You Know Your Story

Immigrant Youth, Pre-Service Teachers, & a Summer English Program

Donald Hones, Tonya Hameister, Hanh Le, Sabrina Samo, Andrew Mayer, & Jessica Martinez

Introduction

Today we will be taking our education to the streets in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Jessica, Andrew, and our other talented interns were doing some last-minute role-plays with a dozen or so English learners, getting them ready to approach strangers to see if they would be willing to answer a few questions. I walked on ahead to the New Moon Café, reminiscing about the previous summer, when I was preparing Ahmed, a Syrian refugee, for a similar survey experience. "Ahmed," I asked, "what if the person says to you, 'We don't want you here, why don't you go back to your country?'" Ahmed replied immediately, "I would tell that person that his president invited me here and this is now my home." He was ready.

The students this summer were ready, too, and through the window of the New Moon, I observed them as they stopped to chat with people out on the sidewalk. About 15 minutes later, they began entering the café. I rose to welcome them and introduce them to some people I knew who were sitting at various tables. More interviewing ensued, accompanied by many smiles and some laughter. At the request of students, interview participants were writing answers to questions on whiteboards and, with their permission, having their photographs taken. The students had earlier written their own responses as part of this chalkboard workshop in response to the question "What is your favorite word?" Jabari, recently arrived from Tanzania, had written, "*Pamoja*/Together."

Umoja / Together: Summer participants with their "chalk talk" messages.

During the summers of 2018 and 2019, a group of immigrant teenagers and interns and volunteers from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh participated in a summer English program sponsored by the Winnebago County Literacy Council and ArtsCore. We were inspired in 2018 to create a curriculum modeled after the work of Wing Young Huie, a photographer from Minnesota. In his *University Avenue Project*, Wing (Huie, 2010) shares the lives of diverse community members in St. Paul and Minneapolis through photographs as well as through their answers, written on chalkboards, to certain questions. We borrowed some of the questions to use ourselves:

- *What are you?*
- *What do people see in you? What don't they see?*
- *What advice would you give to a stranger?*

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◆ *What is your favorite word?*

We added additional questions:

◆ *What is easy for you? What is difficult?*

Over two summers, we worked with students from Syria, Pakistan, Tanzania, Mexico, Honduras, China, and Vietnam with these questions to create our own chalkboard project. They also wrote "I am" poems and "I remember" memories. They engaged in the arts, creating their personal comic book heroes and leaving inspired messages in chalk on the sidewalks downtown.

In addition, they took the chalkboard workshop to the streets of Oshkosh, to a retirement home, to the school district office, and to the university, where they asked and answered thought-provoking questions in a dialogue with university students, teachers, and community members.

To Speak and to Be Heard: Narrative Inquiry and a Summer Language Project

The rights to speak and to be heard are fundamental to the advancement of democracy and the cause of social justice. Yet, here in the United States, are we ready to listen to the voices of refugee and immigrant youth? Large numbers of such youths are present in public schools in the U.S., yet services to meet their needs are often lacking. There are few opportunities for bilingual education or support in secondary school settings, and, coupled with heavy academic requirements and the difficulty of fitting in common to adolescence, refugee and immigrant youth often find themselves silenced, isolated from the school and larger community (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Moreover, schools often do not have the resources to support programs for students during the summer, a key time to continue social and academic language progress. To strive to reach grade-level academic competence, English learners must make 15 months' progress for each 12 months' of their native-English-speaking peers (Collier & Thomas, 2004; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

To support the academic and social English-language development of local English-learner youth, a summer project was developed through the local literacy council. Middle and high school students in two communities engaged in a 6-week program of writing, discussion, interviewing members of the community, and spoken-word poetry on themes of identity and belonging. The project was jointly supported by an area university and two school districts, with preservice teachers serving as volunteers and interns.

Sabrina Samo, a Syrian refugee, and Hanh Le, a Vietnamese immigrant, share their stories of civil and economic conflict in their homelands, journeys into exile, and adjustment to life, school, and community in the U.S. A questionnaire was given to each of these coauthors. Although both coauthors addressed the same general questions, questions were made specific to the country of origin as well as some of the life experiences the coauthors had previously shared through the summer program (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005). Examples of questions asked include the following:

◆ *What are some of your earliest memories of growing up? What was the name of your town? Where else have you lived on your journey to Oshkosh, Wisconsin?*

◆ *Tell me about your family: your mom, dad, any siblings, extended family. What are some memories of family that you have from growing up?*

◆ *Why did you leave your country? What were the circumstances? How did immigration affect you and your family?*

◆ *What have your schooling experiences been like in your home country? In other transition countries? In the U.S.?*

◆ *What recommendations would you give to teachers of immigrant and refugee youth?*

Jessica Martinez and Andrew Mayer shared their perspectives on the project from the standpoint of preservice teachers. They were lead teachers in the second year of the program, and they were able to use the following questions to help them reflect on the importance of the project for them personally and as future teachers:

◆ *Can you speak about your experiences with family, community, and school when you were younger?*

◆ *What experiences have you had that led you to become a teacher?*

◆ *What were your expectations going into this summer program, about the students you would meet, about your fellow interns, and about yourself?*

◆ *What were your biggest surprises in the summer program? What were your biggest challenges? What have been your greatest takeaways from the program?*

Following written responses to these questions, audio-recorded interviews with these co-authors were conducted to explore issues in more depth. From the written responses to the questionnaire and from the audio-recorded interview

Co-authors Sabrina Samo, Hanh Le, and Don Hones with other participants in the "Voices of Oshkosh" radio show.

transcripts, narrative portraits of each of these co-authors have been constructed.

It was important that these co-authors helped in editing their portraits to final form. In this process of narrative inquiry, fidelity to their own words has been the goal of the research (Benei, 2010; Clandinin, Davies, Whelan, Huber, & Rose, 2001; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010; Hones, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1995), wherein stories of individuals, groups, and communities are central to the interpretation.

Through a process of interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 1994) and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), important themes are examined that emerge from the portraits of these co-authors.

By providing the tools and the forums for immigrant and refugee adolescents to reflect on and express fundamental aspects of their identities, this project is in keeping with a goal to transform society and create communities where the multiplicity of human experiences is valued.

Andrew's Journey as a Preservice Teacher

Appleton, Wisconsin, has produced Harry Houdini, the master of escape, and Joe McCarthy, the master of inquisition. Its tree-lined neighborhoods are now home to a diverse cross section of northeastern Wisconsin. Many of its schools reflect this diversity: Columbus Elementary School once announced school messages in English and Hmong; the Appleton Bilingual School, just across the street, has a vibrant dual-language immersion program in Spanish and English. Newcomers from Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere continue to transform the schools and the city, home to Andrew Mayer, a soon-to-be elementary education and ESL teacher. Here are his shared reflections:

To me, home is wherever you have people that care about you, and school was always a second home. I was fortunate to have this throughout my entire education. The schools I attended in Appleton, Wisconsin, were full of classmates, teachers, parents, and coaches who supported me academically and emotionally.

During my senior year of high school, I started to ask the important people in my life how they decided what to do for a career. They all provided different answers of why they chose the profession they did, yet they also all decided to be teachers. I also decided to pursue a teaching career, and so far, it has been an incredible journey.

This journey included an opportunity this past summer teaching English to middle and high school immigrant students. In the past, I have worked with immigrant students, but only at an elementary level. I was intrigued to discover how teaching this group of students would be different. When I met the other teachers with whom I would be working, I realized that we specialized in multiple types of education, including general, English as a second language, bilingual education, and art.

This combination fit well together and supported the type of instruction we wanted to offer our students. Our goal was to give students the opportunity to read, write, speak, and listen every day they came to class. I think it's fair to say the teachers and students achieved this goal throughout the summer.

I can't say enough about how much I appreciated all of the students who attended our class. Most days it felt like I was a student being taught by them. As unique as this felt, nothing was more inspiring than the courage that each student brought into our room. We took chances during our time together that relied on students being brave.

The students shared personal information and stories that are important to them. They interacted with the larger community, a community that didn't know who they were and maybe even where they were from. They accepted and welcomed each other better than any group of people I have ever met. The students in this program entered the group of important influences that the world of education has offered me, a world I call home.

A great memory I have is working with a Swahili-speaking student from Tanzania. She was 10 years old and had entered the U.S. two weeks prior to the start of our summer program. It did not take long to discover that she was shy and lacked the education that her older brother had received, who also attended the summer program. She rarely spoke.

After the first week, I decided to make an effort to build a system of communication for this Swahili-speaking student that didn't involve her brother translating for her. I learned several phrases in Swahili (English/Swahili), such as "hello" (*hujambo*), "good job" (*kazu zuri*), "how are you?" (*habari yako*), "can you?" (*uwaweza*), "speak/say" (*sema*), "write" (*andika*), and "read" (*soma*). By doing this, I showed her that I wanted to communicate and that it was fine to speak her first language.

After practicing these phrases, I was able to ask questions and give feedback about activities we did together. A culminating example is the scavenger hunt we did together on one of our last days. I gave her a list of objects written in Swahili that she was meant to find in the library. Each object then had the English word written on a note next to it.

During this activity, I was able to clarify what she was supposed to write and read in order to find the next object. This is something that I could never have expected her to do without first attempting to learn her language. It was incredibly fulfilling to see her successfully complete an activity that

Co-author Andrew Mayer working with two students.

required reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English.

Near the end of our first session in June, we got in touch with a few local businesses that agreed to have employees answer some interview questions. We had prepped our students on how to appropriately address a stranger and ask for a moment of his or her time. The students then chose questions that they would like to ask a stranger within their community.

When the day came to leave the walls of the Oshkosh Public Library, I was still nervous that our students might be scared or that they would come across an unwelcoming member of the Oshkosh community (our practice also included how to handle a situation like this). I soon realized I had extremely underestimated the bravery of my students. I entered a local café with two boys and a girl speaking Swahili, Vietnamese, and Arabic. I turned to my students to see the two boys doing rock-paper-scissors for who would get to go ask his question first.

I was surprised that they were so excited to be doing an activity like this. The girl then looked at the two boys, and me, and asked if she could go first. I told her that she could, and the boys and I took a seat in the café, watching her speak to a complete stranger. The students who I brought to the café that day each asked at least three people, whom they had never met, a thought-provoking question. They even gained permission to take pictures with the people they met.

I can honestly say it was the best day of work that I have ever experienced. I have never met a group of people braver than the students I worked with this summer.

Students after interviews in the New Moon Cafe with co-authors Jessica Martinez, Hanh Le, and Andrew Mayer.

Jessica's Journey as a Preservice Teacher

I grew up in Waukesha, Wisconsin. In the midst of a largely conservative population, Waukesha students of color experienced and still experience things differently. This can be seen through various incidents that targeted or discriminated against groups, such as racist signs being held at athletic events, students dressing in stereotypes or through cultural appropriation, or bullying that went on.

As someone who is "passing," I found that I didn't have a group that I necessarily belonged to. I was the smart Mexican girl who spoke Spanish, liked school, and talked to anyone and everyone. Looking back, it feels sad to think how little I was able to celebrate or fully acknowledge my identity beyond my home. At school, I was torn between being a confident Latina and not saying anything and "blending in" with my peers. Listening to comments such as "you're too white to be Mexican" or "why do you have blue eyes?" the confidence I had in my identity was affected, but never taken from me.

One of the biggest things that impacted me was being a part of a mixed-status family. It was not until I was older that I realized that my parents and family members being undocumented meant having to deal with the fear and risk of separation. Even though they understood the risks of just existing in the U.S. with us, my parents did everything they could to give me the best childhood. Through those sacrifices, we were still able to enjoy many memories, such as going to Mexico with my uncle when I was eight years old and many family reunions to spend time together.

One of the biggest challenges that I faced in school, and later learned to appreciate, was not being able to get help with homework from my parents. With bills to pay, work to do, and things to get done, my parents did not get the opportunity to go to college or really practice all that they learned from their education in Mexico. I could not blame them for not understanding my world history, calculus, biology, and other subjects, especially when it's taught in a language that they were still gaining confidence in.

This is not to say they did not know anything. My dad is amazing at math, and my mom is great with chemistry, and so much more, it was just that there was a language barrier. I understand how lucky I was to have hardworking parents. Because of them not being able to help me with schoolwork, I became resourceful, I asked many more questions, I became more motivated to find my own answers, and I gained the confidence to teach and share the things I learned with them. While there was some success through hardship growing up, I know that is not the case for other students like me in my community.

Being the oldest of four in my family, and just being curious about the world, is what set me on the path of being an educator. Whether it was helping someone with homework, translating or interpreting for my family, or just being excited to go to school, I have always known that learning and teaching have helped others and me grow.

At first, I wanted to be a doctor, a police officer, or an immigration lawyer, but nothing compared to the idea of being a teacher. My earliest memory of teaching happened in elementary school, where I taught my teacher

and classmates Spanish. As the first teacher in my family, I'll get to maintain my native language, share parts of my culture, and learn from others about theirs. I want my students to be confident in themselves and not have to worry about their accents, mistakes, or identities in my classroom.

I was really excited this past summer for my first experience as a preservice teacher. I expected to take all that I learned from my courses and apply it to the summer program, but it did not happen exactly as I thought. With the environment being more relaxed, less focused on curriculum and standards, the things that I learned about motivation, retention, engagement, and culturally relevant pedagogy were what helped me the most.

The biggest surprises were definitely related to the experiences we had as a group. What I once thought would be completely structured class time turned into a classroom that moved all over Oshkosh. Whether it was the sidewalk downtown, the zoo, the district building, comic book store, coffee shops, other local businesses, and many other experiences, we were always learning! We might not have tracked progress diligently as teachers would do in a classroom, but it amazed me to see just how much students grew in a short amount of time.

This could be seen through the artwork, writing, reading, and practiced speaking almost every day. Just like the year before, I was so happy to see how inclusive, diverse, and celebratory our learning environment was, and that is what made learning so easy. It surprised me that we were able to talk about things like violence, wars, insecurities, and other things but also found ways to turn it around and to uplift each other. Through our work together, we were all able to share a little piece of ourselves.

Every day we were learning things from other cultures and languages. With languages represented such as Arabic, Swahili, Kibemmbe, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, and Chinese, we learned the many ways to say words like "hero." We learned pronunciation, how to write it, and how to spell it. With such an inviting space, the lines between teacher and student were blurred every day, as we were all learning from each other.

Every day we saw our students get more confident in themselves, so much that at times we could not stop talking! I wish everyone who was a teacher could see our program, so that he or she would not have this image or impression of EL students as works in progress needing to be "fixed" or "changed" and would instead see them as very talented, wise, and knowledgeable people who are just adding more in another language.

Like in any other classroom, differentiating learning materials was the biggest challenge for my colleagues and me. With so many students at different levels of "proficiency," we always tried our best to make sure lessons were engaging and age appropriate versus just catering to their language level/ability. I truly believe that by focusing on building the skills of confidence, self-reflection, artistic ability, flexibility, time management, and vulnerability, we helped our students feel more comfortable tackling academic work and communicating their strengths and needs.

From visiting a center for the elderly to doing public surveys, the students got to see and explore Oshkosh and the opportunity to meet some amazing people from our community. Overall, I think this program was a great way for students to understand that they are a part of the community just as much as everyone else is.

I am Jessica
Strong, happy and kind
I am Latina
Speaking Spanish, dancing and singing, being proud
I am growing
Learning at school, doing new things, not being afraid
I am hopeful
Praying, dreaming, living
I am able to see differently
Photography, conversations, connections
I am proud
Of who I am, who I am becoming
Who I will be
I am Jessica

Hanh's Journey as an Immigrant

Vietnam and the U.S. are linked by the war in Indochina in the 1960s and 1970s. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were admitted to the U.S. after 1975, and today, more than 1.3 million people of Vietnamese descent reside in the U.S. (Alperin & Batalova, 2018). Hanh's hometown was infamously leveled to the ground by the Americans during the Vietnam War: According to a U.S. Army Major outside Ben Tre, "it became necessary to destroy the town in order to save it" ("U.S. Destroys City," 1968).

Almost 50 years later, Hanh and her mother did not arrive as refugees but rather as immigrants seeking a better life. The two have spent much time apart in Vietnam as well as in the U.S., as Hanh's mother, like millions of other mothers worldwide, seeks an income to support her child (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Maruja & Asis, 2006). Significantly, the two have been able to live in the same country always, though sometimes a few hours' distance from each other. Hanh has completed high school and is studying to be a nurse.

I am the oldest daughter and also the only daughter of my mom. I was born in Ben Tre, Vietnam, and grew up there. Some of my favorite memories are when I was perhaps 10 or 12 years old, every afternoon my neighborhood friends and I rode our bikes around town and stopped by stores just to get to know what people were selling there.

It was a hard time in Vietnam because I had to live with my aunt, and my mom worked so far away from me. My mom and I came to America in 2017. My mom came here to work because we can make better money here than in Vietnam. She wanted me to be able to study English and have a better future. We stayed in Texas at first, and after that, my mom felt that Wisconsin had a better life for us, and we moved to Wisconsin.

I became a student at Oshkosh West High School. At first, I didn't understand when everybody was talking, but students and the ELL teacher helped me, encouraged me, and gave me more motivation to learn English. The one who helps me most is Sabrina, my best friend now.

Last summer I moved to Arizona, and then to North Carolina. Then my mom got a job in Wausau, and we moved back to Wisconsin. My mom works in a nail salon. I also have a host family I live with in Oshkosh. They are very nice to me and are like my second family. Last year, when I first moved into their home, they drove me to school every day, and their kids are just like my siblings.

I have a big family in Vietnam. They always think about me and call me every weekend. Every Lunar New Year, all my cousins would come to my house to visit my family. At night we would cook some food and eat together. I have very happy memories of those times.

Life in a new country is hard because you have to start at the beginning again with language, a new home, new friends, and a new school. I had good experiences

in school in Vietnam, but when I moved to Oshkosh, it was a little bit hard for me because of the language. However, people here were very nice to me, especially the teachers and friends who encouraged me, so I am getting better now. My teachers, Mrs. Vang and Mrs. Lor, took me everywhere to get to know Oshkosh and how to live here.

One thing I would ask teachers is to be more understanding of students. Just think if you moved to another country—you would feel weird about the language and you would not have any friends at first.

What advice would I give to a stranger? If you think no one cares about you, think again and open your heart. I think all of us have family and friends. They are the ones always being with you. When you have trouble and feel alone, you will not be confident and may think they will leave. They are still behind you and cheering for you, but you don't see it. Keep being nice to people, and they will be nice back to you.

I am Hanh.
In Vietnamese my name means a person who is always happy and who gets a lot of luck in life
I am Hanh
I am from Vietnam
I am a girl who likes to travel
I am a daughter
I am at home with my mother
I want to be a nurse in the future
I feel happy when I am singing
I like shopping, cooking and movies
I wish that all will come true in the future
I am

The Best Part of Me: My Eyes
I love my eyes
They show all my emotion
Close when I sleep
Open when I get up
They are also the window to my soul
Pretty in the inside
See it in my own eyes
Pretty when I smile
Sad when I am not happy
And help me identify many things of life
So, do you love your eyes?

Sabrina's Journey as a Refugee

Today the Syrian civil war rages on in the north, with cities in ruins, widespread death, and destruction, and more than five million refugees living abroad (Ford, 2019). Several thousand Syrian refugees have been admitted to the U.S. in recent years. Young Syrians entering U.S. schools often arrive with educations that have been interrupted by war and with varying degrees of posttraumatic stress.

In the U.S. they face not only the challenge of a new language and new culture but also anti-Muslim sentiment stoked by the U.S. president and others (Yussuf & Calafell, 2018). Daraya, Syria, was an early center of the peaceful rebellion against the Syrian government, and it was bombed relentlessly until a rebel surrender in 2016 (Barnard, 2016). Sabrina Samo left there during the war and arrived in Oshkosh with her brother, mother, and father. She is currently finishing her GED and aspires to be a teacher.

I am from Daraya. It is smaller than Oshkosh, and just 10 minutes from Damascus. My family fled from there to Jordan in 2013. I really don't want to talk more about Jordan. It was a really hard experience. First we were with refugee housing, but my younger brother was really sick, so we moved closer to the capital. They would not let my brother go to school. They said there were not enough chairs, or that he was Syrian. My father tried to speak with them so that I could go to school. It was not a good experience. When I went to my first day at school, students and teachers said to me, "We don't want you here. Why don't you go home? Why don't you go back to your country?" I heard them, but I didn't say anything. I kept it inside, and that made me sick. After 1 month, I stopped going to school.

After four years in Jordan, we moved to Oshkosh in 2016. My dad loved Oshkosh. We told him to go to a warmer place, but he loved Oshkosh. I am here with my mom, my dad, my older brother and his wife, and my younger brother. My sister is married and is in Jordan.

When I came to America, I didn't listen to the criticisms of others. I just studied. Learning English was the hardest part in high school. The first year we just had English and math in the EL program. In the second year, we moved into science and social studies. It was hard to make friends among the American students. I was very quiet. I did not know how to speak. People see me as a shy girl, but they don't see me as a strong girl.

Going to school has been the best for me, meeting new people, learning a new language. I had never gone to school before. What advice would I give to a stranger? Do not listen to others, just do what is good for you.

I am Sabrina
I am a sister
I am a daughter
I am an aunt
I am a student
I want to be a teacher
I am shy when I talk with new people
I am sad when I remember my country
I am happy when I make people happy
I am
This
I am

Students working together.

Dialogue Between Sabrina and Hanh

Donald Hones met Sabrina and Hanh at the coffee house out by the highway on a chilly afternoon toward the end of December. Sabrina greeted him with a smile when he entered, then they waited for Hanh, who arrived shortly thereafter. While they talked, a winter sunset cast a pink glow through the western window. They spoke about their studies, and about their families, and then when Don asked if he could begin to record an interview. Hanh lent him her phone and later sent both of the others the recording.

When Don began by asking Hanh if she had anything to add to the story of her journey to the U.S., she looked down at some notes that she had. Sabrina touched her hand, looked at her steadily, and said, "You know your story." Hanh put the notes aside and began speaking with confidence.

HANH: Sabrina was my closest friend. I think we started practicing English with each other.

SABRINA: Even if we say something wrong we just laugh and keep going. I think we are more scared to speak to American students.

DON: Why did you join the summer program?

HANH: We wanted to improve our English and practice more, and get to know more people. We got to know more about people's culture and their ideas about life. The university students were very friendly.

SABRINA: I also learned a lot about English from Jessica.

DON: What advice would you give us if we offer this program in the future?

HANH: I think we should meet more than one time at the university, so they can learn more about us. It was very fun when I could come to the college with all of you. People are friendly to us. I am very thankful.

SABRINA: Doing more on campus, learning from the professors, meeting university students is very valuable.

DON: The district teachers said meeting you students was the best part of their summer course.

HANH: Next semester I will study academic English. I will study for the CNA. I hope to study for the RN program either at FVTC or UW Oshkosh.

SABRINA: When I finish my GED I want to be an ESL teacher. I am also volunteering now reading to children at my little cousin's school.

Educational Journeys of Immigrant Youth and Teaching Interns

The thoughtful reflections in the personal storytelling of the participants of this unique summer program have surfaced certain themes that generate further thought about the makeup and opportunity that are afforded to middle and high school EL students. Many students mentioned the importance of teachers taking the time to really get to know them and their stories. This theme was prominent throughout the interviews and questionnaires.

Preservice teachers shared the same thought that building relationships with students was a major part of the productive growth of students and teachers. Paolo Freire shares the importance of relationship building and a pedagogy that builds equitable opportunity and assumes a need for people to *be heard* and *to hear*. Through *dialogue*, learning happens from people coming together, equal in power dynamics, to learn from each other and to deeply understand each other. Teachers are students, and students are teachers. All learn from the interaction (Freire, 1970).

This transitions well into the second common theme of "adaptive work" that surfaced from the reflections. This unique summer program offered a glimpse into perspectives on teaching and learning and the learning environment that challenge our current structures of education. The way we have created most of our schools today reflects what we have done in the last century and requires a way of thinking about learning that can seem very myopic.

We look to find answers for better achievement by strictly focusing on what Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) would call the "technical" nature of the work of teaching and learning, and this has often led to scripted lessons and a disconnect with the very part of the "art and craft" of teaching and learning that makes a critical difference.

Aristotle teaches us that inquiry is a key part of learning. Heifetz and Linsky (Heifetz et al., 2009; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017) created a similar idea in their theory of *adaptive leadership*, where "curiosity" and "deep listening" are valued and "holding" people in the feelings of the work as they express the emotion and thoughts behind a challenge is a part of the very important process of empowering others to move forward in effective change and progress.

The recognized learning from the students and the preservice teachers in this summer program is a hint of the possible success of the pedagogy of "dialogue." The beautiful growth comes not just from a "growth mindset" (Dweck, 2008), which is only part of the recipe of learning, but from the "Praxis" (Freire, 1970) that occurs when students and teachers alike take what they are learning into the community of learners to make change. The change is sometimes unknown, which can create hesitancy and fear.

Recognized group support and a culture that encourages the risk are needed for this change. This summer program seemed to offer this sense of camaraderie and support. Transformations from this work do not just occur within the individual, a preservice teacher or a young refugee and/or immigrant student, but ripple out further to make a significant change in the hearts and minds of those within and beyond their circle of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The EL students and some of the preservice teachers discussed a third theme of "social exclusion" in their shared thoughts and the insidiousness of this influence. Many of the preservice teachers and students discussed the dangers of assumptions that may reflect social exclusion or bias in working with refugee and immigrant students. These assumptions may be deeply ingrained in both student and teacher understandings of their work and the cultures in their school buildings.

InTASC Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013) create thresholds of dispositional expectations of teachers that seem to be created to ameliorate social exclusion. Unfortunately, the intricacies of assessing teacher beliefs, values, and dispositions leave these expectations vulnerable to being superficially or briefly assessed in fieldwork, which in turn does little to hold teachers accountable for effective culturally sensitive and responsive practice. Some of the dispositions read as follows:

2(l). The teacher believes that all learners can achieve at high levels and persists in helping each learner reach his/her full potential.

> 2(m). The teacher respects learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests.
>
> 2(n). The teacher makes learners feel valued and helps them learn to value each other.
>
> 2(o). The teacher values diverse languages and dialects and seeks to integrate them into his/her instructional practice to engage students in learning. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013, p. 17)

In addition, commonly found themes of the importance of "community" and "time" were also reiterated by students and interns alike. Seeing the classroom as a microcosm of society actually elevated the importance of the work to interact beyond the physical walls of the classroom. Strategically conversing within the local community helped students avoid assumptions about the "locals," and vice versa.

Courage was shared as students collectively overcame timidity and were empowered to "get to know" other individuals who expanded beyond their circle of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The students seemed to take the interactions as a social experiment, not knowing the result but only knowing the "burning questions" that inspired their work.

Time in this project was not between school bells but on weekdays in the lazy days of summer at the local coffee shop or downtown at the local school district office, supported by friends and neighbors. Activities were completed to prepare for these community interactions, and no person was left to struggle alone. Students and preservice teachers mentioned the importance of taking the time to interact and build community.

Pamoja/Together

On December 2, 2019, an active shooting situation took place at Waukesha South High School, Jessica Martinez's alma mater. The following morning, my colleague stepped out of a meeting, telling us, "There is an active shooter at Oshkosh West High School. I need to get my daughter." This was also the high school that Hanh and Sabrina had attended, where many of our summer program students still attend.

Later, it was learned that the campus police liaison had fired his gun after being wounded by a student. Both were hospitalized. No one was killed, but the fear was palpable in our city, one among so many communities that have been visited by the epidemic of gun violence in the U.S.

Later that night, Don saw a social media post from Kareem, one of the program participants, referring to the day's events. Don replied to say that he was glad that Kareem was safe. Adding to the on-line conversation, Sabrina, a survivor of the war in Syria, after admitting that it had been a hard day, wrote "I hope Oshkosh and the people of Oshkosh will be fine forever."

Adolescent English learners face so many challenges, and they have much to learn to catch up academically in English-speaking schools. Yet, they have much to teach us as well. We have the opportunity in the U.S. to build something very beautiful with the assistance of many willing hands from many distant lands. *Pamoja*/together was the word shared intentionally by Jabari, one of our summer program students. *Together*, with the support of our many stories, we are so much stronger.

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