Democracy in Education
The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin

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Submissions to the Bulletin, a refereed publication, are reviewed by the Editorial Board and the Society editorial staff. Selection is based on relevance of the topics addressed, accuracy and validity, contribution to the professional literature, originality, quality of writing, and adherence to Submission Guidelines (see page 39). Editorial Board members evaluate each submission’s focus, organization, development, readability, and relevance to the general audience of Bulletin readers. Due to the diversity of the Bulletin audience, material that expresses a gender, religious, political, or patriotic bias is not suitable for publication.

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Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the Bulletin Editorial Board. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: Journal accepts research-based articles including Action/Classroom Research, Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, Reviews of Literature, Program Descriptions, Position Papers, and Book/Technology Reviews. The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: Collegial Exchange accepts articles of a more practical, personal nature, including Classroom and DKG Practices/Programs, Viewpoints on Current Issues, Personal Reflections or Anecdotes, Inspirational Pieces, Biographies and Interviews, Book and Technology Reviews, and Creative Writing.

Submissions should be focused, well organized, effectively developed, concise, and appropriate for Bulletin readers. The style should be direct, clear, readable, and free from gender, political, patriotic, or religious bias. For more detailed information, please refer to the Submission Guidelines on page 39 and the Submission Grids on page 40.

Listed below are the deadlines and, where appropriate, themes. Although there is a suggested theme for each issue of the Bulletin: Journal, manuscripts on all topics are welcome. The Bulletin: Collegial Exchange is not theme-based.

**Journal: The Ways We Learn (86-3; Online)**
(Postmark deadline is October 1, 2019)
- Brain Research
- How Individuals Think/Organize
- Technology Impact
- Storing and Processing Information
- Models of Instructional Delivery
- Formal/Informal Learning
- Experiential Learning

**Collegial Exchange (86-4; Print)**
(Postmark deadline is December 15, 2019)
No designated theme

**Journal: Evolving Nature of Schooling (86-5; Online)**
(Postmark deadline is March 1, 2020)
- Public Education in an Era of Change
- Alternative Models
- Home Schooling
- Charters
- Vouchers
- Online Learning and Education
- Responses to Social Issues
- International Perspectives
- Private Education
- Grading/Assessment Systems

**Journal: Controversial Issues in Education (87-1; Online)**
(Postmark deadline is May 15, 2020)
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- Guns in Schools
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- Flipped Schools
- Online Education
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From the Editor

Democracy can be defined as a “system of government by a whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). However, the theme of this issue—democracy in education—was not designed to emphasize such a specific system but rather to explore democratic outcomes and mindsets in education. In other words, the focus is on democracy as both goal—developing individuals to participate actively in a democracy—and method—ensuring that all members of an educational body have a say in its operation.

What knowledge, skills, and values must students develop in order to become effective citizens in a democracy? In a position statement issued in 2001, the National Council for Social Studies argued that the goal of education should be to shape an individual who

- embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them;
- accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one’s family, and the community;
- has knowledge of the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world;
- has knowledge of our nation’s founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes;
- is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national, and global levels;
- seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions;
- asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas;
- uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life;
- has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group; and

As with so many situations in education, students can most effectively develop the desired knowledge, skills, and values in a model environment—in this case, in classrooms and schools that embrace democratic methods. Such an environment involves students regularly in shared decision-making regarding rules, routines, and their learning. As much as is developmentally appropriate, students’ voices weigh with those of their peers and those of the teacher in such decision-making as all take responsibility for making their classes and schools positive places to be and to learn. Student participation and empowerment are the order of the day in such an environment, where issues ranging from curriculum content to behavior concerns are resolved through critical thinking, collaborative discussion, and face-to-face problem solving.
Editorial board member Pálsdóttir leads this issue with an article based on an interview with the first lady of Iceland, Eliza Reid. The education system in Iceland is “built on the idea of the social democratic welfare state,” and Reid offers insights into how democratic ideals are implemented in schools. Her perspectives as both citizen and parent provide depth to the duality of the notion of democracy in education.

Turning to the idea of educators as role models for democratic skills and dispositions, Duffin, Ziebarth-Bovill, and Krueger describe a capstone experience bridging an education course and a required political science course for preservice teachers. Focusing on a collaborative research project, the future educators practice democratic principles in teams of four or five as they prepare a presentation on a contemporary issue in education policy. The researchers found the program to have a measurable, statistically significant effect on the students’ democratic skills and dispositions.

Shillingstad and McGlamery conclude the issue with an article on a topic of interest to educators in general and of special interest to members who support the Society’s international project, Support for Early-career Educators (SEE). They provide a case study of a nationally recognized induction program, Career Advancement and Development of Recruits and Experienced Teachers (CADRE), which is designed to support newly certified teachers as they enter the profession. The study focuses on the roles and perceptions of Cadre Associates, who provide the mentoring and fulfill the role of teacher leader in their districts. The article provides insight to the many challenges navigated by teachers in leadership roles.

Democratic goals and methods, empowerment through mentoring, and the many facets of leadership: As ever, the articles in this issue demonstrate the ways that DKG members, as key women educators, are thinking about and acting upon important educational initiatives to promote the professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.

Judith R. Merz, EdD
Editor
The education system in Iceland is built on the idea of the social democratic welfare state. Preschools offer early education for a subsidized fee, and compulsory schools are public and inclusive, in the sense that all children, regardless of disability, background, or social status, should receive quality education. Research suggests that quality education for every citizen is the key to prosperity and success, both for the individual and society. Through education, people can be empowered to take charge of their lives, develop their capabilities, and contribute to society.

To discuss education in Iceland, I visited first lady Eliza Reid in her home, the presidential residence at Bessastadir, where she lives with her husband, President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, and their four children, ages 12, 10, 8, and 6. Canadian-born, Reid moved to Iceland in 2003 with her husband, previously a professor of history at the University of Iceland. The life of the family took a turn when Jóhannesson was elected president in 2016 and Eliza Reid became the first lady of Iceland and thus a public figure.

Reid holds a Master of Arts degree in modern history from Oxford University. After her move to Iceland, she became a freelance writer for multiple Icelandic publications, and in 2013 she co-founded the Iceland Writers Retreat, an annual event that combines small-group writing workshops with cultural tours to introduce visitors to Iceland’s unique literary heritage.

As first lady, Reid has addressed how Icelanders can share their culture and nature with other nations, with sustainability and hospitality at heart. She is a United Nations Special Ambassador for Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals, and, in that capacity, she has been a spokesperson for responsible tourism, which has become one of Iceland’s important sources of income in the last decade, along with the fishing industry and the technical and creative industries. I visited Reid at the presidential residence in Álftanes on a quiet Monday afternoon, and we sat and talked for about an hour in the beautiful library at Bessastadir.

What comes to your mind when you think about democracy and education?

“I believe that education should give you the tools that you need to be able to
contribute as effectively as possible to society and also to help you find your own path, one that you consider challenging and interesting. With respect to the earlier levels of education, I would think the function is also interaction with other members of society—‘learning to play well with others’ as it were. Even from a very young age, education should teach us to respect each others’ opinions and ideas and give us the tools to express ourselves in articulate ways, to develop confidence, to be able to know that we can have and defend our own opinions, and to disagree when needed. I think that is a part of a democratic and open society.”

**How is it to raise children in Iceland?**

“Well, it is very good, but I have no experience anywhere else raising children so I can’t compare it to anything else. One of the things that is an advantage living here is the family-friendly society, and broadly speaking I have been very pleased with the educational system in Iceland so far. My children are quite young, so we have not gone very far up the system yet for me to have a personal assessment of it. So far it has been very positive, and I especially appreciate that from the very youngest age the focus has been on play as opposed to performance. This is what I hear is happening in so many places—competition and pressure on children to perform: for example, kids from the age of three having to read and write and play the violin and speak four languages. We shouldn’t underestimate our children and by all means we should continue to challenge them, but I feel that when that flips into some sort of parental competition to see if my child can do more advanced math than your child at this early age, then that puts too much pressure on children. What I have liked in the Icelandic preschool system is the emphasis on play and interaction, children’s gross and fine motor skills, seeing if there are any early indications of things that need to be addressed and if children are able to interact with other people and enjoy themselves, and I think that’s very positive.”

**What do you find most important when it comes to your children’s schooling?**

“I want my children to be happy at school; I want them to feel that they have friends and that they are not ostracized in some way and have their own social networks. I also think that it is important that they feel that they are given enough work and assignments, that they feel challenged but not so much that they are stressed and overwhelmed, and that, again, has got to be the most difficult thing because every...”

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student is different in that respect and motivating them is also a challenge. My three oldest children are all boys, and I don’t know if there is sort of a gender stereotype there or not, but when I was a student I was really keen and I always did my best to do everything on time, and sometimes I find the boys a bit more ‘it’s not very interesting so I can’t be bothered.’” Reid smiles. “We just have to figure out different ways to motivate different people.” She adds that she and her husband have always sent their children to the local schools and find it important that their children participate on an equal basis with their peers.

Schools have changed and so has the role of the teacher. “When you and I were in primary school,” Reid says, “it was a matter of memorization and the teacher telling you something and you learning it and regurgitating it afterwards. I think we see a lot more dialogue and discussion taking place nowadays, which is an important part of education. It is not just memorizing facts and information and numbers and learning how to calculate but being able to develop the confidence to express your opinions based on the information you have acquired.”

Children in Iceland are often considered to have more independence and freedom to go about on their own than their peers in other countries. Is that your experience?

“Yes, children here are given a lot of independence. They are often outside playing by themselves after school or going to sport practices or music practice themselves, which also gives them an opportunity to learn from mistakes. They don’t always have a helicopter parent around them to grab them from any situation before there are any difficulties or challenges or conflicts.”

The Icelandic government legalized the United Nations Convention on the rights of children in 2013, and there is increased emphasis on including the perspectives of children in societal affairs. Do you feel that children’s perspectives are taken into account in the school?

“Kids have this great way of thinking outside the box, and they are not limited to the way things have always been done. It empowers people to feel that their ideas and opinions are being listened to. It is important—and kids love it—when they have the chance to participate in a real way.” Two of her children have participated in an anti-bullying project called the Peer-friends (Icelandic vinaliðar), where fourth graders are elected by their peers to become Peer-friends and their role is to assist and play with younger students at school recess. “They feel so empowered by having their peers select them. They get to go through special training and coaching, which they love; they know they are helping other kids, they go on a trip at the end of the period, they miss a day of school, and they get a coupon for pizza—and they both thought this was a really empowering and interesting experience. Showing the kids they can make a difference and be looked up to by the younger kids really supports their self-confidence.”
Can you tell us about the after-school centers for young school-aged children in Iceland?

“Yes, our kids have been in those, and we have been at several schools, so we have had different experiences. I think there are a lot of opportunities there to provide informal learning activities. Our children finish school around 1 p.m., and the after-school centers are open until 5 in the afternoon, and that part of the day they have opportunities to play with friends, where they are not feeling any academic pressure but where they can participate in, say, building things or creating things or running around. We haven’t had any bad experiences, but we have had some great experiences with after-school centers where our kids loved it. In other cases, it was more like, ‘Do I really have to go this week?’ and that is normal as well. As the kids get older, they are less enthusiastic about going.”

One of the main emphases in the Icelandic educational policy is inclusive education and access for all to quality education. According to the Icelandic compulsory school law, all children should have access to their neighborhood school and have the support they need. Do you think we are doing well enough in this respect?

“It is very important that everyone feels included. We are all different and unique and some of us need more academic stimulation, some of us need less. We all learn in different ways, so of course there is no one-size-that-fits-all model. I sense we have good support for people with learning disabilities where there is emphasis on the support needed for everyone to achieve his or her goals. Education should instill self-confidence in every child. It is important that children feel confident enough in their own abilities, that they are willing to take risks when they have to learn and develop more, but they also need to feel confident in themselves as they are and that they have something unique to contribute to society. Having said that, people who excel academically don’t necessarily have the opportunity to progress faster, which puts them at risk of getting bored or lazy with school and projects because they are not being challenged enough.”

The Icelandic Alþingi was established in 930 A.D., which makes it the oldest running parliament in the world. Icelanders have always been extremely proud of their democratic heritage. But of course, Icelanders are still learning, and the nation is becoming more heterogeneous. How is the Icelandic educational system responding to these changes?

“We have seen a big increase in the number of immigrants to Iceland, and this brings challenges both in terms of different cultural backgrounds of students and in terms of language—the need to learn a new language and to ensure that we are providing immigrants with the best possible educational experience that we can and for them to know that they are welcome and have a place here.”
Reid and I talk about how students with immigrant backgrounds, about 12% percent of the student population, face more challenges in the Icelandic education system than their peers and are more likely to drop out of upper secondary school. Reid emphasizes that we must develop ways for Icelandic students with immigrant backgrounds to flourish and contribute to society in their own way. She points out that sometimes children with immigrant backgrounds are not able to participate in extra-curricular activities because of the cost or because their parents do not have the same social networks as other parents. A few years ago, municipalities in Iceland started to offer a subsided fee for extra-curricular activities for every child up to the age of 18. Reid notes, “I think it is wonderful that the municipalities are supporting people, because it’s a real shame when there are opportunities like music or sports or other things that are not available to people for financial reasons. I think we can do a better job on reaching the immigrant communities, especially in respect to that.”

Despite good intentions and a general good will, Reid says more must be done to strengthen multicultural education in the Icelandic schools. “I remember my kids coming home with old books that you would never see in many countries nowadays, books with sort of old fashioned and even outright racist texts or at other times just an outdated take on things. This surprised me. I also remember when the kids were learning colors in preschool, and they would come home and say, ‘Can you pass me the “skin-colored” pencil?’ To me it was unbelievable that this vocabulary was still being used in school.”

We talk about the crucial roles teachers have in the education system as they can impact the lives of young people and make a difference in their lives.

“We could also empower teachers more. My father is a teacher, and my mother taught preschool, and my husband’s parents were both teachers. It is such an important, influential profession, and we all remember growing up with teachers who were wonderful, who changed our lives. We need to value teachers highly, but we also need to empower them to be able to have a strong impact. That involves making sure that they don’t suffer from burnout. It also involves making sure that their voices are heard and giving them the tools to be able to help.

“In Iceland we have a relatively egalitarian society, and one example that I often use is how everyone is referred to by his or her first name rather than by last name or by Mr., Ms., or some title. This is also the case in schools; teachers are called by their first names by students. I suppose that the flip side of that is that you see a lot more informality. I don’t want to say disrespect; it is just a different system from what I was used to in Canada. I remember when I was growing up there would be more silence in class, and you would put your hand up when you spoke, and then you would say your opinion. I have visited the primary school classrooms of my children, and it sometimes feels to me like chaos because of this informality, voices calling out ‘hey, look at this’ or ‘hey, Thóra do that.’ I have a lot of respect for primary school teachers and the patience that they have to have to handle such situations.”
Literature and literacy have been core components of the identity of the Icelandic nation. Today, young Icelanders read fewer books, and there are even concerns about the literacy of children, young boys in particular. Social media and technology seem to be taking over our lives. What are your thoughts on that?

“I think it is just reality. I mean, it depends: You can look at it as a threat, or you can look at it as a challenge. If we accept the proposition that it is important to be literate, to read, and that young people are turning away from reading, then we need to see that as a challenge; we need to find ways to increase reading in some ways. But you can read on your e-reader, and you don’t have to be reading Shakespeare all the time. So there are different ways, I think, of making things relevant in a modern era.

“There is a lot you can learn on the Internet just from Googling a different subject; you can teach yourself an instrument; you can read so many different books. It can be a wonderful tool as long as it’s managed properly, and that’s certainly a challenge to those of us who are parents and educators. And we see, too, that teenagers aren’t talking to each other face to face as much as before as communication patterns have changed. There is increased anxiety, especially among teenage girls; that’s something that we have to look at seriously. And as parents, we have to be good role models; we shouldn’t be on our phones when we’re at the dinner table or spending time with our children.”

Changing Democracy and the Future

We talk about how social media have changed democratic processes and the possibilities and pitfalls of the constant flow of information and often propaganda targeted at specific groups, not least young people. Reid points out that nations could use the UN Sustainable Development Goals as blueprints and tools in the education system, as they address challenges that the world faces related to the climate, equity, poverty, education, health, and well-being.

How do you see the future and the role of young people?

“There will always be threats and challenges. When we were growing up, there was a threat about nuclear war and acid rain. We have some big challenges that can seem kind of overwhelming, such as global warming, intolerance on a global scale, and unwillingness to listen to and face facts. But we are moving in the right direction: There is less global poverty; life expectancies are longer; there are fewer wars. We are gradually moving in the right direction, and we shouldn’t forget that. We are developing all the time, making constant advances in science and technology. We have to focus on the urgent problems, like the environment and global warming. But we’ll always have things to worry about. We have to take these issues seriously but not let that scare us.

“Young people can change the world, and I’m very optimistic about the next generations, what they will do, what they’ll learn, and what they will discover. Young people have what’s most important: optimism. They have the belief that they can
make a difference, that they can bring about world peace and save the planet. And you need that kind of optimism to be able to face challenges head on and to bring about necessary change.”

Author Pálsdóttir sits with Eliza Reid, first lady of Iceland.
Building Democratic Capacity in Preservice Teachers

By Diane L. Duffin, Jane Ziebarth-Bovill, and Rochelle Hunt Krueger

The role of higher education in preparing students for democratic citizenship is generally understood to be developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective civic participation. In a deliberate effort to cultivate democratic skills and dispositions in preservice teachers, faculty in teacher education, political science, and the library at the University of Nebraska at Kearney created and continue to deliver a Collaborative Student Research Project (CRP). The assignment involves students in a month-long, scaffolded effort to study and prepare an argument on a controversial topic in education policy. This paper describes the CRP and presents an analysis of its impact on students’ democratic dispositions and perceptions of their own democratic skills. By administering pre- and postproject surveys gauging students’ attitudes, we learned that participating in the CRP had a measurable, statistically significant effect on most indicators of democratic skills and dispositions. However, the effect on students’ perceptions of improvement in their democratic skills was more powerful than the changes in their views respecting democratic norms.

Introduction

In a political climate that characterizes public schools as “failing” and labels them contemptuously as “government schools” (CATO Institute, 2015), it is vitally important that advocates for democratic education engage publicly in education policy debates. Public school teachers in particular occupy a critical place in defending the best interests of schooling and children (Goodlad, 1992). However, the values and skills needed for effective citizen participation in a democratic society are not innate to humans; they must be learned (Chaltain, 2010; Fenstermacher, 1999). This is markedly true for teachers, whose undergraduate education prioritizes pedagogy and content knowledge, often to the neglect of democratic learning. Preservice teachers (defined here as undergraduates in teacher-preparation programs) need this learning to assume their roles as stewards of public education (Goodlad, 1992).

This study presents an approach to citizenship preparation among undergraduate students in the teacher education program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK). As described below, students engage in collaborative research on education policy issues toward the goals of (a) deepening students’ appreciation for democratic values and (b) creating opportunities for students to practice the skills needed for democratic participation. The study also asks whether students’ participation in this research project meets these goals. Does completion of the Collaborative Research Project (CRP) at UNK alter students’ views toward democratic norms and their own abilities to engage effectively in democratic decision-making? Generally, the answer
is yes, although the project affects students’ perceptions of their citizenship skills more powerfully than it affects their democratic dispositions.

**Educating for Democracy**

The literature on democratic education identifies three components of student learning necessary to democratic citizenship: democratic knowledge, democratic skills, and democratic dispositions (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). Mayne and Geissel (2018) examined the health and stability of modern democracy and how a quality democracy depends, in part, on attributes and attitudes of citizens. Assuming that course contents in the teacher education and American politics classes contribute interdependently to students’ knowledge of democratic processes and policy issues, the CRP narrows its focus to democratic dispositions and skills.

“Democratic dispositions” refers to the acceptance of certain values underpinning successful democratic decision making. These values include (a) openness to alternative viewpoints, (b) majority rule, (c) standing for principle, and (d) deliberative processes. “Democratic skills” refers to a set of activities that facilitate political engagement. Examples include tools of persuasion, such as public speaking, and tools of decision-making, such as running meetings.

To elaborate on the dimensions of democratic dispositions, openness to alternative viewpoints supports “quality democracy,” in which participants hear, process, and weigh alternative viewpoints (Kovac, 2018). Baron (2018) advocated “actively open-minded thinking,” which includes an element of inquiry. The values of inquiry and critical thinking recur in the literature on open-mindedness. Colby et al. (2007), Kovac (2018), Turabik and Gün (2016), and Huber-Warring and Warring (2006) all connected critical thinking to appreciating alternative viewpoints.

Regarding majority rule, numerous studies on democratic dispositions relate majority rule and legitimate authority to decision-making structures and processes. Baron (2018) identified majority rule and respect for democratic decision-making processes as important social norms. Huber-Warring and Warring (2006) depicted group decision-making through reflective inquiry as justifying majority rule. Chaltain (2010) and Darling-Hammond (1997) described “authoritative practice” as a decision-making framework that strikes a balance between individual freedom and group structure. Kovac’s discussion of “quality democracy” (2018) illustrated how sharing views and listening to others enables students to appreciate democratic structures and develop regard for decision-making processes in a democracy.

Commitment to one’s beliefs has been characterized as a civic virtue (Baron, 2018) critical to democratic decision-making. Hylton (2018) argued that civic engagement requires a willingness to fight and engage in conflict. Although some authors saw this inclination as an indicator of political efficacy (Colby et al., 2007, Kahne & Westheimer, 2003), numerous others saw confidence in asserting one’s views as a character strength. Ritchhart (2001) described standing for principle as truth-seeking and intellectually courageous. Loeb (1999) noted that humans face a
series of lifelong, imperfect moments in which they must decide to take a stand for something they deeply believe and support.

Regarding the value of deliberation, Dewey considered it central to democratic processes: “The method of democracy is to bring conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged” (1993, p. 148). While Dewey emphasized the conflict inherent to deliberation, myriad other studies identified willingness to listen as an essential democratic norm. According to Westheimer, “… any theory of teaching in a democratic society depends on encouraging a multiplicity of ideas, perspectives, and approaches to exploring solutions to issues of widespread concern” (2017, p. 17). The actions Westheimer described require thoughtful communication, especially active listening. Baron (2018) noted the value of listening when participating in problem-solving. His concept of actively-open-minded thinking considered listening as important to solving conflicts in a democratic manner. Listening helps individuals to “be open to counterarguments, to listen better to each other, and to engage in true argument rather than screaming past each other” (Baron, 2018, p. 239). Colby et al. (2007) also noted the importance of listening to democratic collaboration, communication, and leadership. Listening as an element of deliberation encourages tolerance and respect. Kovac (2018) argued that listening encourages democratic participants to understand one another’s arguments, with the aim of finding consensus or common ground. Moreover, Kovac linked listening to “processing and critically assessing information in a dynamic manner through a continuous evaluation of arguments” (2018, p. 11). Likewise, Turabik and Gün (2016) related listening to critical thinking, highlighting how effective listening presents opportunities to analyze and evaluate claims and evidence, independent from prior knowledge and prejudice.

In addition to the values and dispositions discussed, democracy requires participants to develop the skills of speaking and running meetings. The importance of public speaking ability in democratic deliberation appears frequently in the scholarship. Fisher (2010) emphasized the “public” in public speaking, calling it a vital part of educating for democratic citizenship. Similarly, McGee and McGee (2006) argued that public speaking activities often become seedbeds for other democratic processes. Parker (2006) advocated more structured speaking opportunities (as opposed to bull sessions), claiming they increase students’ skills and interests in democratic processes. Loeb, in his book *Soul of a Citizen* (1999), stressed how public speaking experiences promote political self-efficacy and confidence in expressing one’s core values. Colby et al. (2007) echoed this view, connecting students’ democratic participation in group settings to the power of using their voices for political purposes.

The literature on democratic education also identifies the ability to organize and run meetings as a skill necessary for democratic participation. Embedded in running meetings lie the skills of teamwork, collaboration, communication, and leadership. Colby et al. (2007) maintained that these skills transfer readily to authentic political situations in public life. They also noted that learning such practical political skills creates an appreciation for those skills among students, as well as instills confidence in their abilities to use these skills.

**Background: A Democracy-Oriented Teacher Education Curriculum**

The University of Nebraska at Kearney, founded in 1905 as the Nebraska State Normal School at Kearney, requires all students in the College of Education to begin
the teacher education sequence with an introductory course called Teaching in a Democratic Society. The sequence pairs this course with a required political science course, Introduction to American Politics. Students enroll in the two courses as a schedule block, delivered in back-to-back class periods. Both courses emphasize education governance and policy development.

A Collaborative Research Project (CRP) bridges the two courses and serves as a capstone experience. Working in teams of four or five, students spend the final month of the semester preparing 30-minute presentations on contemporary issues in education policy. Examples of the questions students study have included (a) Is universal preschool a worthwhile investment? (b) Should music, the arts, and physical education be part of the core curriculum in public schools? (c) Should public school teachers be equipped with firearms? (d) Has the emphasis on math and reading in standardized testing done more harm or good in public education? As all of the possible research topics represent live controversies, the assignment requires teams to take positions on an issue and to support a thesis with evidence drawn from scholarly, peer-reviewed research. The policy controversies students address are incidental to the purposes of the CRP. Although students doubtless develop some substantive policy knowledge, the goal of the project is not to develop policy expertise per se but to develop tools of inquiry and advocacy.

To encourage the open inquiry necessary to democratic reasoning, teams begin the project with a critical reflection exercise, talking through what they already know or believe about their research topics, what biases they may hold toward the issues, and what they do not yet know. In this initial discussion, team members also draft and sign a compact identifying agreed-upon work methods and a commitment to democratic collaboration. Specifically, the compact sets terms for the team members regarding participation, communication, meetings, conduct, conflict resolution, and work deadlines.

Teams report to a single faculty mentor, either their teacher education or political science professor. Mentors supervise work on teams’ projects, troubleshoot, answer questions, aid in conflict resolution, and grade the annotated bibliographies and final presentations. After the initial introduction of the project, mentors typically meet with each team two times. These conferences serve as “accountability moments,” ensuring that the team is functioning as a unit and making steady progress toward completion.

Faculty typically introduce the project to students about two-thirds of the way through the semester by holding two class days in the library. Directed by a librarian, these sessions extend over both halves of the course block. On the first day, the librarian introduces students to library databases and other resources, including an online resource guide that links to peer-reviewed databases, opinion databases, and citation style guides. In the first interactive library session, students learn to evaluate the reliability and credibility of resources using the “CRAAP test,” asking students to validate the Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose of an information
source (Blakeslee, 2004). Once a class works past the initial giggles, the acronym helps students remember the criteria they need to consider in appraising source materials. On the second day, students learn to prepare annotated bibliographies, a required component of the project. Each team member locates and identifies five different peer-reviewed articles related to the topic. These individually-created annotated bibliographies create a pool of resources from which the team draws its evidence for the presentation. The librarian and faculty from teacher education and political science remain in the library with students as they work on their annotated bibliographies, assisting with research and answering technical questions.

Over the ensuing weeks, teams examine the evidence, formulate their theses, and build their presentations. The 30-minute presentation serves as the final exam for both courses and is presented to an audience of faculty mentors and fellow students.

Is the CRP Working?

Teacher education, political science, and library faculty designed the CRP to satisfy specific goals related to democratic preparation for preservice teachers. After running and refining the project for several years, faculty had created a model stable enough to assess. A survey administered immediately before and immediately after the project measured students’ attitudes toward specific democratic dispositions and skills. All prompts presented statements with which the students agreed or disagreed. The survey arranged options for answers on a 6-point scale, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 6 meaning “strongly agree.” The prompt statements themselves are reproduced in Table 1.

After drafting prompts and building an online survey in Qualtrics, faculty validated those statements by piloting the survey with two sections of the block. Students completed the survey while faculty observed the classroom from a distance and measured their response times. When the 47 students in the pilot sections had completed the survey, faculty invited students to comment on the prompts, identify any statements that confused them, and discuss what attributes of democratic dispositions and skills the statements measured. Students reported no difficulty understanding the prompts, and most finished in 5-7 minutes.

Faculty launched the survey in the semester following the pilot, collecting responses for three consecutive semesters (Spring 2016–Spring 2017). During these terms, no changes were made to instruction on the project or the grading criteria. In all, 206 students out of 225 (91.5%) enrolled during the three test semesters completed the surveys.

Description and Analysis of Results: Dispositions

The survey used a total of eight statements by which students evaluated their own democratic dispositions. Table 1 summarizes the results, noting the mean response on the survey when administered before the project, the mean response for the survey
when administered after the project, the difference between those means, and a t score to validate the statistical significance of any differences between the pre- and postproject surveys.

Table 1

*Mean Responses and Difference of Means for Prompts on Democratic Dispositions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements on Democratic Dispositions</th>
<th>Preproject Survey Mean Response</th>
<th>Postproject Survey Mean Response</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>t score</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am open to listening to other people’s perspectives.</td>
<td>5.26 (.870)</td>
<td>5.54 (.756)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>3.526***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who disagree with me usually have good reasons for feeling the way they do.</td>
<td>4.27 (.903)</td>
<td>4.73 (.969)</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>4.973***</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member of a project group, I usually go along with what the majority of group members agree to.</td>
<td>4.31 (.941)</td>
<td>4.60 (.108)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>2.888***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if I disagree with the majority, they have the right to carry forward with their ideas.</td>
<td>4.63 (.923)</td>
<td>4.97 (.931)</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>3.676***</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member of a project group, I persist in pressing my point of view if I think the other group members are wrong.</td>
<td>3.86 (1.19)</td>
<td>4.33 (1.23)</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>3.950***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better about the decision made by authority figures if I’ve had a chance to share my views and listen to theirs.</td>
<td>4.74 (.881)</td>
<td>5.10 (.891)</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>4.160***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find that listening to other people’s points of view helps me understand my own views better.</td>
<td>4.86 (.905)</td>
<td>5.14 (.875)</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>3.163***</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups tend to make better decisions when they discuss their differences and try to compromise.</td>
<td>5.11 (.901)</td>
<td>5.23 (.893)</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.431</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes.* Responses arranged on a 1-6 scale; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree somewhat, 3 = disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = agree somewhat, 6 = strongly agree. Standard deviation in parentheses. ***p < 0.01

On every prompt save one (where results were inconclusive), the data showed a statistically-significant change in mean student response between the survey administered before the project and the survey administered afterward. The observed change always lay in the direction of increasing support for democratic norms.

To focus on some specific results, the two prompts measuring openness to alternative viewpoints both showed an increase in the number of respondents who agreed with each respective statement. For the statement “I am open to listening to other people’s perspectives,” the mean response in the pre-CRP survey was an already-high 5.26 on the 6-point scale. That it increased to 5.54 suggests some small number of students deepened their appreciation for alternative viewpoints as a result of the project. The other prompt measuring openness to alternative viewpoints revealed a notably larger change in attitude. When asked the extent to which they
agreed with the statement “People who disagree with me usually have good reasons for feeling the way they do,” respondents’ mean scores increased from 4.27 on the 6-point scale to 4.73, a difference of .46. The student responses to this statement indicated an increased willingness to listen to and legitimize the views of those with whom they disagreed. These results confirmed that participating in the CRP served its purpose in encouraging students to think critically and to keep open minds, consistent with prior work by Huber-Warring and Warring (2006), Colby et al. (2007), Turabik and Gün (2016), Baron (2018), and Kovac (2018).

Although support for majority rule was fairly strong among CRP participants before the project, the survey showed increased willingness to accept majority decisions after the project ended. For the statement “As a member of a project group, I usually go along with what the majority of group members agree to,” the mean response on the 6-point scale before the project was 4.31. Afterward, the mean increased to 4.60, a shift of .29 places on the scale. The survey revealed an even larger shift in attitude in response to the statement “Even if I disagree with the majority, they have the right to carry forward with their ideas,” from 4.63 to 4.97 on the 6-point scale, a difference of .34. Both these results indicated a willingness to accept outcomes respondents may not be able to control or with which they might not agree. The processes and structures of democratic decision-making—including discussion and critical inquiry (Huber-Warring & Warring, 2006; Kovac, 2018)—served to strengthen participants’ acceptance of majority rule.

Among the democratic dispositions measured by the survey, participation in the CRP exerted the greatest impact on the willingness to stand up for one’s beliefs. In response to the statement “As a member of a project group, I persist in pressing my point of view if I think the other group members are wrong,” the mean response was 3.86 in the preproject survey. Note that this was the lowest initial mean response to any prompt in the series. In the postproject survey, the mean response rose to 4.33, a change of .47 on the 6-point scale. The literature on democratic education suggests that standing one’s ground is a mark of political efficacy (Colby et al., 2007; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003) and strength of character (Loeb, 1999; Ritchhart, 2001). It is clear that students became more confident in asserting their views after completing the CRP, boding well for their future effectiveness in democratic decision-making.

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The last series of democratic disposition prompts assessed students’ appreciation for deliberative processes. As reported in Table 1, when asked to rate their agreement with the expression “I feel better about the decisions made by authority figures if I’ve had a chance to share my views and listen to theirs,” the mean response was 4.74 on the 6-point scale. After the project, the mean of responses increased to 5.10, an increase of .36 on the scale. A similar shift occurred in attitude regarding respondents’ appreciation for deliberative discussion. In the preproject survey, the mean response to the statement “I find that listening to other people’s points of view helps me understand my own views better” was 4.86. After the project, the mean score rose to 5.14, an increase of .28 on the 6-point scale. These results indicated some degree to which students appreciated listening as important to deliberation. As an element of actively-open-minded thinking, listening facilitates problem-solving and conflict resolution in groups (Baron, 2018). Prior research has also linked deliberative listening to the need for building consensus (Kovac, 2018) and critical thinking (Turabik & Gün, 2016) in democratic decision-making. On this measure, the CRP met its objective.

“\textit{We observed a stronger effect of the CRP on students’ democratic skills than on their attitudes toward democratic norms.}”

Description and Analysis of Results: Skills

Table 2 presents the summary scores and difference of means for survey prompts regarding the skills necessary for democratic participation. Here, consistently larger shifts in the mean responses between the pre-CRP and post-CRP survey are evident. Concerning the democratic skill of public speaking, students reported increased confidence after completing the CRP. The difference in the pre- and postproject survey means on the statement “I have confidence in my abilities as a public speaker” was .64. Before completing the project and presenting its results, the mean response was 4.25. After students gave the presentation, the mean response increased to 4.89. Similarly, the mean response to the statement “I would feel comfortable making a presentation to school administrators or a board of education on a topic I understand well” increased by .57, from 4.29 before the project to 4.86 afterward. These recorded increases in students’ confidence in and comfort with public speaking validated the presentation component of the CRP. Prior work has established the value of structured public speaking for developing interest in other democratic processes (McGee & McGee, 2006), building students’ sense of self-efficacy (Loeb, 1999), and learning to use their voices for political ends (Colby et al., 2007). As persuasion is a fundamental tool of democratic decision-making, building students’ confidence as speakers is of unparalleled necessity.
The other skill emphasized in the democratic education literature concerned running meetings. The results from the pre- and postproject surveys indicated growth in students’ attitudes about their own abilities in this regard. The statement “I have experience at running meetings: scheduling, planning agendas and leading the discussion toward decisions” showed one of the lowest mean response scores before the CRP at 3.91. Eighty-one of the 206 respondents disagreed with the statement. After completing the CRP, the mean response score increased by .67 to 4.58. Of all the prompts in the survey’s democracy series, experience at running meetings showed the largest increase in mean score between the pre- and postproject surveys. Not only did students believe the CRP gave them experience in running meetings but the experience improved their confidence in those abilities. Before the CRP, the mean response to the statement “I am confident in my ability to run a meeting” was 4.02. Afterward, it rose to 4.67, an increase of .64 points on the 6-point scale. Running meetings, mundane though it may seem, lies at the heart of leadership for democratic decision-making. As Colby and her colleagues argued, practice at running meetings builds students’ confidence in their abilities to do so and transfers readily to other forms of community life (Colby, et al., 2007).

Table 2

Mean Responses and Differences of Means for Prompts on Democratic Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements on Democratic Skills</th>
<th>Preproject Survey Mean Response</th>
<th>Postproject Survey Mean Response</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>t score</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have confidence in my abilities as a public speaker</td>
<td>4.25 (1.271)</td>
<td>4.89 (1.051)</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>5.549***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would feel comfortable making a presentation to school administrators or a board of education on a topic I understand well</td>
<td>4.29 (1.241)</td>
<td>4.86 (1.140)</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>4.857***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have experience at running meetings: scheduling, planning agendas and leading the discussion toward decisions</td>
<td>3.91 (1.363)</td>
<td>4.58 (1.257)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>5.188***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am confident in my ability to run a meeting</td>
<td>4.02 (1.196)</td>
<td>4.67 (1.197)</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>5.441***</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Responses arranged on a 1-6 scale; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree somewhat, 3 = disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = agree somewhat, 6 = strongly agree. Standard deviation in parentheses. ***p < 0.01

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By way of summary, we observed a stronger effect of the CRP on students’ democratic skills than on their attitudes toward democratic norms. We attributed this to students exhibiting a higher level of support for democratic norms than they did for their own abilities when the CRP began. Preproject survey results showed more room for growth when it came to public speaking and running meetings than for acceptance of democratic values. Two possible explanations for this difference suggest themselves. First, the placement of the CRP in the context of the Teaching in a Democratic Society and American Politics courses likely contributed to the observed difference in growth between dispositions and skills. Because the CRP starts at Week 11 or 12 of the semester, students begin it well-steeped in the values and processes associated with American democracy, having read, discussed, and written about them in class for the previous 2–3 months. Beginning the CRP presents little, if any, change in learning about democratic dispositions. By contrast, the structure of the courses affords students fewer opportunities to speak in public and run meetings. Beginning the CRP produces a more pronounced change when it comes to practicing democratic skills, resulting in the CRP’s more significant impact in those areas.

A second possible explanation recognizes that students’ prior experiences in collegiate or high school activities—in areas ranging from debate and student government to music and athletics—likely contributed to their embrace of democratic norms (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Kahne & Wesheimer, 2006; Nishishiba, Nelson, & Shinn, 2005) before they enrolled in the teacher education sequence. Failure to capture the influence of these prior experiences on students’ attitudes limits—but does not eliminate—our ability to isolate the CRP as a source of value formation. Future work should query on these experiences, incorporating them into a better-specified explanatory model of change in students’ democratic dispositions.

Conclusions

A rich literature on educational renewal argues for teachers to be leaders in promoting positive change and defending the “public” in public schooling. Democratic schools value teachers’ voices and expertise. Unfortunately, democratic schools do not just happen, nor do teachers who see schools as democratic spaces where they exercise agency. Instead, the tools of democratic participation and leadership—knowledge, skills, and dispositions—must be taught.

The Collaborative Research Project represents an effort to bring needed intentionality to teacher preparation for democratic practice. Students in the College of Education take a required, two-course block linking an introductory teacher education course with an introductory course in American politics. Teacher education, political science, and library faculty designed the CRP—a capstone project for Teaching in a Democratic Society and Introduction to American Politics—for the explicit purpose of focusing student learning on the dispositions and skills necessary for effective democratic participation. This study demonstrates that the CRP is meeting these intended purposes. Students who completed the CRP showed a modest but statistically significant improvement in their support for expressions of democratic norms, such as open-mindedness, support for majority rule, self-efficacy, and deliberation. On measures of democratic skills, project completers showed pronounced improvement in their self-assessed abilities and confidence regarding public speaking and running meetings.
These results affirm two key ideas when it comes to preparing preservice teachers for democratic leadership in education. First, such preparation is necessary: Undergraduates do not always come into teacher-preparation programs in possession of the dispositions and skills they will need. Second, such preparation works: Democratic instructional strategies result in strengthened democratic skills and more deeply internalized democratic norms.

References


Introduction
Numerous researchers have studied and analyzed various dimensions of teacher leadership and teacher-leader characteristics (Parris & Peachey, 2013; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In schools, the term “teacher leader” is often applied to teachers who have taken on leadership roles and additional professional responsibilities. Teacher leadership in schools across the nation is practiced inside and outside of the classroom, through informal and formal positions and various roles and responsibilities. Teachers may serve in formal leadership roles such as mentors, administrative assistants, department chairs, school improvement team leaders, or curriculum specialists. Leadership roles may be demonstrated in informal ways through coaching peers, participating in small groups and teams, or modeling best practice.

Background of the CADRE Project
Career Advancement and Development of Recruits and Experienced Teachers (CADRE) is a collaborative project between the College of Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC). The consortium began in 1994 and is comprised of 12 local school districts in Nebraska and Iowa and the UNO. To gain insight into the CADRE Project, the researchers conducted a review of current and archived documents and research related to the initiative. Archival material was obtained from the CADRE Project coordinator and included reports and scholarly papers written by the coordinator and numerous CADRE Project colleagues.

The CADRE Project is a nationally recognized induction program designed to assist newly certified teachers with the unique challenges of entry into the profession of education. The goals of the CADRE Project are to

• provide entry-year assistance to beginning teachers utilizing veteran teachers

Individualized support, modeling of best practice, and engagement in continuous professional development with first-year teachers are just a few of the leadership activities of teachers serving as mentors in the Career Advancement and Development of Recruits and Experienced Teachers project (CADRE). The focus of this research study was on teachers who served in the leadership role of CADRE Associate (CA) and mentored beginning teachers. The purpose of the study was to identify, using a case study approach, how teachers serving in the role of CA defined “leaders,” defined “teacher leaders,” and described the personal and professional characteristics needed to serve in the CA role.
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• attain greater linkage between existing teacher-preparation programs and participating school districts;
• provide incentives for professional growth and career options to veteran teachers;
• provide networking opportunities for teachers, districts, and the university.
(www.unomaha.edu/college-of-education/moec/projects/cadre/index.php)

CADRE teachers have an opportunity to complete a master’s degree through a sequence of academic course work, field components, and a project-based research capstone. The entry-level teachers are provided the opportunity to complete an accelerated 15-month master’s program while receiving support from university faculty, veteran teachers, and their cohort peers.

Central to the project’s goal is the exchange of services made possible by placing veteran teachers in classrooms throughout the participating MOEC districts. Veteran teachers work as CAs and are involved in classroom-support roles, district-designated roles, and university-related work. Throughout the 25 years of the CADRE Project, most program review has centered on the CADRE teachers’ experiences as they navigated their first classroom and master’s level coursework. This study, however, focused on the veteran teachers who served as CAs and the multiple roles (supporting and mentoring new teachers, serving their local school district and university) in which they were engaged.

This research was a case study of 12 teachers who served in a leadership role in the CADRE Project, a comprehensive teacher-induction program. The study centered on teachers who worked as CAs; 50% of a CA’s time is in a leadership role. The research questions addressed in the study were designed to identify how teachers serving in the role of CA (a) defined “leaders,” (b) defined “teacher leaders,” (c) described the personal and professional characteristics needed to serve in the CA role, and (d) identified the organizational supports they were provided by the CADRE Project to support their transition from classroom teacher to teacher leader.

The researchers not only sought to answer the above questions but also to compare current findings with those of previous studies found in the literature. In doing so, we hoped to further confirm the findings of the past decade or suggest new areas of teacher leadership that need additional study.

Review of the Literature

Research efforts have sought to define the attributes one needs to be a leader. As we reviewed the definitions of “leader” and “teacher leader,” most sources described the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be a leader. A leader in the school setting is often responsible for supervising, directing, influencing, changing, motivating, and transforming others to achieve a goal. Several levels of leaders exist in school organizations, which are hierarchical in nature (i.e., superintendent, central office personnel, principals, teacher leaders). The research has generally focused on the roles
of building administrators. Therefore, it is not surprising that administrators are identified as leaders.

Many educators may not regard teaching and leading as synonymous. Teachers set goals, write objectives, select and implement strategies for meeting the objectives, plan, teach, and assess learning, the students, and the learning environment. CAs engage in these same roles but also serve as mentors and role models and provide leadership in content and pedagogy.

The seminal definition of leadership by Tannebaum, Weschler, and Massarik (1961) described the critical dimensions of leadership, defined as the “interpersonal influence directed through the communication process toward the attainment of some goal or goals” (p. 24). This definition focuses on a leader’s ability to communicate and draw upon his or her followers to assist in achieving the goal. Bass and Stoghill (1990) listed the attributes of a leader as someone who has

…strong drive for responsibility and task completion, vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals, venturesomeness and originality in problem solving, the drive to exercise initiative in social situations, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, willingness to accept consequences of decisions and action, readiness to absorb interpersonal stress, willingness to tolerate frustration and delay, the ability to influence other persons’ behavior, and the capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand. (p. 81)

As Bass and Stoghill’s (1990) comments suggest, leaders have specific attributes that define their behavior and allow them to reach their goals. But how does this seminal definition of leader apply to teacher leaders? A large pool of school leaders already exists whose work is not linked to traditional leadership roles in school administration. These are the teachers who serve as leaders in their buildings, districts, and community. Cosenza (2015) noted that, over the past four decades, numerous definitions and descriptions of “teacher leadership” have been asserted, but no single definition has been commonly accepted.

Research efforts have now begun to focus on those classified as “teacher leaders” (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2008; Gabriel, 2005; Wink, 2016). For example, Sherrill (1999) posited that teacher leaders are “clinical faculty, clinical educators, teachers in-residence, master teachers, lead teachers, and clinical supervisors” (p. 57), while Crowther et al. (2008) and Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hann (2008) saw teacher leaders as those “aspiring to lead school reform” (p. 5). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) defined teacher leaders as those who “lead with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders…and influence others towards improved educational practice” (pp. 6).

The definitions of teacher leader remain varied because teachers engage in a wide range of activities and roles that involve leadership. Put even more simply, the leader is the inspiration and director of the action. He or she is the person in the group who possesses the combination of personality and leadership skills that makes others want
to follow his or her direction. Teacher leaders in this study—i.e., those who served as CAs—had strong pedagogical expertise, mentoring skills, and problem-solving skills, as well as a desire to serve others.

The review of the literature on teacher leadership provided direction for the methodology used in this study. A variety of philosophies and theories surrounding leadership styles in education (e.g. transformational, transactional, servant, instructional, emotional) are evident. Each leadership style has a defined set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Each style has a wide berth of variation. A description of two most pertinent styles follows.

**Servant leader.** The root of servant leadership is grounded in the work of Greenleaf (1977). According to Greenleaf (1998),

> The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choices bring one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power or to acquire material possessions. (p. 19)

Spears (1998) identified ten characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building. Russell and Stone (2002, p. 147) went further and identified 20 attributes important in servant leadership. These were categorized into functional attributes (identifiable characteristics to enact leadership responsibilities, e.g. vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment) and accompanying attributes that supplement the functional attributes, e.g. communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation.

**Transformational leader.** A key attribute of the transformational leader is the desire to promote change within the workplace and among those he or she leads. Northouse (2001) defined transformational leadership as the ability to get people to want to change, improve, and be led. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as a way to satisfy followers’ needs and to support followers in moving toward a higher level of work performance.

Teachers set goals, write objectives, select and implement strategies for meeting the objectives, plan, teach, and assess learning, the students, and the learning environment. CAs engage in these same roles but also serve as mentors and role models and provide leadership in content and pedagogy.

A transformational leader exhibits several key characteristics: (a) a desire to promote change (Northouse, 2001); (b) engagement in risk-taking to promote change (Bass & Avolio, 1994); and (c) motivation and commitment to the organization’s mission and values (Menon, 2014). The transformational leader is often characterized
as supportive, positive, and motivated. Transformational leaders focus on the common good and commit to the organization’s mission and values (Menon, 2014) in an effort to bypass self-interest. Transformational leaders pursue new ways of doing things and are less likely to support the status quo (Bass, 1990). These leaders desire their colleagues to be a part of and to celebrate the success of meeting goals.

According to Balyer (2012), transformational leadership includes three basic functions. First, these leaders sincerely serve the needs of others and inspire and empower followers to achieve great success. Second, they lead charismatically, set a vision, and instill trust, confidence, and pride in those working with them. Third, they offer intellectual stimulation to their followers. This stimulation in turn causes the school members to become collectively empowered.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used to design this study and to analyze the data collected was a constructivist perspective. Constructivism is an epistemology that puts forward the idea that knowledge is constructed by the learner from experiences, social interactions, and interactions with his or her environment (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Von Glasersfeld, 1989). Thus, a researcher strives to understand the perspectives of participants as they learn and change with new experiences. Further, the researcher wants to understand participants’ opportunities to grow as teacher leaders and professionals from the perspective of the teacher leader.

**Research Methodology**

This study focused on veteran teachers serving in the role of CA within the context of the CADRE Project. Associates are arguably a vital aspect contributing to the preparation of teachers. The study started with the assumption that a CA is a leader.

For the purposes of this research, the strategies utilized are best described as focused, semi-structured, and open-ended (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000.) Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggested that, in a qualitative study, one may use a less structured format—the semi-structured questionnaire format.

To collect data, the researchers created an open-ended questionnaire. The design of the questionnaire for this study was twofold: the instrument allowed the respondents to (a) share their perceptions of leadership and (b) elaborate on the characteristics of leaders and the organizational support provided by the CADRE Project to assist in their transition from classroom teacher to a leader.

The questionnaire sought participants’ answers to five open-ended questions:

(a) How would you define a “leader”?

(b) How would you define a “teacher leader” as viewed from the perspective of
…a teacher leader recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of a mentee. Working collaboratively to build capacity, both parties experience professional and personal growth.

The CADRE Project Program Questionnaire was distributed to 17 teachers who served in the CA role during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Participants received the questionnaire via the College of Education’s assessment management system, LiveText. Confidentiality was considered a top priority. Neither the participants nor sites at which they held CA appointments were identified. Pseudonyms were used.

Each set of responses to a question was classified as a single data set. Each data set was analyzed independently of the other sets during analysis. Responses to each question were coded individually. All data collected were coded for trends and patterns in responses using the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). We first identified tentative categories for each question until themes emerged. We started with open coding, which led to ongoing analysis and identification of common themes. Questions were also analyzed using deductive coding to establish confirmation of theories in the responses related to the literature review. The study was designed to collect and analyze data, as well as disseminate findings on participants’ perspectives regarding their leadership roles as CAs.

Participants
Seventeen teachers serving in the CA role were invited to complete a 13-item questionnaire. Due to time and personal constraints, five CAs chose not to participate. Thus, 12 of the 17 targeted CAs ultimately participated in the survey that discussed their perspectives on leadership and their roles as teacher leaders. The 12 participants represented a considerable range of teaching and leadership experience. The associates were asked to provide the leadership roles or positions they had held and the number of years they had taught in K-12 classrooms. The leadership roles or positions held included principal/assistant principal (5 years), curriculum specialist (4 years), teacher leader (6 years), department head/grade level team leader (5 years), and teacher mentor (12 years).

Individualized support, modeling of best practice, and engagement in continuous professional development were just a few of the leadership activities of teachers serving as CAs in the CADRE Project. Each associate mentored two CADRE teachers. In the mentorship role, the associates provided their teachers with instructional resources and served as instructional specialists. The associates provided the teachers
with effective teaching and assessment strategies. Throughout the school year, each associate served as a classroom supporter working inside the teacher’s classroom to help implement new ideas, demonstrate differentiated instruction, observe the teacher’s lessons, and provide feedback.

In addition to mentoring teachers, the associates also served in their local buildings or districts, as well as completed duties at the university. They served as school leaders (i.e., coaches, assistant principals, special appointments, catalysts for change) and engaged in professional development activities. All aforementioned activities promoted continuous inquiry to improve personal and professional practice.

Limitations
All data collected were self-reported by the CAs. The data were a representation of their perceived understanding of leadership at a point in time. The sample size was less than 30; therefore, responses cannot be generalized to the broader population without further study and replication (Mertler, 2016).

Analysis and Results of the Study
The overarching theme of Teachers in Leadership Roles: Navigating Multiple Roles captured the CAs’ (a) definitions of leaders and teacher leaders, (b) personal and professional characteristics that assisted them in their leadership role of CA, and (c) organizational supports they received by the CADRE Project to assist them in their leadership roles. The overarching theme represented the totality of the three subthemes:

Sub-theme I: Defining Leadership: Knowledge, Skills, & Dispositions.
Sub-theme II: Personal/Professional Characteristics: Knowledge, Skills, & Dispositions.
Sub-theme III: Leadership Supports.

Table 1 shows how the overarching theme, subthemes, and assertions emerged from answering the five questions.

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Table 1

Assertions, Data Sources, and Overarching Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assertion #</th>
<th>Data Source/Questionnaire #</th>
<th>Overarching Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A. The CAs described the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a “leader” and “teacher leader” in common terms.</td>
<td>Addressed in questions 1, 2, and 5</td>
<td>Sub-theme I: Defining Leadership: Knowledge, Skills &amp; Dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B. The CAs defined the term “teacher leader” in greater depth than the term “leader.”</td>
<td>Addressed in question 1, 2, and 5</td>
<td>Sub-theme I: Defining Leadership: Knowledge, Skills &amp; Dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C. The CAs’ perspectives of leadership have deepened and evolved into new understandings of leaders and leadership.</td>
<td>Addressed in question 1, 2, and 5</td>
<td>Sub-theme I: Defining Leadership: Knowledge, Skills &amp; Dispositions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2A. The researchers noted that the CAs’ definitions and characteristics were reflective of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building.</td>
<td>Addressed in question 3</td>
<td>Sub-theme II: Personal/Professional Characteristics: Knowledge, Skills &amp; Dispositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A. The CAs were provided with organizational supports that have assisted them in carrying out their leadership roles in the CADRE Project.</td>
<td>Addressed in question 4</td>
<td>Sub-theme III: Leadership Supports</td>
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</table>

Discussion of Assertions

Assertion 1A. Essential to understanding CAs’ perspectives on leadership was the examination of the terms they used to define a “leader” and “teacher leader.” The responses were first coded and categorized by knowledge, skills, or dispositional attributes. Following a review of leadership literature, we noted that the terms described by the CAs had also been used by many researchers (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Gabriel, 2005; McGee-Cooper & Looper, 2001; Northouse, 2001) to define the roles, responsibilities, and characteristics of effective leaders (see Table 2).
Assertion 1B. The CAs defined the term “teacher leader” in greater depth than the term “leader.”

- Participant Anne defined a teacher leader as “someone who recognizes, reinforces, and builds on the skills and talents of those around them. They collaborate on a vision and facilitate the action steps needed to reach that collective goal… But unlike a ‘leader,’ a teacher leader recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of a mentee. Working collaboratively to build capacity, both parties experience professional and personal growth. Teacher leaders share their knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment through conversation, co-planning, and data analysis. Teacher leaders take the time to build trusting relationships and encourage reflection through cognitive coaching. Generally, teacher leaders have several years of teaching experience, participate in building or district leadership roles, and demonstrate a commitment to building the profession.”

- Participant Beth noted that a “leader is defined by his or her services. Being a leader means engaging with others and maintaining attentiveness to serve and shape culture and community through services.” She defined teacher leader as one who is “fully engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding and seeks opportunities to model for and share learning with others. Openness, reflection, reciprocity, embracing ambiguity, maintaining a willingness to change, and trust are crucial attributes of a teacher leader.”

- Participant Deb defined a leader as “anyone who has an impact on others.
Leaders use their ideas, relationships, and position to influence those around them. ‘Leader’ isn’t solely reserved for those who positively influence others; instead leaders are required to be deliberate in their effect on others.” She defined a teacher leader as “someone other teachers view as professional. Teacher leaders share ideas, engage students, collaborate, and are always looking for ways to improve their instruction and the education of their students. Teacher leaders may or may not have formal leadership positions but are more viewed as someone dependable, professional, talented, and trustworthy by building peers.”

Participant Faye stated, “A leader is a role model who empowers others to lead themselves. A leader communicates often and clearly. A leader seeks input from his team to create ownership of vision and goals. A leader motivates others to follow by letting his team know that they are valued and appreciated. A leader listens, asks questions, and seeks to understand. A leader works alongside his team with a collaborative/cooperative spirit. A leader is reliable and follows through. A leader is honest and transparent.” She further stated that “a teacher leader models, listens, works alongside teachers, engages in reflective conversations, takes risks, demonstrates a willingness to try new things, seeks to be a lifelong learner, shares ideas, accepts feedback, and strives to continuously improve.”

Following analysis of the CAs’ definitions of “leader” and “teacher leaders,” we noted that the characteristics and skills were reflective of “servant” and “transformational leadership.” The findings revealed that 9 of the 12 CAs defined and described skills and characteristics related to the theory of “servant leadership,” and 3 of the 12 aligned with “transformational leadership.”

**Assertion 1C.** The CAs’ perspectives had grown and evolved into new understandings of leaders and leadership. The CAs were asked if their definition of a leader had changed as a result of their becoming more active in leadership roles in the CADRE Project. Nine of the 12 CAs stated their definition of leadership had changed through their involvement as teacher leaders in the CADRE Project, and 3 stated their definitions had not changed.

- Participant Naomi shared, “My understanding of leadership has changed. I believe I can serve best as a servant leader in partnership with others.”
- Participant Anne shared, “My definition of a leader has changed in the sense that leaders don’t have to have all of the answers. The best leaders, I have learned, ask the right questions. They don’t set out to be a leader; instead, they seek to make a difference.”
- Participant Paul noted, “I don’t believe my definition of a leader has changed, but certainly I am more aware and comfortable with the tools I can use as a leader. Specifically, I have expanded my knowledge of instructional and cognitive coaching so that I can more effectively support teachers.”
- Participant Trina’s definition did not change either. She noted, “My understanding of who and what a leader is has always been centered around the idea that a leader’s role is to empower others to be their best selves and to positively

"Teacher leaders take the time to build trusting relationships and encourage reflection through cognitive coaching."
impact the greater cause. In this role, though, I have had the opportunity to see many different perspectives on leadership, learn more about effective research, strategies, and implementation, and to gain many leadership experiences to help me grow in this area.”

Assertion 2A. Questions 1 and 2 sought to identify how CAs defined leaders and teacher leaders and the personal/professional characteristics that assisted them in carrying out their leadership roles. After analyzing responses, we noted that the CAs’ definitions and characteristics were reflective of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building (Spears, 1998). At the same time, other CAs described transformational leader characteristics as the primary types of traits they used in their leadership positions. As noted, the CAs serve 50% of their time mentoring first-year teachers. This role requires the CAs to listen to their mentees and offer advice and suggestions, be empathetic to their needs, provide support (healing), have the capacity to persuade and encourage, build community, and be committed to the growth of their mentees. Accordingly, we wondered whether the role of servant leader appealed to the CAs because they possessed the traits necessary to fulfill the role. The data suggest that teacher leaders are developed or grown based on the leadership roles they assume. In this particular study, teacher leaders were developed by experience and the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions they needed to carry out their roles as CAs.

• Participant Beth noted, “Organization, communication, connectedness, and relationships are the key characteristics I leverage to support my ongoing growth and leadership as a CADRE Associate.”
• Participant Mary shared, “I am well grounded in sound instructional practices and have a strong knowledge of what new teachers need…I have skills unique to aid our CADRE teachers.”
• Participant Nancy referenced the results of her Gallup Strength Finder (Liesveld, Miller, & Robinson, 2005), noting “my Gallup strengths definitely help me in my roles. My strengths are Positivity, Woo, Achiever, Communicator, and Developer.”
• Participant Paul noted, “I rely on my positivity to build and strengthen relationships with both my teachers and other teacher leaders I collaborate with. I use my communication strength to clearly communicate my vision in this role and to support teachers as they grow as educators. I rely on being responsible to ensure that, despite the many demands on my time, I am able to ensure I meet deadlines and fulfill my responsibilities.”

Assertion 3A. The CADRE Project has provided the CAs with organizational supports that assisted in their role of a teacher leader. CAs identified leaders in the CADRE Project across both settings in the partnership: the university and their individual buildings. The CADRE coordinator, fellow CAs, building principals, and university faculty/staff were cited as human resources support. The CADRE coordinator was cited by 9 of the 12 CAs as being integral in providing support in their transition to CA.

The CAs reported that their knowledge and skills increased as a result of their involvement in professional development activities.
• Participant Beth noted, “I could not do this without support. [The] professional development through cognitive coaching, book studies, video analysis, coaching
analysis, mentor training, university-endorsed learning opportunities, and routine reflective conversations with other CADRE Associates...have been invaluable.”

• Participant Fay posited, “The professional development offered through the CADRE Project is outstanding. The support from fellow associates through shared ideas and suggestions on best practice is very helpful.” She continued, “The CADRE Associate meetings provide an open and reflective forum for listening and collaboration.”

“

This role requires the CAs to listen to their mentees and offer advice and suggestions, be empathetic to their needs, provide support (healing), have the capacity to persuade and encourage, build community, and be committed to the growth of their mentees.

”

Conclusion

Teacher leadership is a multi-faceted concept. This study sought to investigate CAs’ perceptions on defining leaders and teacher leaders and on the characteristics and organizational supports that assisted them in carrying out their roles as leaders and mentors. More than two decades of findings (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Menon, 2014; Northhouse, 2001; Parris & Welty-Peachey, 2013) on the roles of teacher leadership have indicated that teachers serving in such roles have the ability to navigate leadership at multiple levels. By virtue of the functions the CAs in the CADRE Project perform, the teachers in this study are indeed leaders. Each CA demonstrated leadership in his or her district as well as at the university.

Involvement in the CADRE Project broadened the CAs’ perspectives of leadership beyond the classroom and exposed them to many roles in which those in leadership positions engage. Assuming leadership roles in the areas of mentoring, collaboration, modeling of best practice, coaching, and problem-solving deepened their understanding of their role as leaders.

The 12 participants agreed that their role as CA was a valuable form of job-embedded personal and professional development that allowed them to expand their knowledge base regarding leadership. Involvement in the CADRE Project for many of the CAs provided a sense of purpose and caused them to engage in continuous inquiry into practice through engagement in professional development offered by their districts and the university.

CAs in this study defined “leaders” and “teacher leaders” in terms similar to those described in the literature. Much like Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), they defined teacher leaders as “those who lead with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders...and influence others towards improved educational practice” (pp. 6).

The findings in this study also support the personal or professional characteristics cited by Spears (1998) that characterize a servant leader (listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building). Nine of the 12 participants utilized the terms associated with servant leadership to define a leader and teacher leader.
In this study teachers were given the opportunity to voice their perspectives as they engaged in the roles of teacher leader, leader, mentor, supervisor, and role model. These perspectives add yet another layer to the existing body of research regarding teacher leadership. Although the findings of this study confirmed findings from the literature review on characteristics of leaders and teacher leaders, a need exists to explore responses gathered from the questionnaire and other sources to further triangulate the data. The next step in this study would be to engage the CAs in a focus group interview to provide researchers with additional understanding of their responses.

References


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- Double space the entire manuscript, including quotations, references, and tables. Print should be clear, dark, and legible. Pages must be numbered.
- Abbreviations should be explained at their first appearance in the text. Educational jargon (e.g., preservice, K–10, etc.) should be defined as it occurs in the text.
- Place tables and figures on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Use Arabic numerals and indicate approximate placement in the text.
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Submission

- One submission per author per issue.
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- Electronic/digital photo files must be saved in JPG or TIFF format and must be a minimum of 1.5” x 1.5” with a 300 dpi resolution. For photos submitted to enhance text, include caption/identification information.
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# Bulletin Submission Grid

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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Action/Classroom Research: Organized, systematic, and reflective analysis of classroom practice with implications for future practice in teaching and learning.</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
<td>Abstract; documentation; bio; photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed Methods Research: Essentially narrative with nonstatistical approaches and a focus on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meanings from their experiences (Qual)/Gathers and analyzes measurable data to support or refute a hypothesis or theory through numbers and statistics (Quan)/Utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to explore a research question (Mixed).</td>
<td>1,500-4,000</td>
<td>Abstract; documentation; bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Position Paper/Viewpoint: Defines an issue; asserts clear and unequivocal position on that issue, provides data and references that inform that position, and argues directly in its favor.</td>
<td>1,000-1,500</td>
<td>Abstract; documentation; bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Review of Literature: Presents supporting and nonsupporting evidence to clarify a topic and/or problem of interest and value to educators; synthesizes and critiques the literature; draws conclusions; mentions procedures for selecting and reviewing literature; may include narrative review, best evidence synthesis, or meta-analysis.</td>
<td>1,500-3,000</td>
<td>Abstract; documentation; bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Program Description: Provides an overview and details of a single program in an educational setting. Goals, resources, and outcomes are included. No marketing or promotion of a program is allowed.</td>
<td>1,500-2,000</td>
<td>Abstract; documentation; bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Book/Technology Review: Combines summary and personal critique of a book, Web site, or app on an educational topic or with educational relevance.</td>
<td>400-700</td>
<td>Introduction; documentation; bio; photo</td>
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<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Classroom Practice/Program: Describes practice or initiative used in a classroom to advance educational excellence</td>
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<td>Bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DKG Chapter/State Organization Practice/Program: Describes a practice or initiative used by a chapter or state organization to advance the purposes of DKG</td>
<td>700-1,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Viewpoint on Current Issue: Defines and addresses an issue related to education, women, children, or DKG</td>
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<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Personal Reflection or Anecdote: Shares a personal experience that provides insight to the human condition, particularly related to educators and women</td>
<td>500-700</td>
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<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Inspirational Piece: Provides transcript of speech delivered at chapter, state, regional, or international events</td>
<td>700-1,200</td>
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<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Bio and/or Interview: Shares the story or thoughts of a key woman educator or leader in education, women’s issues, or children’s issues</td>
<td>700-1,200</td>
<td>Bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Book Review: Combines a summary and personal critique of a textbook, resource, or book (fiction or nonfiction) related to education or to women and children</td>
<td>400-700</td>
<td>Bio; photo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Technology Review: Combines a summary and personal critique of an educational application, program, or piece of hardware that is useful in the classroom or that is useful in the life of an educator</td>
<td>400-700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal or Collegial Exchange</td>
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<td>200-300</td>
<td>Author’s name; chapter/state</td>
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<td>Journal or Collegial Exchange</td>
<td>Poetry/Creative Work: Original expressions in any creative format</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Bio; photo</td>
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