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Abstract

Teacher education is under assault from the corporatization of public education. Reductive, essentialized/ing discourses of standardization and compliance exert intense pressures on teacher education (Kumashiro, 2015), and a market-based, audit culture (Apple, 2005) constricts conceptions of the "good teacher" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006). Despite the pervasiveness of neoliberal discourses, little is known about how student teachers experience increased corporatization in education, or about how they act rather than are acted upon in this context. In examining these dynamics, we explore the following research questions: (1) How do student teachers make sense of neoliberal discourses in teaching? (2) How do student teachers experience the process of "teacher visioning" (Hammerness, 2003) in the context of neoliberal discourses? (3) What, if any, effect does visioning have on their responses to these discourses? We draw on qualitative data including focus groups, interviews, and document analysis from a group of early childhood student teachers enrolled in a public teacher education program and placed in field sites around eastern Massachusetts. Based on our findings, we argue that teacher visioning (Hammerness, 2001, 2003, 2006) can, under certain circumstances, serve as an impetus for student teacher resistance to neoliberal pressures.

Introduction

Teacher education is under assault from the corporatization of public education. Reductive, essentialized/ing discourses of standardization and compliance exert intense pressures on teacher education (Kumashiro, 2015), and a market-based, audit culture (Apple, 2005) constricts conceptions of the "good teacher" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006). Despite the pervasiveness of neoliberal discourses in education, little is known about how student teachers experience these discourses, or about how student teachers *act* rather than *are acted upon* in this context. In our analysis, we draw upon the robust research around sensemaking (Spillane, 2004; Coburn 2001, 2004; Weick 1995) to explore the ways in which student teachers make sense of neoliberal forces in education. In addition, we employ the practice of "teacher visioning" (Hammerness, 2003) a process of examining beliefs about teaching and learning, to explore how student teachers might conceptualize their roles as agents in reproducing/resisting hegemonic discourses.

In examining the dynamics between student teachers' experiences and neoliberal pressures on education, we address the following questions: (1) How do student teachers make sense of neoliberal discourses in teaching? (2) How do student teachers experience the process of "visioning" in the context of neoliberal discourses? (3) What, if any, effect does visioning have on their potential responses to these discourses? In responding to these questions, we examine data from a qualitative case study of eight student teachers in a comprehensive teacher education program in Massachusetts. Data sources include transcripts and field notes from focus groups, personal interviews with student teachers, and document collection.

Framing the study

Neoliberalism and teacher education

Much has been written about the institutionalization of neoliberalism in education, i.e., the adoption of a market-driven, entrepreneurial, competitive approach to solving social problems (Harvey, 2005; Apple, 2005; Sleeter, 2009; Weiner, 2007). Though a comprehensive treatment of neoliberalism in education is beyond the scope of this article, there is a wide body of research pointing to the implications of neoliberal discourses in education in general and teacher education in particular.

This scholarship points to a number of outcomes of the neoliberal project for public teacher education. For example, teacher education is increasingly pressured to prepare teachers as technicians with the goal of increasing student test scores. This is evidenced not only by the ongoing focus on student test scores (Anyon, 2005; Sleeter, 2009), but also by the pervasiveness of prescribed, scripted curricula (Achinstein, Ogawa & Speigelman, 2004; Kumashiro, 2005). Further, there is an ongoing minimizing of teacher professional knowledge and a shift towards equating teacher quality with standardized test scores (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2006; Sleeter, 2009). Parallel to this is the continual threat to teacher education as a whole and the creation of programs to shorten or bypass traditional teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Tamir & Wilson, 2005). Overall, one of the most significant effects of neoliberal pressures on teacher education is a challenge to the idea that education plays a central role in promoting social justice and democracy (Zeichner, 2006, Weiner, 2007). The shift away from the fundamental notion that education is a "public good" (Anton et al., 2000) has meaningful implications for students, teachers, and teacher candidates alike.

Student Teacher sensemaking

Our study is informed by the well-established research on teacher sensemaking in education. Sensemaking theory (Spillane, 2004; Weick 1995) posits that three key constructs interact to shape how teachers understand and respond to information, policies, and practices in education. The first construct, or individual cognition, represents the ways in which teachers interpret new information through their existing frameworks of understanding and experiences. The second construct, or situated cognition, addresses the established relationships and local cultures that serve as context for how teachers make sense of new information (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). The third construct, or policy signals, represents the body of a variety of messages from policy documents (Stone, 2001). Teachers make sense of the ever-changing nature and conditions of their work through these three constructs.

Though the literature around teacher sensemaking is robust, we know relatively little about the sensemaking processes of student teachers, who are situated in multiple "enactment zones" (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). In their role as students and as apprentice teachers in the field, student teachers operate in multiple professional settings. Each of these settings is governed by an individual local culture (Weick, 1995) that impacts their development (Lortie, 1975; Brody, Vissa & Weathers, 2010). For this reason, it is crucial to consider how student teachers make sense of institutional practices and policies and the ways in which these are mediated through various lenses in the university training and in their field sites (Hara, 2017).

Visioning

This study concerns opportunities for student teachers to inquire about the "primary questions of *who they are* and *who they are becoming*" (Stremmel et al., 2015, p. 158) as they learn to teach in neoliberal times. Therefore, we draw from Karen Hammerness's (2001; 2003; 2006) framework of teacher vision, which she describes as "a set of images of ideal classroom practice for which teachers strive" (2001, p. 143). Visioning affords opportunities for student

teachers to articulate their beliefs and to recognize how their beliefs manifest in their practice. Visioning also entails recognizing and reflecting on the gaps between articulated beliefs and teacher practice.

The process of visioning allows teachers to articulate "the way that they feel about their teaching, their students and their school and helps to explain the changes they make in their classrooms, the choices they make in their teaching, and even the decisions they make about their futures as teachers" (Hammerness, 2006, p. 2). Engaging in teacher visioning might, as Hammerness (2003) suggests, "provide a means for us to better appreciate what decisions teachers make and what experiences they have in the classroom" (p. 45). As teacher educators seeking to support our students through their programs of study, we conceptualize visioning as both a generative process of articulating beliefs as well as an impetus for reflection on those beliefs. We recognize that visioning might serve as one way to help student teachers to begin to understand themselves as thoughtful and critical decision-makers. In this article, we employ the theoretical perspectives offered by visioning in concert with the sense-making literature to provide new insights into how student teachers experience neoliberal pressures in education.

Methodology

This study employed instrumental case study methods (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) by engaging with a phenomenon (student teachers' understandings about neoliberalism and education and the impact of visioning on those understandings) within a contemporary context (student teachers' experiences in their education program and public school classrooms). Engaging in case study methods allowed us to "capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context" and convey "the perspectives of people who [were] negotiating those experiences" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & David, 1997, p. 3).

Participants

At the beginning of the professional practicum (student teaching) semester, we contacted thirteen early childhood education majors (we refer to them as student teachers). Of the student teachers recruited to participate, twelve previously completed coursework with either one or both of us in our education methods courses. However, neither of us supervised any of the participants during their student teaching practicum.

Ten student teachers agreed to participate at the onset of the study, though two participants were unable to continue with the study after the first focus group. Of the remaining eight participants, seven were enrolled in a traditional early childhood education program at a comprehensive liberal arts institution in Massachusetts and one was enrolled as a post-baccalaureate student, having previously completed an undergraduate degree outside of education. Seven of the student teachers, including the post-baccalaureate student, completed their education methods courses as a cohort while the remaining student teacher completed her education methods courses semesters before the others. In sum, the majority of participants experienced the same education coursework with the same professors prior to their professional practicum semester.

As required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, student teachers completed approximately the first six weeks of their professional practicum in a public kindergarten classroom and the remaining nine weeks in either a public first or a second grade classroom. All of the participants completed their professional practicum across four school districts in the outer suburbs of Boston.

Data Sources

Focus Groups

One way to engage in the production of insight is through the convening of focus groups, naturalistic settings in which the researcher is able to listen for content, emotions, and contradictions in a setting ruled by a particular set of social norms (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Given that focus groups are inherently social and semi-public, in this methodology the "talk" that emerges between and across focus group members, as well as the silences—what is not said—are key sources of data (Creswell, 1998).

Student teachers participated in two focus groups over the course of the study. The first, which convened in the days before the participants began their professional practicum, involved a discussion about student teachers' encounters with messages about neoliberal pressures, in particular those dealing with compliance and standardization. Participants were also asked to articulate their understandings of these pressures in the contexts of their education coursework and field study placements. Further, student teachers discussed their current understandings about the climate of education in the United States and the extent to which they encountered messages about the politics of education in their coursework and field studies.

The second focus group convened at the conclusion of the professional practicum. Participants reflected on their student teaching experience and, in particular, the extent to which their own beliefs about teaching and learning materialized in the practices in which they engaged during the practicum. Student teachers also reflected on the process of visioning and the extent to which it emerged as a "consciousness of possibility" (Greene, 1995, p. 23) over the course of their practicum experience.

Document Collection: Visioning Artifacts

Hammerness (2001) suggests that a teacher's vision is "deeply individual, incorporating past and present, and neither wholly good or bad" (p. 144). To that end, participants engaged in visioning independently over the course of approximately four weeks around the midpoint of

their practicum experience. Drawing on Hammerness's (2001; 2003) work, participants reflected on and articulated their beliefs about the following and what spaces informed their beliefs (education coursework, field study placements, or personal experiences): *sights and sounds of the classroom, the role of the teacher, the role of the students, curriculum,* and *the relationship between classroom and society*. The participants organized their beliefs and reflections on notecards and shared them with us. Data were compiled and used to inform both the final focus group discussion and individual interviews.

Individual Interviews

The data that emerged from focus groups was shaped by the social norms and expectations of the group setting. Therefore, additional sources of data in this study were semi-structured interviews with student teachers. In-depth interviews are another way to craft faithful portraits of teachers, staff members, and parents (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The central foci of the interviews were awareness of and experiences with neoliberal pressures on teaching and teacher education, individual experiences with the visioning process, and self-reported views of the impact of visioning.

Data Analysis

The questions in interview and focus group protocols were designed to underscore student teacher perspectives and opinions. Coding of focus group data, data constructed through the student teachers' visioning experiences, and interview data was iterative throughout the research study, and took place in two separate phases (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995). The first phase involved "open coding" in which the data was taken line by line in order to identify the range of possible themes and patterns that arose from transcripts of focus groups and interviews as well as the documents generated through visioning. The second phase involved "focused coding" in which the data was re-coded through the lens of specific topics of interest

(in this case, student teachers' understandings of neoliberalism and the relationship between teacher vision and understandings of neoliberal discourses).

Findings

Fumbling towards a definition of neoliberalism: teacher education and professional knowledge

Respondents described having a limited understanding of neoliberalism and its impact on education. Student teachers' individual cognition around neoliberalism; that is, their existing frameworks of understanding, was limited in scope (Weick, 1995; Spillane 2004). They associated this lack of knowledge to the absence of direct, explicit instruction around increasing pressures of neoliberalism on education through their teacher education coursework. While certain professors did situate pedagogical knowledge within the context of contemporary neoliberal movements in education or raised questions about increasing standardization in teacher education, respondents interpreted these instructional choices as individual rather than part of a larger, coherent vision held by the teacher education program as a whole.

Respondents who reported little professional training around market-based pressures on education and teaching found this silence notable; as Sam stated, "I guess not speaking out against it is kind of telling us unconsciously that we should conform and just go with the flow, not recreate the wheel as they say, so if they're silent about it, that tells us something, too." Sam recognized that the absence of explicit teaching around the impact of neoliberal discourses on teacher education was a stance in and of itself. Student teachers absorb messages in what is left unsaid as much as in explicit directives or coursework, particularly in the absence of a robust existing framework for making sense of new information (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002).

Though respondents identified few examples of explicit instruction around neoliberalism in their coursework, they did experience significant pressures around standardized testing and teacher quality in their own professional training. Because the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

requires all licensed teachers to pass multiple Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL), the respondents' teacher education program implemented a policy requiring all MTELs to be passed in order to begin student teaching. Students who passed their MTELs early were also able to transition from classroom coursework to their student teaching practicum and therefore to graduation and licensure. However, students who failed to receive passing scores on all required MTELs prior to a deadline set by the program each semester would have to delay student teaching, and therefore graduation, until they were able to satisfy the MTEL requirement.

Respondents felt tremendous pressure around the MTELs, not only because of the implications for their progress to degree, but also because of the cost involved with taking and retaking the tests. Still, most students stated that they understood the need for teacher licensure exams as a whole. Melissa stated, "[…] Here is a bunch of questions that, like, basic knowledge that yes, you should know. I understand that, and you need some baseline where everybody can reach a goal." While many students recognized the need for some theoretical benchmark assessment to gauge teacher preparedness, Melissa and her peers questioned the idea, implied by their teacher education program, that success on standardized high stakes tests such as the MTEL would equate to "good" teaching (Lucas, 2014).

One of student teachers' biggest concerns was around the impact that the MTELs had on their coursework and the pedagogical content knowledge put forth by the program. Emma, a student who struggled to pass MTELs and took an academic year off from school in order to earn money while studying for the exams, argued,

> Well, I don't want to say we were teaching to the test, but, like, a lot of the stuff that we were learning was on the test. So, like, sometimes, like, in different classes, as a warmup, we'd do an MTEL prep question, or be like, oh, you are going to want

> to remember this for when you study for your MTELs. Like it wasn't really like, oh, today we're going to be doing MTEL prep. It was more like little reminders along the way, like, oh, you can use this for the MTELs. Oh, this would be good for the MTELs and blah, blah, blah, MTELs, MTELs, MTELs.

Although student teachers had difficulty expressing a formal definition of neoliberalism in education, they were able to recognize ways in which pressures of high stakes standardized testing and related definitions of "good teaching" were made manifest in their own teacher education experiences around the MTEL exams. Student teachers received powerful explicit and implicit messages from their teacher education program about the relationships between standardization, compliance, and performing the role of a "good" teacher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2006).

Compliance and coordination around delivering scripted lessons

In the context of limited formal professional training around neoliberalism in education, as well as a lack of exposure to policy signals from policy documents themselves (Stone, 2001), respondents gathered much of their insights from their experiences as student teachers in districts around eastern and central Massachusetts. Student teachers, situated in the two "enactment zones" (Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer, 2002) of the university teacher education program and the practicum site, drew upon both settings and local cultures in their sensemaking processes. The primary way in which respondents experienced pressures related to neoliberalism in their student teaching experiences was through the standardization of curricula in schools and districts across the state. Each respondent in the study reported the use of curricular programs such as Engage New York, Fundations, Envision Math, etc., which varied in levels of prescriptiveness. Kristen described one program used in her student teaching placement as follows:

> So they got a two-inch workbook, lesson one through five. And then another two-inch workbook, lesson five, six through ten. In that workbook for each student, remind you there's, okay, so 18 students. There was the solve-and-share worksheet. There was the independent practice worksheet. There was the homework worksheet. There was the reteach worksheet.

Given the logistical constraints of managing the scripted programs described above, time and coordination were central themes in respondents' experiences with standardized curricula in their student teaching placements. Teachers and student teachers' preparation time centered largely on coordinating with grade-level team members to synchronize progress throughout lessons, units, and materials. Kristen recalled,

> [My district] has a calendar that they put out. So there's a team of teachers in first grade [...] and they put this calendar together that says, the week of January 1st through the 8th or 7th, you will do math 3.6 to 3.9. You will do science units two, three, and four. So you had to kind of follow that guide through.

Kristen's description of grade level planning and scheduling is what Gitlin and Margonis (1995) describe as "contrived collegiality," which is "administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-oriented, fixed in time and space, and predictable." Contrived collegiality is not to be confused with collaboration, which is "spontaneous, voluntary, developmental, unpredictable, and organically worked into the teacher's day" (p. 399). Rather than authentic collaboration around curriculum and pedagogy, what Kristen and other student teachers described was more akin to the reification of school norms and expectations for compliance to scripted programs.

Respondents highlighted positive and negative aspects of adhering to scripted programs in their school sites, and a tension between the ease of using standardized programs and other competing interests. Sam stated, "Planning is easier because the lessons are right there for you. The concepts are right there for you. But I guess, for me, it means, like it means that sometimes the kids will be less engaged and interested in what we're doing because it's not drawing on their interests." Respondents also felt that the standardization and the synchronization across all classrooms limited their ability to operate as professionals (Kumashiro, 2015; Zeichner, 2006). Kristen argued,

> And maybe for a first-year teacher that's good, because you're not scrambling for ideas. Because you do have to build a lot the first few years. But I think it's a lot of, why did I have to go through this to go in there and push a button and say, here you go, kids, here's your worksheet. [...] I'm like, where is your teaching? Where do you come in?

A robust body of literature speaks to the elements of teaching that characterize it as a profession rather than merely an occupation, ranging from structural factors such as public funding (Ball, 2006) to a perceived lack of specialized knowledge and expertise (Ingersoll, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1994). The data above suggests that the increased standardization of curriculum in schools represent another challenge to the perception of teachers as professionals; by removing the expectation that teachers must go through rigorous training (around curriculum development, for example), the work of teaching becomes more mechanized and more accessible to those without specialized knowledge (Sleeter, 2009; Zeichner, 2006)

Reexamining the student teacher-supervising practitioner relationship

In addition to the influence of curricular standardization on instruction, student teachers described how the emphasis on accountability shaped their professional apprenticeship during student teaching. Student teachers in this study experienced a gap between what they expected from their mentoring relationship with their supervising practitioner and actual practice, and attributed that directly to the standardization in the curriculum. Rebecca recalled, "We very rarely talk about my teaching practices […] at the end of the day, we don't spend a lot of time planning the curriculum, because it's all, I mean, for her, it's all in the book. We look it over, but we're not really like creating anything."

Rebecca's comment points to the ways in which the standardization of the curriculum can affect the traditional relationship between the student teacher and the supervising practitioner. Research suggests that much of what teachers need in order to be effective must be learned in practice (Ball and Cohen, 1999; Hammerness et al., 2005; Zeichner, 2010). The challenges inherent in affording access to mentor teachers' metacognition and decision-making processes are well documented (Hammerness et al., 2005). However, when scripted programs are increasingly common, student teachers not only miss exposure to the practice of developing original units and lesson plans, they may have even less access to the conversations around practice that emerge organically from the student teacher-supervising practitioner dyad working together to plan, deliver, and reflect upon a lesson. Student teachers make sense of new information (Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer, 2002; Weick, 1995) around neoliberalism in education, for example, in the context of the existing relationships and cultures in the enactment zone of the practicum setting.

The theory-to-practice tension in the neoliberal age

The lack of connection between material learned in the university classroom and its potential application in the field site is a well documented challenge in education (Zeichner, 2010). Respondents identified a disconnect between their professional training in their teacher education program and what they experienced in their student teaching placements. In particular, given the ubiquity of scripted programs, they felt that it was unrealistic to spend significant time learning to develop original lesson plans and units. Rebecca noted,

> I think one of the biggest surprises in student teaching was how few lessons I personally would be creating, just because we spent so much time in class creating our own lessons, that realizing, oh, well, I guess I'm just going to retype this book as my lesson plan, was kind of a little bit of a surprise.

Emma described a conversation with her supervising practitioner around developing original lesson plans:

> She was like, […] I don't really get why you guys still have to do that anymore. Everything is so scripted for us now, she's like, that is a little unrealistic. […] I'm glad that I can write a lesson plan really well and do it if I have to, but that's like the one thing I wish we did in class was like be exposed to the more, like the scripted things.

However, not all respondents felt that their teacher education program should modify coursework to mirror school practices. Indeed, some felt that the emphasis on creativity, on individual thought, and the craft of teaching that they received in their professional training in their university coursework was a necessary counterpoint to the standardization seen in the field. Alex stated,

> I think I got nervous as the [field placements] went on, because it didn't seem like

> the ends justified the means in a way. It seemed like there were a lot of logistical things you had to follow in the classroom, and it was very structured and standardized and things like that. […] I feel like [...] you didn't see the reward of the interactions with all the kids that made all the standardization worth it.

Research suggests that meaningful interactions with students, both in terms of instruction and personal relationships, are among the most significant sources of satisfaction for teachers (Lortie, 1975; Metz, 1990). The data above, however, questions whether increased standardization challenges the possibility for meaningful interactions with students.

Student teachers' sensemaking takes place within a framework of multiple influences including personal prior knowledge and values, university coursework, and supervising practitioners. Respondents in this study who sought to make sense of neoliberal pressures embodied did so in multiple educational settings, and in the context of multiple competing ideas about the role of standardization and compliance in teaching (Brody, Vissa, and Weathers, 2010; Lortie, 1975). Because of the relative silence from their teacher education program around these issues, student teachers turned to their field sites for important messages about "good" and "legitimate" teaching.

Teacher visioning as a means to concretize beliefs

Approximately halfway through the sixteen-week student teaching practicum, the student teachers engaged in the process of teacher visioning (Hammerness, 2003, 2006; Squires & Bliss, 2004). We discussed visioning with the study participants as the articulation of beliefs that both shape and are shaped by the kinds of teachers they recognize themselves to be. As Squires and Bliss (2004) suggest, "all teachers bring to the classroom some level of beliefs that influence their critical daily decision-making" (p. 756); engaging in the process of visioning created an

opportunity for the student teachers to organize their beliefs about classroom practice. In doing so, they could then reflect on the extent to which their visions were made manifest in the practicum and how context shaped those visions. See Figure 1 for the beliefs that emerged in individual student teachers' encounters with visioning.

In the final focus group, the student teachers recognized the relationship between articulated beliefs and their own emerging teacher identities.

> R1: [Visioning] makes it more of a conscious thing…you're not just going through the motions. You're thinking about why you are doing things and what your beliefs are and the type of things that you want. [You're thinking about] the type of things that you want to see happen in the classroom or the type of people you want your kids to be. It just makes it more conscious rather than not thinking about it.
>
> R2: [...] This is what I'm going to do rather than just kind of floating around in my brain getting mixed up with everything else.

The respondents recognized that as student teachers immersed full-time in classrooms, they were decision-makers whose choices were potentially shaped by their beliefs about teaching and learning. Teacher visioning encouraged the student teachers to engage thoughtfully with their practice and to become conscious to the connections and gaps between what they claimed to believe and what they were actually enable to enact as pedagogues.

The student teachers described visioning as a helpful tool to hold teachers accountable for what they claim to believe, and how those beliefs do or do not manifest in their practice. Hammerness (2003) suggests that teacher visioning might serve as both "a guide for practice" and "a means of reflection, assessing and evaluating past practice" (p. 50). The student teachers in our study recognized this potential as they described how explicitly articulating one's beliefs

makes one more inclined to reflect on the [dis]connections between beliefs and practice. Emma associated teacher visioning and the articulation of beliefs as a way to prompt thoughtful engagement with decisions she made in the classroom. She said,

> [Beliefs] are kind of just tossed in the back of your head, but having to sit down and think about it, I don't even think I realized in the moment, but I was like thinking about it at school and being like, 'oh, this is what I'm doing, this is actually aligned with my vision.' So it brought it more to the front of my brain and I was actually thinking about it more, which was good.

Like Emma, the student teachers appreciated the way in which articulating their beliefs made them more thoughtful about their own classroom practice, despite the many challenges they confronted in realizing their visions during the practicum. Emma's description of how her beliefs aligned with her practice at distinct times throughout the practicum experience reflects what Hammerness (2006) terms "episodic vision" whereby "moments of ideal practice" emerge "rather than ideal practice that occurs daily' (p. 46).

The student teachers described how explicitly articulating their beliefs during the process of visioning was difficult, in part because their beliefs had not previously been concretized in such a way. They also recognized that there were structural factors that made it more challenging to connect their pedagogical practices to their newly-articulated beliefs. As the student teachers experienced, teacher vision emerges in practice amidst contextual constraints and expectations for compliance. We describe below how moments of ideal vision were realized most frequently, it seems, when supervising practitioners or other evaluators were not in the classrooms with the student teachers.

Resistance in someone's else's classroom

While visioning served as a process in which to engage in articulation of and reflection on student teachers' beliefs, it did not in itself provide an opportunity for student teachers to actively disrupt the neoliberal pressures they encountered in their student teaching experiences.

One of the challenges to the success of visioning was that the student teachers received powerful messages from their supervising practitioners about complying to standardization in their classrooms. Kristen described one exchange during student teaching that she found significant: "There was this one teacher. She was like, 'Well, I just want to do what they want. […] Just have them tell us what they want and we'll do it.' But if it's not important for your kids, you know, why do you have to do that?"

The student teaching practicum is a period of apprenticeship in a variety of ways; student teachers observe teaching in action and apply their own pedagogical content knowledge to practice for an extended period of time (Zeichner, 2010; Grossman & Loeb, 2008). Supervising practitioners model, both consciously and subconsciously, their own approaches to pedagogy, but also to interactions with administrators and colleagues, as well as a wide range of other professional tasks.

A sense of obligation to practices that were deemed appropriate in specific contexts made student teachers question whether and to what extent their beliefs might align with the established school culture and whether realizing their beliefs in practice was even a reality given what was already happening in classrooms.

R1: I think doing this also like showed me how hard it is to like keep your beliefs in a classroom.

R2: Yeah.

R3: Like, after doing this and like going into a classroom, I was like, 'ah, I don't know if

I could fit all of these into it or if they would be accepted or permitted.'

R2: I think it's easy to stray away and like go with whatever.

R3: I definitely think so.

Established expectations in regards to the implementation of classroom curriculum emerged as an element of the gap between student teachers' beliefs and classroom practice during student teaching. The materials available for lessons and the integration - or lack thereof - of certain content areas did not always coincide with what student teachers envisioned for their classrooms.

R: …in first grade, [science] is just not talked about. I mean, we have a bin of little science books, which a lot of the kids like reading from, but there's no explicit instruction in science.

I: And that is disconnected from your beliefs about curriculum?

R: Yeah, about teaching in general because, I mean, you teach math. You teach reading. And yeah, all of it's important. Like, science is too. Kids kind of need to know about science.

Many of the student teachers described their desire to integrate more methods they learned in their teacher education programs than they were able. For example, Alex discussed her desire for more hands-on, inquiry-based science activities in place of the worksheets that dominated so much of the classroom instruction. In her vision, Sam explicitly articulated her beliefs that a classroom should promote social justice. She expressed disappointment in not being able to capitalize on the recent presidential election to engage with children in discussions that she felt would reflect her vision for a classroom that prepares citizens for the 21st century. Sam stated,

Well, it seems like my vision, especially with the social justice piece and that

> kind of stuff, takes a back burner in the classroom. So, I mean, for example, the election. I have a lot of kids who, well, maybe a handful of immigrant families and a lot of Spanish-speaking families, and the kids don't like Donald Trump, you know? So rather than kind of go into Donald Trump's character, anything like that which I think I might have done, we just kind of glossed over the election rather than what it might mean for them because kids are scared.

Her supervising practitioner's reluctance to engage in conversations about a major sociopolitical event in the United States and the ways in which it might impact the lives of her students was of great concern to Sam, but because she did not consider the classroom to be "hers," she did not feel as though she could enact her beliefs about social norms and critical thinking around the election.

The challenges of resistance in an evaluatory setting

In addition to the overt messages they received to adhere to existing practices of compliance, the student teachers also described the notion of being in another person's classroom as a constraint to the manifestation of ideal vision due, in part, to the surveillance of their practice that was tied to reviews of her performance as a student teacher.

Alex said,

> …because I'm in a co-teacher model, there was always one teacher there, so it was a lot of like pressure to like…like, I could just feel them like judging me the whole time making sure we stayed on topic and like it wasn't too loud for their level and it wasn't really my idea of what was working. It was theirs because they were there the whole time.

Alex described the difficulty she had in implementing her vision under the watchful eyes of supervising practitioners, who would ultimately evaluate her success in practicum. In her vision, she articulated her belief that adjustments should be made to scripted programs to meet the individual needs of children and that teachers should take advantage of spontaneous teachable moments. The gap between Alex's beliefs and what she was able to do in the classroom indicates how expectations to comply to school and district mandated scripted curricula can limit student teachers' sense of ownership over their own practice.

Indeed, in the final focus group, respondents discussed the sense of freedom that they felt and how they were able to implement practices more closely aligned with articulated beliefs when their supervising practitioners were not in the classroom.

> R: I kind of like being by myself. It's kind of nice. I kind of like not having anyone in there [during takeover week].
>
> R2: Because you can do what you want.
>
> R1: Yeah.
>
> R2: And [the students] can be a little louder, which I think if they're doing their work, they can chat. That's fine with me.

Britzman (2003) describes how teaching is socially negotiated in that it "concerns coming to terms with one's intentions and values, as well as one's views of knowing, being, and acting in a setting characterized by contradictory realities, negotiation, dependency, and struggle" (p. 31). We recognize that expectations for novice teachers to resist neoliberal policies is no small thing as they are "especially prone to adopting instructional logistics embedded in state instructional policies and enacting practices that reflect their districts' approach to instruction" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2003, p. 32). Further, it would be naïve to ignore the fact that the outcome(s) of teacher

resistance are not always positive: teachers lose their jobs due to perceived insubordination, move to school districts where there are fewer constraints on their practices - districts that tend to be more affluent with fewer students of color and emergent bilingual learners, or leave the profession altogether (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2003; Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Sleeter, 2008).

One conception of teacher agency is to consider the "capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events. An agent ceases to be such if he or she loses the capability to 'make a difference', that is, to exercise some sort of power" (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Respondents in this study were fully cognizant of the challenges inherent in pushing back against examples of standardization they found problematic. Indeed, their sensemaking processes around neoliberal pressures in education were directly informed by the explicit and implicit messages they received in the various sites of their professional training. When asked if they would do so as teachers in their own classrooms, 5 out of 8 student teachers stated that they would struggle to openly question practices such as scripted curricula or behavioral plans. These student teachers felt that standardization was something that was inevitable, and that to resist would not only be fruitless, but also an indication of being "left behind."

The possibilities of visioning for teacher resistance

At the same time, visioning did seem to serve as an impetus for the exercise of teacher resistance for many of our participants. Respondents drew on their experiences with visioning to anticipate how they might respond to neoliberal pressures such as curricular standardization or high stakes accountability measures in their own classrooms. Kristen stated, "I hope that there's still a way to bring in what you need to bring in as a person, as a teacher, to make it valuable. I

think that you have to figure out a way to tailor those scripts to make them authentic for teaching."

Kristen was particularly vocal about her willingness to advocate for students and for herself based on her beliefs that emerged in the process of visioning and was the only participant who expressly stated that she would opt for exit from a teaching position rather than comply with a policy or practice that she felt was detrimental to her students or her teaching.

I: How long do you think you have before you can start to say no?

Kristen: I'm pretty verbal, so maybe the second year.

I: Maybe year two?

Kristen: Yeah, especially if I don't believe it.

Like Kristen, Melissa described her willingness to stand up for her students if she were to detect that the curriculum was inappropriate or ill-paced and that she is willing to do so sooner rather than later.

Melissa: I think you can do both. I think you can have creativity and have things that are appropriate for a five- and six-year old and still have fun and still meet everything that needs to be met for report cards and standards.

I: So when you say you think you can have both, does that mean you could make that structure work?

Melissa: Yes...I think I'd be able to. But I also think you have to stand up for - if something's not working or it's just too hard, I think you have to say, 'this just isn't good for a six-year old.'

Likewise, other student teachers identified the possibilities of resistance as a result of the visioning process. While the student teachers did not specifically articulate their willingness to

resist in their initial visioning, their beliefs about their roles as teachers were more thoroughly developed and contextualized by the end of student teaching. This speaks to the evolution of teacher visions; as student teachers become immersed in different learning contexts across time and are confronted with varying degrees of pressure or expectation, who they are becoming is transformed. The question becomes whether that becoming remains in the service to themselves, their students, and their students' families or whether the pressures to comply to neoliberal discourses are strong enough to prioritize compliance and standardization above all else.

Much of the conversation around resistance that emerged in interviews with student teachers was grounded in their notions of what it means to be a "good teacher" and their efforts to cultivate and maintain their own teacher identities. As Britzman (2003) writes, "Learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always the process of becoming: a time of transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 31). Visioning created opportunities for respondents in this study to identify and articulate their emerging beliefs, scrutinize their practice in light of these beliefs and to understand themselves as decision-makers and pedagogues who may or may not be satisfied with the status quo.

Discussion and implications for future research

This study reflects an introductory exploration of student teachers' sensemaking around neoliberal pressures on education, and the role that visioning might play in the context of conflicting messages from teacher education coursework and their experiences in the field. We argue that it is crucial to explore the ways in which student teachers, the newest members of the teaching profession, conceptualize the impact of market-based discourses on their professional training and their practice in classrooms.

The data in this study suggests that the impact of privatization, standardization, and compliance in education has not necessarily translated into an awareness of these forces and their implications being integrated into teacher professional knowledge. Just as teacher education programs place limited focus on student teachers' awareness around policy advocacy, for example, many of them omit an explicit treatment of the ways in which teachers might encounter and possibly respond to neoliberal pressures in their teaching practice. We note, too, that the traditional theory-to-practice divide that has been well documented in education has suffered further as teacher education programs continue to emphasize individual teacher professional choice over curriculum development and lesson planning, when districts and schools are increasingly adopting scripted curricula. The student teachers in this sample discovered over the course of their practicum experiences how neoliberalism influences the standardization of the curriculum, the definition of teacher quality and professional knowledge, and the future of teacher education itself.

Teacher visioning at the student teaching level has the potential to be a means of concretizing beliefs and keeping these beliefs at the fore despite a variety of essentializing and reductive pressures in education. Though the respondents in this study were clear in expressing the difficulty of integrating beliefs into practice, and indeed reported limited tangible outcomes of the visioning process on the daily practices of their supervising practitioners' classrooms, we argue that "episodic vision" nevertheless represents meaningful and potentially transformative moments of critique and potential resistance. The student teachers in this sample discovered for themselves how visioning, that is, the identification and articulation of closely held beliefs, could serve as accountability and encouragement in ongoing efforts to bring their pedagogical practice closer to their ideals. In this way, we view teacher visioning at the student teacher level as a

potential antidote to the neoliberal turn; however, we recognize that this is only possible under key necessary conditions.

In exploring what these key necessary conditions might be, we consider the question of the role of teacher education. We argue that it is the charge of teacher education programs to resist rather than to conform and replicate what is happening in schools in the name of preparing teachers to teach. We believe that one way we can support student teachers is to guide them in critically engaging with ideas around neoliberal pressures prior to student teaching. As our study indicates, student teachers recognized the effects of neoliberalism in their own experiences in terms of MTELs and evaluation, but did not conceptualize the neoliberal pressures as they directly impact teachers' experiences with curriculum in the classroom. Being explicit about the origins and effects of privatization, compliance, standardization, and a market-based audit culture might help student teachers enter student teaching better equipped to engage with and problematize those constraints. Given that student teachers find themselves in multiple enactment zones (Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer, 2002), we argue that it is all the more important for the teacher education programs to provide a local culture that speaks directly to and provides student teachers with tools to address neoliberalism in education and its implications for teaching and learning.

Further, we propose that engaging in the process of visioning consistently throughout teacher education coursework, as well as during student teaching, might help student teachers ground their beliefs in theory and research. We imagine that student teachers might be better equipped to disrupt the status quo as it emerges in classrooms if they have articulated their beliefs in light of scholarship that describes authentic and equitable practices for both teachers and students. We believe that it is the role of teacher educators to create space for conversation

about and inquiry around becoming a teacher in neoliberal times in order that student teachers begin to recognize themselves as persons with agency who as a collective might resist neoliberal pressures of standardization and compliance. In our courses, this materializes as conversations around the ways in which neoliberal policies inform our own practice and the ways in which we push back as well as in-class visioning activities and extensive discussion about the relationships between teacher vision and the current educational climate.

In order for teacher visioning to be a catalyst for teacher resistance to neoliberal pressures to comply and standardize, the process should be extended to involve cooperation among teacher educators, student teachers, and classroom teachers. As Gitlin and Margonis (1995) describe, "individualism [poses] an obstacle to educational reform" (p. 382). Likewise, Achinstein and Ogawa (2003) suggest that individual resistance can "weaken [teachers'] political impact, leaving them vulnerable and limiting the impact of their resistance" (p. 57). In other words, in order for student teachers to disrupt the status quo, they must have opportunities to share their visions with others, to think with others about how their visions are informed by theory and research, and to imagine how the beliefs embedded in those philosophies might offer new ways of being and becoming in a classroom. Thus, the practice of collaborative visioning extends beyond reflection and articulation of beliefs to a form of "principled resistance" (p. 52) or action with the potential to inform policy changes as student teachers collectively advocate for policies at the school, district, state, and national level that are, indeed, good for their students (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2003; see also Gitlin & Margonis, 1995).

Finally, teacher education programs should establish some common ground upon which student teachers can articulate and continually reexamine their beliefs as they progress through coursework, field studies, and student teaching. This might involve cultivating a shared vision

among faculty that is made manifest in their encounters with student teachers. It seems to also involve ongoing reflection on the part of teacher educators as they consider the connections between their own beliefs and how those beliefs inform their practice and the extent to which they model that reflective practice with student teachers.

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ure 1: Teacher Candidates' Beliefs Articulated during Visioning

eacher ndidate	Sights + Sounds	Role(s) of the Teacher	Classroom Curriculum	Role(s) of the Students	Relationship between Classroom + 21st Century Society
lissa	vibrant and comfortable classroom well-organized materials cozy library area student work and classroom expectations on walls chatty classroom conducive to success	co-learner creator of material that allows for multimodal learning provider of hands-on learning who values ownership and personality in student work	connected to logical thinking in an effort to prepare students for the future a balance between prescribed (offers comparable data between classrooms) and made curriculum (allows for creativity); both offer same outcomes	to learn academics and socialization skills to be become better people to be engaged and interested in school to have a drive to want to learn to gain compassion, responsibility, kindness, and achievement	social skills and connections link classroo and society space to learn about culture and social/economic class compassion is developed as students learn about differences
ce	controlled chaos where hands-on learning takes place a balance between the messiness of	facilitator and guide of student's learning knowledgeable about what kinds of activities are	curriculum includes the academic, but also the social-emotional	should have the will and drive to participate in their education should be responsive to the ways the	opportunities to gain an awareness of self and peers classroom as space to communicate about diversity

	learning and organized space for work materials and spaces should provide opportunities for all learners	engaging to students		teacher engages the child in learning	classroom as space to foster a loving and caring community
n	warm, bright, and comfortable welcoming and representative of the cultures and backgrounds of students to show students that they are valued displays of student work and thinking tools and assistive resources available to students	guide, facilitator, and partner in learning active listener and gatherer of student information (builder of relationships) source of safety and comfort community builder observer and diplomat	should be relevant and meaningful should be student-centered and based on interests should be student-led when possible needs to be developmentally appropriate and multimodal to reach the needs of all learners	to put in the effort, come to class, and participate in ways that make them feel comfortable and safe to be open to new ideas to be willing to collaborate with peers and explore new materials	classroom and teaching should include a strong social justice component should encourage critical thinking about school "norms," structures, issue and inequities discussions about respect, a peaceful world, how to resolve conflict and communicate respectfully encouragement of self-knowledge and self-love
ecca	students actually doing things, not just worksheets	to support students by encouraging them to try new things and make	should be flexible and accessible to all should include realistic expectations	to explore what is and is not presented through asking questions, making	classroom as a space to foster an appropriate sens of risk-taking

	students should be collaborating, not just working independently	mistakes to model positive and accepting behaviors towards others to model reactions and different emotions in a positive and healthy way	for what students are developmentally able to process and do	observations, and making mistakes to explore what it means to be human, including how to resolve conflict, manage stress, and be a good friend	classroom as a space where students learn to be kind, responsible member of society classroom as a space where students learn to accept others and value different points of view
ma	lots of color, walls decorated with posters and student work desks arranged in a way that fosters discussion lots of conversation (academic), laughter, and music	to foster each student's development (emotional and academic) to be a role model and educate outside of the curriculum	mandated curriculum serves as a foundation or stepping stone teachers should adjust mandated curriculum through their own creativity to meet students' needs	students are like sponges students should be curious and active in their education students should take in knowledge wherever and however they can	teachers shape the minds of the future reactions in the classroom are dependent upon effect they have on students
sten	center-based space for large groups, small	role model and leader who maintains high	curriculum is guided by the district and varies from one	to be actively involved to be accountable for	early childhood teachers foster a love of school, reading, math, and scienc

	groups, coloring, writing, talking, smiling, and respect music, games, movement, and stories mathematics and interactive science lessons questions from teacher and students	expectations to build more than academic skills; fosters a sense of community within a classroom to make student feel welcome to get to know students and build on what they know	district to the next prescribed curriculum can be made one's own by the teacher as she comes to understand and adapt it	actions to confront challenges and show what is understood	teachers show children they believe in them and offer them the skills to question and wonder so that they become effectiv communicators, thinkers, and leaders
riah	inviting, welcoming, and colorful student learning should be made visible there should be opportunities for student conversation	to guide students through their learning to respond to students' questions to support students' discovery of knowledge that they are interested in	curriculum should be adapted and individualized for each student's needs curriculum should hold students' attention	students bring school and community together students have a hunger for knowledge that keeps teachers going	students should be well-rounded, kind, compassionate to the world around them, and confident in whatever the do
x	colors to encourage happiness during	to guide students through their own	teach the students, not the program;	to absorb all they can and to have fun doing	what students learn in the classroom can directly

	classwork classroom appearance represents diversity of students a constant murmur of students' conversation as they share what they are learning the sound of students making mistakes as they feel confident enough to try the sound of laughter	explorations in academics and in finding themselves to help the students navigate decision-making and understanding how to be positive members of society to love and care for the students so that they can learn to not only love and care for the people around them but also themselves to provide a safe space that fosters confidence and opportunities to take chances	parts of mandated programs can be adapted in lesson design to meet the needs of students academics are only one part of the curriculum; the curriculum emerges alongside spontaneous teachable moments	it to encourage one another to learn and to celebrate one another's success to show the teacher how they learn best, even if that best is different than the day before to respect and accept one another and help each other be amazing humans	affect what type of people they are in society the classroom is where respect for others and listening to others is modeled