"It's Like Being on a Road Trip with a Driver you Trust": Augmenting Practice-Based Methods with Critical, Project-Based Clinical Experiences

Lin Rudder
George Mason University, lrudder@gmu.edu
Kristien Zenkov
George Mason University, kzenkov@gmu.edu
Jenny Goransson
Johns Hopkins University, jgorans1@jh.edu
Stella Photiou Ettenson
George Mason University, settenso@gmu.edu
Sibel Singleton
Falls Church High School, ssinleton@fcps.edu

Empirical

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Abstract

This article describes an instrumental case study of a graduate-level teacher preparation course that merged practice-based (PBTE) assignments with critical, project-based (CPB) clinical experiences to address two research questions: 1) How might CPB clinical experiences address noted critiques of the PBTE model via a merged CPB/PBTE structure?, and 2) What are the impacts on preservice/early career teachers' awareness of effective pedagogies that result from their experiences with a merged PBTE/CPB teacher preparation architecture? In this study, we analyzed qualitative photovoice data, revealing how the unique clinical elements of the course allowed preservice teachers to practice differentiation and consider how to integrate notions of equity and social justice into their pedagogies. Additionally, we examined how the course aided preservice teachers with identifying and decomposing effective pedagogies. We close with a discussion of considerations for future research and the implications of an emerging PBTE/CPB model for teacher education, including enhancing preservice and early career teachers' pedagogical agency.

Keywords

Practice-Based Teacher Education, Critical Project-Based Clinical Experience, Photovoice

Corresponding Author:

Lin Rudder
George Mason University
4400 University Dr, Fairfax, VA 22030
Email: lrudder@gmu.edu   ORCid: 0009-0008-8095-2859

Introduction

> As a student, I feel safe when it's clear a lesson is about to run smoothly and give me the support
> I need. It's like being on a road trip with a driver you trust – you can drift off to sleep, confident
> that you're safe.
>
> –Liam, Preservice Social Studies Teacher

Since the release of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report in 2010 (NCATE, 2010), teacher education scholars have wrestled with how to develop and implement clinical experiences that merge traditional, research-based teacher preparation coursework with authentic field-based structures to simultaneously honor mentor teachers' expertise and develop novice teachers' pedagogies (AACTE, 2018; Helfrich et al., 2019; Zeichner, 2010). While clinical experiences are intended to provide preservice teachers with meaningful opportunities to grow their pedagogical skills and expertise, implementing such structures can prove challenging due to inconsistencies in how mentors are chosen and paired with mentees (Badiali et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2014). Traditional forms of clinical practice too often *place* (rather than *match*) preservice teachers in partnering PK-12 classrooms as passive observers, expecting them to monitor ostensibly effective teaching rather than engage in scaffolded opportunities to experiment with these or their own pedagogies (Kretchmar & Zeichner, 2016; Zeichner & Payne, 2013). While teacher education practitioners and scholars are increasingly attempting to develop and implement more authentic clinical experiences (Burns & Badiali, 2020; Fisher & Many, 2014; Zenkov et al., 2024), these structures engender their own complexities – including how to prepare preservice teachers for these more intensive clinical opportunities and how to identify sites in which to enact these alternatives.

Preservice teachers who undertake concurrent coursework and clinical experiences are better able to interpret and apply pedagogical concepts when they are offered active opportunities to apply theory, observe and participate in practice, receive formative feedback, and engage in structured reflection (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Moody et al., 2022b). The takeaway from decades of teacher education scholarship is clear but unsurprising: University teacher education programs should craft opportunities for preservice teachers not only to *discuss* teaching but also to *practice* teaching (Moody et al., 2022b; Scheeler et al., 2016). Further, this practice should not occur only in the secure, artificial settings of their college courses, but also in authentic classrooms (Kavanaugh et al., 2023). These age-old foundational limitations of traditional teacher preparation structures have inspired us to consider alternative models for aligning university coursework with impactful clinical experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Dutro et al., 2018).

One of the most celebrated and studied attempts to address these constraints has focused on applying what we would characterize as a *science of teaching* lens to teacher preparation: Identifying a comprehensive set of discrete pedagogical skills with which all teachers should be proficient, developed through a model of practice-based teacher education (PBTE). While this model represents a significant and positive shift in teacher education practices, it has been criticized for promoting rote teaching practices that do not attend to individual learners' needs (Moody et al., 2022a). It has also been faulted for insufficiently developing novice teachers' understandings of equity and justice (Philip et al., 2019).

A potential answer to the documented limitations of PBTE and traditional clinical practice is to supplement such models with novel clinical structures. The authors of this study have helped devise, implement, and examine one such structure – "critical, project-based" (CPB) clinical experiences–a clinical architecture undergirded by a framework of social justice (Roegman et al., 2020; Zenkov & Pytash, 2022). In the study

on which we report here, we have considered how these two frameworks for teacher education – PBTE and CPB clinical experiences – might be synergized to better support early career teachers seeking their initial teaching licensure. Via an analysis of the theoretical and structural elements of these two frameworks, and focused on an early exploration of a merged PBTE/CPB model in a graduate-level teacher preparation course for future and current secondary educators, we address the following research questions:

1. How might CPB clinical experiences address noted critiques of the PBTE model via a merged CPB/PBTE structure?

2. What are the impacts on preservice/early career teachers' awareness of effective pedagogies that result from their experiences with a merged PBTE/CPB teacher preparation architecture?

To answer these questions, we begin with an overview of the PBTE and CPB frameworks, highlighting how CPB elements address some key criticisms of the PBTE model. We then appeal to the data drawn from an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) that explored the early implementation of a merged PBTE/CPB model in a graduate-level teacher education course ("Perspectives on Extraordinary Teaching"). We conclude with a discussion of implications from the case and considerations for blended PBTE/CPB structures and future research. We highlight how synthesizing PBTE/CPB in teacher education can enhance preservice and early career teachers' pedagogical agency.

Literature Review

For decades teacher education researchers have troubled the disconnect between preservice teachers' learning in university courses, their clinical experiences, and the realities of the PK-12 classroom (Colmenares, 2021; NCATE, 2010). This divide is often the result of conflicts between conceptual stances about teaching and learning and the implementation of pedagogical practices within PK-12 settings (Flessner & Lecklider, 2017). More than three decades ago Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985) identified this university/reality gulf as the *two-worlds pitfall,* highlighting the fact that preservice teachers often encounter contradictory notions of effective instruction in their university courses and their school-based field experiences (Johnson & Barnes, 2018; Peercy et al., 2019).

Multiple scholars have pointed to the significant challenge this divide poses for every constituent involved in these exchanges. For preservice teachers, the challenge is to effectively learn pedagogies while in their college/university programs. For school-based mentor teachers, the objective is to be recognized with time, titles, and compensation for the vital roles they are expected to play. And, for university-based teacher educators, the dilemma is to design, implement, and examine teacher preparation structures that support both of these aims (AACTE, 2018; Burns & Badiali, 2020; Zeichner, 2010). To ground our examination and analyses of a potential merged PBTE/CPB model, in this literature review we highlight descriptions of the research bases behind both theories.

Practice-Based Teacher Education (PBTE)

PBTE describes an approach to teacher education centered on collaborative, practice-embedded opportunities within coursework that allows preservice teachers to rehearse the essential strategies of teaching (Grossman et al., 2009; Kavanagh et al., 2023; McDonald et al., 2013). Via these activities, preservice teachers not only deepen their comprehension of course content but also gain confidence in

practical, pedagogical skills that prepare them for the realities of teaching (Abbott et al., 2012; Danielson, 2021). In addition to narrowing the oft-critiqued gap between theory and practice (Peercy et al., 2019), PBTE structures can reduce over-reliance on real-world field experiences, which can have varying levels of quality (Badiali et al., 2021). PBTE provides preservice teachers with authentic opportunities for practice and feedback within coursework while still furnishing them with opportunities to grow their skills as practitioners (Moody et al., 2022b).

While scholars have identified a variety of conceptualizations of PBTE, all models center the implementation of "core" (Forzani, 2014) or "high-leverage" (Teaching Works, 2025) pedagogical practices – common teaching skills recognized as elements of effective instruction. PBTE also highlights the importance of providing preservice teachers with authentic teaching experiences, consistent modeling of effective pedagogies, analysis of pedagogical performance and outcomes, constructive feedback as they learn to teach, and repeated cycles of teaching and reflection (Brownell et al., 2019). PBTE includes three key elements as part of its instructional "cycle" which we examine further below: approximations, representations, and decompositions (Grossman, 2011; Grossman et al., 2009; McDonald et al., 2013).

Approximations

Approximations are intentionally scaffolded opportunities for preservice teachers to practice teaching as part of their university coursework (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020). Approximations may include rehearsals (where preservice teachers practice teaching with peers acting as students and receive targeted feedback) as well as roleplays and virtual simulations (Brownell et al., 2019; Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020; Grossman, 2011). These opportunities to practice teaching might also include fieldwork or other engagements with PK-12 students (Gorodetsky & Barak, 2008; Moody et al., 2022b).

Representations

Representations are visual models/portrayals of teaching and/or pedagogies, most often provided by teacher educators (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020; Grossman, 2011). Examples of these include instructors demonstrating practices during class sessions, case learning (activities where preservice teachers are presented with narrative descriptions or student profiles to facilitate pedagogical discussions), and videos from authentic PK-12 classrooms or teaching scenarios (Brownell et al., 2019). In these representations, preservice teachers might be prompted to reflect on their own experiences as students and educators to analyze key practices being employed (Moody et al., 2022a).

Decompositions

Decompositions describe the practice of expert teacher educators guiding novice teachers to develop their understandings of specific pedagogical moves by naming the parts of these instructional strategies and facilitating reflection on their effects (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020). Kavanagh et al. (2023) identified two types of decompositions: *top-down* – where teacher educators explicitly explain high-leverage teaching practices – or *bottom-up* – where teacher educators invite teachers to discuss their understandings of a teaching practice, often co-constructing knowledge as a whole group. Danielson (2021) identified an optimal framework for decompositions across four quadrants, demonstrating how effective decompositions illustrate conceptual theories, practical examples, general systems, and specific parts – thus shifting the

focus of decompositions from not only *what* is taught but also *how* it is taught (Danielson, 2021). A related complement to decomposition is *recomposition*: that is, teaching educators how to assemble these discrete teaching skills into a sequence to best impact PK-12 student outcomes (Janssen et al., 2015).

Common Critiques of PBTE

Although PBTE has gained traction as a promising model, evidence of its impact on teachers' ability to implement *adaptive expertise* (i.e., the ability to adjust to new problems) is limited (Janssen et al., 2015). In fact, scholars have noted that PBTE can promote generalized teaching practices, removed from the realities of PK-12 classrooms and the differentiated needs of diverse learners (Moody et al., 2022a). PBTE is most effective when paired with opportunities to practice teaching both in the university classroom *and* in fieldwork with actual PK-12 students (Moody et al., 2022b). Without consistent opportunities to practice pedagogies with a variety of PK-12 students – including skills in differentiation and recomposition – teachers may struggle to develop asset-based, culturally sustaining teaching practices, particularly if coursework does not offer explicit theoretical and practical considerations of equity and social justice (Phillip et al., 2019).

Decompositions – and particularly top-down decompositions – run the risk of prescribing teaching practices in a decontextualized manner rather than developing teachers to make responsive pedagogical choices (Kavanagh et al., 2023). This over-standardization of teaching practices might not only limit teachers' abilities to implement effective pedagogies, but also to challenge hegemony around patriarchal or White supremacist curricula in their future classrooms, particularly without explicit instruction in criticality (Kavanagh et al., 2023; Phillip et al., 2019). As detailed below, CPB clinical experiences explicitly aim to avoid and/or answer some of these common critiques of PBTE and traditional clinical practice.

Critical Project-Based (CPB) Clinical Experiences

The CPB model has been developed, implemented, and examined in response to the critique that traditional teacher preparation often functions without sufficiently addressing the school/reality divide. It is also a rejoinder to United States (U.S.) policymakers', scholars', and teacher education accreditation and professional organizations' mandates for more intentionally organized clinical experiences for preservice teachers (AACTE, 2018; Hollins, 2015). Scholars and policymakers have recognized that via these clinical experiences, classroom teachers, teacher educators, and preservice teachers are exposed to the increasingly common political and community tensions in the U.S. that have seeped into PK-12 classrooms (Geller, 2020), including issues of racism, gender oppression toward women, and xenophobic political discourses (Darragh & Petrie, 2019). The CPB model represents an equity-oriented teacher education effort that explicitly considers the contentious environments in which teachers find themselves in today's sociopolitical landscape (Bailey et al., 2014; Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Zenkov & Rudder, 2025).

As informed by Kretchmar and Zeichner's (2016) community-oriented notions of "Teacher Preparation 3.0," CPB teacher preparation structures are contextually relevant, community-based, and consider the authentic circumstances and needs of PK-12 students and their families. Like PBTE, CPB clinical experiences are grounded in high-leverage practices, but these are rooted in – rather than only recommending connections to – clinical experiences and opportunities for preservice teachers to enact pedagogies with PK-12 pupils (Johnson & Barnes, 2018). Amongst a number of other features, the CPB

model includes two foundational elements: intense, short-term clinical experiences and an embedded social justice framework.

Intense and Short-Term

CPB clinical experiences are "intense, short-term clinical opportunities" where preservice teachers partner with veteran teachers serving as mentors (i.e., school-based teacher educators) in their own classrooms (Zenkov & Pytash, 2022, p. 65). As opposed to traditional clinical experiences, which typically call on preservice teachers to merely observe in a mentor's classroom, these abridged opportunities are focused on particular pedagogies or enactments, meaning the specific high-leverage practices being studied are more likely to be implemented with fidelity (Johnson & Barnes, 2018; Kang & Windschitl, 2018). Typically occurring early in preservice teachers' programs, these brief clinical experiences are also more sustainable as they do not require long-term commitments from preservice teachers or school- and university-based teacher educators (Álvarez, 2023; Zenkov & Pytasg, 2022). Uniquely, these shorter engagements provide university-based teacher educators with the chance to partner with the preservice and veteran teachers in boundary-spanning roles (Dennis et al., 2017; Rudder et al., 2026a), a feature of effective teacher preparation programs increasingly highlighted by scholars and policymakers (AACTE, 2018; Clarke et al., 2014; Fitchett et al., 2018; Rudder et al., 2026a; Zenkov et al., 2024).

Social Justice Orientation

As perhaps its most defining feature, CPB clinical experiences center the perspectives and voices of young people in PK-12 classrooms as a form of criticality (Emdin, 2016; Zenkov & Pytash, 2022; Zenkov & Rudder, 2025); that is, they provide youth with opportunities to ask questions about the very structures of school and our society. Teacher educators frame these experiences as acts of social justice, offering preservice teachers' pedagogies that challenge common stereotypes about youth and other oppressed groups (Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Zenkov & Pytash, 2022; Zenkov & Rudder, 2025; Zenkov et al., 2016). Interacting with diverse students – and listening to their perspectives in order to understand their realities – can encourage preservice teachers to develop identities as social justice educators (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Dutro et al., 2018). Teacher educators might further aid preservice teachers with considering the political realities impacting young people today – while preparing them for these realities in their own future classrooms – through a heightened focus on such novel forms of clinical experience (Roegman et al., 2020; Zenkov & Rudder, 2025, in press), enhanced by an explicitly embedded social justice framework (e.g., Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Gorski, 2018). For this course, the CPB clinical experience was undergirded by the social justice-oriented Listening Literacy framework (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025), as explained below.

Social Justice Framework: Listening Literacy. The social justice framework embedded within the "Perspectives" course was that of Listening Literacy (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025). Premised on an acknowledgement of the ways in which schools often agnostically reproduce our culture and the layered oppression therein (Giroux & Simon, 1984), PK-12 teachers and teacher educators have an opportunity to counter these inequities and facilitate their respective students development of critical democratic stances through the radical act of listening – and teaching their students to do the same. Drawing on a range of existing theories, Listening Literacy primarily synthesizes Indigenous pedagogies (Merculieff & Roderick, 2013; Smith-Gilman, 2018; Tanaka, 2016), Deweyan philosophy (Dewey, 1997/1916; Waks, 2011), critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2009), culturally sustaining practices (Paris & Alim, 2017), speculative civic literacies

(Mirra & Garcia, 2020), and artful pedagogies (Flint & Toledo, 2021) to create environments that center student voice, build classroom community, and position learners (both educators and the PK-12 students with which they interact) as experts and civic actors with the potential to address issues of social injustice.

Listening Pedagogy: Photovoice. When relying on Listening Literacy, teachers and teacher educators implement "listening pedagogies" – that is, instructional approaches that intentionally engage students, teachers, and other participants in the act of listening around a particular topic (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025). These often visual and arts-based projects can allow the creator and the audience to access different facets of understanding (Quijada Cerecer et al., 2011; Vasser-Elong, 2025). Via such pedagogies, listening becomes both a content element of the curriculum as well as a means for students to engage with that curriculum. These instructional moves challenge students to consider their own assumptions and critically consider diverse perspectives. While there are innumerable listening pedagogies (e.g., restorying, process drama, filmmaking), the CPB implementation in this case employed photovoice as a pedagogy.

Merged Model of PBTE/CPB

CPB clinical experiences offer a contextually relevant clinical structure that attempts to counter the over-standardization and decontextualization common with isolated PBTE while simultaneously integrating a contextualized social justice lens. To enact such short, intensive clinical structures, preservice teachers must be equipped with knowledge of high-leverage practices, supplied via practice-based strategies (Schutz et al, 2018; Zeichner, 2013). Such strategies include scaffolded rehearsals (Kazemi et al., 2016) and pedagogies of enactment (Grossman et al., 2019). We reasoned that a course that synergized key elements of both models might best serve us as university-based teacher educators, the preservice teachers in our program, partnering school-based teacher educators (too often forgotten or lightly regarded in traditional teacher preparation and PBTE structures), and even PK-12 students.

Methods

In this section, we describe the analytical and qualitative methods we employed in this instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) of the "Perspectives" elective course. We begin by sharing our positionalities which informed both our study and the pedagogies we employed in this early PBTE/CPB model. We then present the context of the case, detailing how the course design paired the PBTE framework with a CPB clinical structure before describing the participants, data, and analysis methods.

Positionalities

As our lived identities impact our ways of knowing and perceptions of reality (Erickson, 1968), we briefly introduce ourselves here. Authors 1, 3, and 4 are emerging scholars in teacher education who identify as White cis-gender women. Author 2 is a White, cis-gender man and veteran university-based teacher educator who designed and instructed the course examined in this case. He functioned as a mentor for the other authors in the study, with Authors 1 and 3 having served as his teaching interns in prior semesters. Author 5 is a secondary teacher who has served as a school-based teacher educator through multiple iterations of the course, and she identifies as a White cis-gender woman.

Context

To better frame our methods and findings, we offer a summary description of the "Perspectives" course in this section. To offer context surrounding the data collected for the case, we begin with a brief overview of the origin of "Perspectives" and photovoice, an arts-based research method that we implemented as a listening pedagogy. We then detail the course design to illustrate how elements of PBTE and CPB were synthesized.

The Origin of "Perspectives" and Photovoice

The "Perspectives" course began as a photovoice inquiry (the "Through Students' Eyes" project or TSE) in Cleveland in 2004 (Zenkov et al., 2016). Unaware of the still early research on "photovoice," the TSE directors speculated that young people might be more motivated to engage with school and its writing practices if they had the opportunity to consider the institution's very objectives (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025). This paper's second author has now employed photovoice methods to listen to young people and future and current teachers via dozens of such projects, exploring their perspectives on not just school and writing, but also citizenship, community, reading, and numerous other topics (Zenkov et al, 2013, 2014, 2023).

An exercise that aims to empower participants to use photography to share expertise and generate knowledge, photovoice has three main goals: 1) allow participants to record and reflect on their own communities and experiences, 2) promote critical dialogue about important community issues through discussion of the images, and 3) influence changes in policy, pedagogies, and community action (Wang & Burris, 1997). When structured intentionally, photovoice can serve as an effective listening pedagogy. Scholarly analyses of photovoice products (pictures and related writings) focus on reflective elements and participants' ideas (Latz, 2017). Scholarship demonstrates that such photovoice methods can challenge participants' own and others' perceptions of the phenomena they are examining, their identities as experts on that phenomena, and their rights and abilities to construct and compose meaningful writing and art representative of their own lives and destinies (Bonati & Andriana, 2021; Borup & Stevens, 2018; Hua, 2012; Zenkov, 2010).

The "Perspectives of Extraordinary Teaching" Course

The TSE initiative eventually evolved into an elective course taught by Author 2 in the Secondary Education program with which he is affiliated at a large mid-Atlantic university. Running for over a decade, the six-week summer elective enrolls approximately 10-20 preservice and inservice teachers working toward Master of Education degrees and teaching licenses; these graduate students (referred to as "POETs") experience an iterative PBTE cycle of approximations, representations, and decompositions (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020). The course is also anchored in high-leverage practices (Teaching Works, 2025) which are integrated into the course demonstrations and the assignments the POETs produce. POETs facilitate three clinical site visits at middle and high schools (CPB clinical experiences) where they lead a photovoice process as a listening pedagogy with secondary students. This occurs early in the course while schools are still open; the latter-half of the course is devoted to instructor-led representations of practice and individual approximations from the POETs. Table 1 outlines the typical course structure.

Table 1

"Perspectives" Course Overview

Week 1	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	Class community-building; instructor leads representation of photovoice; Team 1 plans first site visit
	Wednesday (Site Visit)	Team 1 enacts photovoice activity at first school; other POETs support
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Instructor leads class in reflection on and decomposition of first site visit; veteran school-based teacher educator leads POETs through an representation of "extraordinary" teaching; all teams plan approximations based on assigned high-leverage practices
Week 2	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	In teams, POETs lead approximations and whole-class decompositions; Team 2 plans second site visit
	Wednesday (Site Visit)	Team 2 enacts photovoice activity at second school; other POETs support
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Instructor leads class in reflection on and decomposition of second site visit; veteran school-based teacher educator leads POETs through a representation of "extraordinary" teaching; all teams plan approximations based on assigned high-leverage practices
Week 3	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	In teams, POETs lead approximations and whole-class decompositions; Team 3 plans third site visit
	Wednesday (Site Visit)	Team 3 enacts photovoice activity at third school; other POETs support
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Instructor leads class in reflection on and decomposition of second site visit; veteran school-based teacher educator leads POETs through a representation of "extraordinary" teaching; all teams plan approximations based on assigned high-leverage practices
Week 4	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	Instructor led representation of high-leverage pedagogies; in teams, POETs lead approximations and whole-class decompositions
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Instructor facilitates POET team conferences to decompose site visits and approximations and to plan for individual approximations
Week 5	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	Instructor-led representation of high-leverage pedagogies
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Instructor facilitates one-on-one conferences to assist POETs with planning for individual approximations
Week 6	**Tuesday** (University Classroom)	Individual approximations designed and led by each POET followed by whole-class decompositions
	Thursday (University Classroom)	Individual approximations designed and led by each POET followed by whole-class decompositions

In the first "Perspectives" class at the university each summer semester, the course instructor (Author 2) enacts the listening pedagogy photovoice process. Then, POETs are broken into three teams; while POETs attend all three 2-3 hour school site visits, each team takes responsibility for planning and leading one of the three photovoice lessons. During the university class meetings, the teams plan and rehearse their site visit lessons together and receive feedback from the instructor and their peers. Their site visit lesson must employ high-leverage practices and consist of a community-building activity, modeling of the photowalk and photo selection steps, photo elicitation conferences, and drafting and sharing of reflections. During the site visits, all POETs (the facilitating team members and their peers) work with an individual or pair/trio of secondary students. Youths' photos and reflections respond to four questions, which are also the focus of all course assignments the POETs complete, as part of the embedded social justice framework of Listening Literacy:

1. What do you believe makes an extraordinary teacher?

2. What do you believe teachers do to support your own and your peers' willingness to attend, engage with, be successful in, and stay in school?

3. What do you believe teachers do to get in the way of your own and your peers' willingness to attend, engage with, be successful in, and stay in school?

4. What do you believe is the evidence that teachers are successful at their jobs?

Follow-up university classes allow for decompositions – debriefing about the pedagogical decisions made in whole and small group contexts – supported by extensive qualitative feedback from the instructor (Author 2). In addition, POETs make entries into their "Pedagogical Practices Photovoice Journals" (PPPs) across the length of the course to prompt reflection on and decomposition of their perspectives around extraordinary teaching.

In addition to these site visits, the PBTE instructional cycle and high-leverage practices are reinforced through the three other assignments, all revolving around forms of approximation (twice with their teams and once as individuals during the final week of the course). While the instructor continually models representations, he also invites veteran teachers in as guest presenters to demonstrate effective pedagogies. Decompositions of these elements include feedback from the instructor, individual written reflections, metacognitive discussions with the whole class, and individual reflections in the PPPs. For example, the instructor may ask the POETs, "Why is this an example of effective teaching?" or "Why might I have made this instructional choice?" and guide the class towards deeper reflection (Grosser-Clarkson & Neel, 2020). Table 2 illustrates some ways PBTE and CPB elements are embedded within the course design.

Table 2

Merged CPB/PBTE Model in "Perspectives"

Original Framework	Element	Example from Course
PBTE	Approximations	Three times in the course, POETs rehearse a lesson based on high-leverage practices for their fellow POETs
	Representations of Practice	Instruct models photovoice process; Veteran teachers visit the class to demonstrate "extraordinary" pedagogies and lessons
	Enactments	POETS lead photovoice process through specific high-leverage pedagogies during site visits
	Top-Down Decompositions	Written feedback from the instructor followed by conferencing
	Bottom-Up Decompositions	Whole-class metacognitive discussions after site visits and POET presentations; written reflections from POETs
CPB Clinical Experience	Brief and Focused on Student Learning	POETs attend three sites visits at three secondary schools, leading or assisting in 2-3 hour long photovoice lessons
	Social-Justice Framework	Listening literacy with photovoice as a primary listening pedagogy
Both	High-Leverage Practices	Written assignments, class presentations, and lessons at school sites are required to explicitly implement and reflect on high-leverage practices

Participants and Data Collection

As noted above, across the six-week course, POETs complete PPPs using photovoice methods to document the instructional strategies they have employed and/or witnessed in the course and/or during the site visits with secondary students (illustrative examples are included in the appendix). The objective of this project is for these early career teachers to consider a range of youths' perspectives, the strategies modeled by the instructor and their peers, and the pedagogies highlighted by course readings, ultimately developing a collection of effective instructional approaches to add to their own "teacher toolboxes." For this case study, we analyzed 18 of these PPPs (with approximately 15 entries in each) as longitudinal data. We selected six PPPs each from the last three years of the course (Summers 2023, 2024, and 2025) as purposive samples based on teaching status (see Table 3). These three semesters were chosen because the instructor had piloted the embedding of PBTE instructional elements into the CPB clinical experiences for these sections, looking to examine these as a "proof of concept" of this merged PBTE/CPB structure.

Table 3

Participant Information

Year	Pseudonym and Content	Status during Enrollment
2023	Ayla, English	Inservice Teacher
	Edward, Math	Preservice Teacher
	Hassan, Math	Preservice Teacher
	Alejandro, Social Studies	Preservice Teacher
	Cody, Social Studies	Preservice Teacher
	Tom, Social Studies	Inservice Teacher
2024	Giulia, English	Preservice Teacher
	Daniela, English	Preservice Teacher
	Emily, English	Preservice Teacher
	Noor, Math	Preservice Teacher
	Quinn, Science	Inservice Teacher
	Chloe, Social Studies	Inservice Teacher
2025	Chris, English	Inservice Teacher
	Melissa, English	Preservice Teacher
	Hana, Science	Preservice Teacher
	George, Social Studies	Preservice Teacher
	Liam, Social Studies	Preservice Teacher
	Alan, Social Studies	Preservice Teacher

In addition to the 18 PPPs, we analyzed the formal written feedback the instructor (Author 2) provided to students. After each site visit and small-group presentation, Author 2 offered qualitative feedback across five assignment features – preparation, opening facilitation, group facilitation, wrap-up/closing, and high-leverage practices – with three domains for each: observations, highlights, and points of growth. To guide the instructor's feedback, POETs submitted individual reflections on their approximations and site visits. Author 2 shared the feedback first with the pertinent group and then with the entire class, inviting the class as a whole to discuss and reflect not only on each small group's teaching, but also on the feedback itself, as a form of whole-class decomposition. We collected 12 of these qualitative rubrics, four from each year (2023, 2024, and 2025). As purposive samples, four of the rubrics specifically addressed site visits while eight addressed small-group presentations completed in the university class (see Table 4). While the PPP journals gave insight into how students experienced the course, the rubrics offered insight into how the instructor might enact elements of the frameworks, particularly decompositions.

Table 4

Data Analyzed in the Case

Data Source	Number of Sets Analyzed		
	2023	2024	2025
PPPs	6	6	6
Site Visit Rubrics	1	2	1
Small-Group Presentation Rubrics	3	2	3
Totals	10	10	10

Data Analysis

These qualitative data were coded through deductive and inductive processes in two stages to best address the research questions and conceptualize the "Perspectives" experiences (Stake, 1995). First, we independently acquainted ourselves with data – "digesting and reflecting" on its forms and content (Clarke, 2005, p. 84). Then we conducted a round of initial coding using identified characteristics from the PBTE and CPB frameworks to categorize data (e.g., approximations, rehearsals, decompositions, clinical experience, differentiation). We completed this step to confirm (or disprove) the existence of these PBTE and CPB characteristics and provide us (the authors) with a more complete picture of the merged PBTE/CPB course design. This first round of coding also allowed us to establish a basis for the instrumental case of our developing notion of this merged framework.

Next, all of the authors participated in "interpretive reflexive" thematic analysis to review students' images/writings in the PPPs and the instructor's written feedback in the rubrics (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 334). In this process, 45 codes emerged (e.g., relationship building, teaching style, creativity,

accommodating learners, safety and belonging, implicit bias, scaffolding, etc.). In this second round of coding (Charmaz, 2014), the authors divided and coded the data individually but met frequently to discuss emerging patterns and reconcile code application, producing iterative analytical memos throughout the process. We also discussed the photos in the PPPs, focusing on reflective elements and participants' ideas, consistent with photovoice analyses (Latz, 2017).

Multiple examinations of the 18 PPPs and 12 rubrics helped promote trustworthiness; additionally, each of the PPPs and rubrics were coded independently by two researchers during the initial coding stage, and the research team met consistently to reconcile analyses during the focused coding stage. As a final step, all authors met to compare our independent outcomes alongside our researcher memos and reorganize codes into categories then themes. For example, "safety and belonging" was merged with "implicit bias" to eventually create one of our themes: "promoting inclusion and social justice." Through this dialogic process, we identified the three themes we share below to address our two research questions.

Findings

In this section, we detail our findings as they addressed our two research questions, which we share again here just to remind the reader of these guiding queries:

1. How might CPB clinical experiences address noted critiques of the PBTE model via a merged CPB/PBTE structure?

2. What are the impacts on preservice/early career teachers' awareness of effective pedagogies that result from their experiences with a merged PBTE/CPB teacher preparation architecture?

Our first set of findings – assessing how CPB clinical experiences address noted critiques of the PBTE model via a merged structure – highlighted two themes related to the ways in which POETs recognized the importance of differentiating for diverse learners and creating classrooms that are inclusive and equitable. Crucially, POETs reiterated how extraordinary teachers took responsibility for implementing these responsive elements. Considering POETs' pedagogical insights (and answering our second research question), our analysis of the data suggested the third theme: the unique architecture of the course provided POETs with opportunities to reflect on and identify specific examples of effective pedagogies. Due to the limits of available space, below we include only three photos – one exemplar per theme – to illustrate these patterns.

RQ 1: Assessing the Augmentation of the Merged Model

Through the literature, we initially identified a primary critique of PBTE is the risk of prescribing standardized pedagogies without opportunities to develop these skills through application which can limit teachers' opportunities to practice adaptive expertise (Jannsen et al., 2015) and hinder their orientation towards asset-based, culturally sustaining teaching practices (Kavanagh et al., 2023a; Philip et al., 2019). The first two themes of our findings detail how the POETs enrolled in the course recognized the ways in which extraordinary teachers respond and adapt to students to make them feel successful and included as a form of social justice.

Differentiation and Adaptation

The idea of offering student's opportunities for choice and creativity in their learning highlighted POETs' insights related to differentiation in their instructional practices. POETs – and particularly the in-service teachers amongst our participants – reflected how differentiation might look in their own practice. Edward described ways he would offer different modalities for instructional time: "A few students are working alone, some in groups, but all of them are still seated with their attention towards their work." Tom echoed this idea of access: "Instead of having students only take notes, I try to give them multiple ways to show me what they have learned." And Ayla shared: "My one lesson looks different in all five classes, down to having just different skills and practices that we focus on." Similarly, Emily noted the need for choices in designing summatives: "Instead of only catering to those with great writing skills by assigning essays, switching it up with presentations." Talking to high school students during a site visit allowed Giulia to recognize how students "prefer to have options," and in her PPP journal she noted how she now wanted her future students to have "practice making their own intentional choices." In one rubric, Author 2 wrote, "choice matters, options give access."

The PPP journals and feedback from the instructor reiterated that teachers should be flexible and accommodating to the diverse needs and capabilities of their students. The site visits reinforced the necessity of differentiation in actual instruction. After working with EL students in a middle school class, Ayla wrote, "I was led to believe that students would all be around the same level and abilities, but that is simply not true." She now acknowledged:

> My lessons need to meet English learners, students with dyslexia, students who are four grades behind, students who are at a collegiate level, students with ADHD, students with different intellectual abilities, students who have bad days, and so much more.

Giving feedback on this same site visit, Author 2 prompted POETs to consider strategies of differentiation: "I wondered about how you'd thought about modifying your words to best communicate to this younger audience, which was also filled with students who were English language learners. What vocabulary and strategies did you use to communicate with them?" After one site visit went awry due to a school fire drill, in an effort to guide students towards expecting and planning for the unexpected, Author 2 wrote: "While we didn't plan for you to be so responsive, you handled the reality of needing to be so with tremendous professionalism. Looking back now, how might you have planned differently, given this reality?"

The instructor's feedback consistently illustrated that he recognized that "extraordinary teachers" (the driving focus of the course) took ownership of supporting students through accommodations and differentiation: "It's up to us as the teachers to make sure this level of respect exists." And POETs' own reflections in the PPPs matched this orientation, with Noor writing, "In a class of twenty-eight students or so, the teacher needs to make sure they reach all students," and Hassan reflecting that extraordinary teachers are capable of "coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson to make it responsive to students' needs." Noor added: "[T]eachers need to know what is happening in students' lives to respond appropriately and find out their needs to optimize instruction design." And, for one photovoice entry in her PPP (Figure 1), Emily posted a photo of stacked dishes:

This beautiful stack of bowls is orderly and organized, however, there is a chip on one of the bowls. This chip can represent the hardships of teaching since every day is a little varied and different. Students are humans who experience many chips in their lives, ones others don't know much about. Teachers have to accommodate and work around the chip to get the students to feel heard while learning the content or the shape of the bowl… Being flexible and understanding how to be quick problem-solvers on their feet, teachers can use each experience as a way to adjust accordingly for the instruction to be met in each lesson.

Figure 1

Emily's Photovoice: The Metaphor of Chipped Bowls

Figure 2

Chris's Photovoice: Admitting Regret
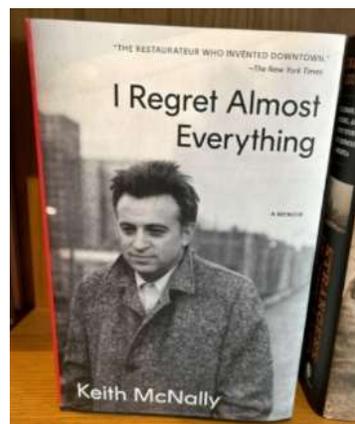
Promoting Inclusion and Social Justice

In response to critiques that PBTE can promote instruction that overlooks issues of justice, the analysis of data from the merged PBTE/CPB "Perspectives" project showed that POETs were reflecting on how to promote inclusion through differentiating instruction and by attending to their own biases and position as authority figures. Chris shared the cover of a book about regrets and wrote, "Teachers enact bias in the classroom. We all prejudge our students despite our best efforts." He acknowledged: "I chose this image because I regret how I've judged and continue to judge students" (Figure 2). Hassan echoed this sentiment, writing, "Implicit bias has a way of showing up in teachers' comments when they're least aware." Relatedly, George wrote, "It makes the teacher and their classroom less of a safe space for their students and is a failure on the teacher's part to not provide equity and equal opportunity for students to succeed." He added, "Unconscious bias is unfortunate… it means that a teacher is unknowingly setting some students up for failure based on the teachers' own sleeping prejudice."

The POETs were encouraged to be attentive to these ideas through elements of the course. For example, the PPP journal assignment required them to consult external sources. Appealing to a recent scholarly report, George cited statistics about how implicit bias can negatively impact student grades. And citing a number of studies, Alan noted the "extensive research on the impact that a teacher's unconscious bias or implicit attitudes have on student learning."

Alan also recalled how the site visits helped him reflect on identity and positionality. After a conversation with an African American high schooler, he wrote, "Since I'm not an African American teacher, this poses an interesting question of how I might be able to better accommodate a Black student to give the individual the best opportunity to learn in my class." Giulia reflected on one site visit, recalling, "One student expressed that he gets frustrated when people or teachers assume 'all of Latin America is Mexico.' It is crucial that we do better to learn about students' cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to ethnicity, heritage."

The data highlighted various ways teachers might promote more inclusivity. Hassan noted they were committed to creating fair rubrics to reduce their own "implicit bias," and Emily wrote, "It is important for the teacher to take on the role of understanding positionality and implementing the strengths of said positionality in the classroom." Author 2 reinforced this ownership, describing how students might physically crouch or kneel near students and engage with them as equals: "It demonstrates to students that you're not above them, that you intend to honor them as equals, at least in terms of ideas, if not full authority."

By attending to bias and creating spaces committed to inclusion, POETs felt they could create better learning environments for their students. Cody wrote, "When it is clear that all students are in a safe space, the students can have those higher-level conversations with both the teacher and each other." George echoed this idea: "When students feel safe and respected, they're more likely to take chances and grow." Hassan recognized that not respecting students' identities "may impede students' willingness to attend, engage and stay in school."

RQ 2: Impacts on Preservice/Early Career Teachers' Awareness of Pedagogies

Our reviews of the data indicated that various elements of the course provided POETs with specific, authentic examples of effective pedagogies, For example, reflecting on representations, the PPPs described strategies of extraordinary teaching highlighted by the veteran teacher guest presenters. Noor wrote, "It was a great experience to learn from Elizabeth [a guest presenter] when she taught us so many things including leading group discussions and setting up and managing small group work." Quinn echoed this observation: "Roberto [a guest presenter] showed how to keep students participating and interacting even during direct instruction." Hana remembered two different teacher representations: She highlighted the creativity from one – "I was so impressed and inspired by her creative drive to engage her students by keeping her project relevant to them" – and a feedback process designed by another – "he [the teacher] values feedback from his students and teaches them how to reflect on their work."

In their journals, POETs also recognized how different approximations gave them insight into effective pedagogies. For example, recalling a classmate's end-of-semester lesson, Liam noted that her "call-and-response kept us engaged, and it could be a great tool to check student understanding throughout a lesson." Tiffany, an in-service social studies teacher, was impacted by a fellow classmate's approximation related to scaffolding, noting how it might shape her current practice: "I would love to implement this in my classroom in some way… I know that my students would benefit from more hard (scaffolded and supported) reading and writing in class."

Ultimately, the school site visits provided the most substantive opportunities for POETs to identify – and implement – what they recognized as effective pedagogies. Giulia revealed how working with English language learners at a middle school helped her practice modeling. And Alejandro, another in-service teacher, reflected on a conversation he had with a high school student during a site visit: "She told me about her experiences with a teacher who used many visuals in her lessons. It made me think of my lesson plans. I use a lot of visuals and short film clips."

The feedback Author 2 (the course instructor) provided to POETs on their approximation-related assignments and on their CPB lesson facilitations highlighted specific pedagogical moves. These sometimes praised POETs for implementing these practices: "You had someone from the class read the slide aloud. Just as we should milk every opportunity to interact with our students, we should milk every chance to let students contribute, have their voices heard, particularly in low-key ways." And other times they noted areas where these practices might be implemented: "I wondered a bit about how much space we were leaving for students' voices in some small groups and about our comfort with wait time: two more key skills to practice." In her PPP journal, Daniela described the impact of the communal decompositions Author 2 facilitated after the site visits: "In class, we completed a process of identifying highlights, insights, and a lowlight about the site visit [the day before]. I think that this can be a practice of extraordinary teaching because it can be used in a variety of ways by a teacher."

These feedback procedures prompted POETs to reflect deeply on their own practice, linking these reflections to their future pedagogies, both in the course and in their own classrooms. Liam wrote, "I think I have done more formal reflecting in the last two semesters of this program than in the rest of my life, combined." Alejandro described reflecting on feedback from peers and instructor, with an explicit focus on improving the effectiveness of their pedagogies at subsequent site visits: "We need to remember to look at ourselves and ask, 'Did that go well? Were we going through the paces?'" Linking the practice of reflection directly to pedagogies with students, Melissa echoed her colleagues' ideas: "This whole class is based on reflection of our teaching practices and how we can continuously improve. This is why it is crucial that we offer students time for reflection."

Liam, whose quote inspired the title of this article, added that students seemed "acutely" aware of the quality of their teacher's lessons, particularly those instructional situations that made it clear to students that they were secure enough to take the risks needed to learn. In one photovoice entry from his PPP journal, he shared an image of a car safety handle (Figure 3), using this photo to reflect on his own experiences as a student and the implications for his future practice as a teacher:

> As a student, I feel safe when it's clear a lesson is about to run smoothly and give me the support I need. It's like being on a road trip with a driver you trust – you can drift off to sleep, confident that you're safe. But when a lesson is a mess, I stress out. It's like being in the passenger seat of my grandma's car when I was a kid, white-knuckling the "oh shit" handle as she drifted toward oncoming traffic. I want my lessons to communicate that sense of safety for my students. I'm going to get them there. They just need to sit back and enjoy the ride.

Figure 3

Liam's Photovoice: The "Oh Shit" Handle

Cody's conversation with a 9th grader made it clear that the student wanted two things from teachers: support and opportunities for creative freedom. This desire reinforced for Cody the dangers of a "sage on the stage" approach to instruction where teachers "[spout] heaps of knowledge at students but disregard students' learning or feelings." Emily echoed these insights, noting how extraordinary teachers "provide great pedagogies that will allow students to get creative and innovative."

Discussion

In this article, we have examined the theoretical bases of both the PBTE and CPB models, detailed how CPB structures attempt to answer common PBTE critiques, and explored how a graduate-level teacher education course designed through an initial merged PBTE and CPB framework might impact early career teachers' considerations of pedagogy. It appears that CPB holds promise for addressing some of the key limitations of PBTE and traditional clinical practice: a blended PBTE/CPB structure has the potential to guide teachers toward deeper understandings of differentiation and justice-oriented pedagogies as well as identify important, effective pedagogical skills. Amongst the most promising implications for such a merged structure – and another potential area for future study – are the ways in which a PBTE/CPB model helps teachers develop pedagogical agency. We explore these implications and limitations below.

The Impacts of an Augmented Teacher Preparation Structure

Scholars have long acknowledged how difficult it is to determine how – or even if – different preparation structures impact teachers' pedagogies (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Bardelli et al., 2022). While our study only captured POETs' self-reported reflections on teaching during one summer course, it was apparent that the merged PBTE/CPB architecture prompted in-service teachers to reflect on their current pedagogies and preservice teachers to reflect on their future pedagogies via bottom-up decomposition processes (Kavanaugh et al., 2023), reinforced by the top-down decompositions offered by Author 2's feedback. Within the merged architecture, elements from the two frameworks overlapped and enhanced one another. For example, the social justice listening pedagogy drew from the CPB framework but generated the bottom-up decompositions. Table 5 offers other examples from the findings to depict the potential for complementing PBTE with CPB clinical experiences.

While our instrumental case establishes the potential for such merged structures in teacher education, future scholarship should empirically expand these theories into a more rigorous framework for the field. In reviewing what is apparent from our findings, we would suggest the CPB social justice framework of

listening literacy – through the method of photovoice – was essential in fostering these bottom-up decompositions. Further, the merged PBTE/CPB elements served to provide specific benefits for all participating educators and better bridge the theory/practice divide. We explore these implications below.

Table 5

Elements of PBTE/CPB that Emerged from the Findings

Element	Illustrative Example	Evidence
Approximations	POETs implementing high-leverage pedagogies and listening pedagogies during class presentations	Author 2: "You had someone from the class read the slide aloud. Just as we should milk every opportunity to interact with our students, we should milk every chance to let students contribute, have their voices heard, particularly in low-key ways."
Representations	Impact of visiting teachers who modeled "extraordinary" practice	Noor: "It was a great experience to learn from Elizabeth [a guest presenter] when she taught us so many things including leading group discussions and setting up and managing small group work"
Top Down Decompositions	Specific written feedback from course instructor	Author 2: "I wondered about how you'd thought about modifying your words to best communicate to this younger audience, which was also filled with students who were English language learners. What vocabulary and strategies did you use to communicate with them?"

Element	Illustrative Example	Evidence
Facilitated Bottom-Up Decompositions	Communal, whole-class decompositions guided by course instructor's written feedback	Daniela: "In class, we completed a process of identifying highlights, insights, and a lowlight about the site visit [the day before]. I think that this can be a practice of extraordinary teaching because it can be used in a variety of ways by a teacher."
Self-Guided Bottom-Up Decompositions	Individual reflections after site visits	Ayla: "My lessons need to meet English learners, students with dyslexia, students who are four grades behind, students who are at a collegiate level, students with ADHD, students with different intellectual abilities, students who have bad days, and so much more."
Emerging Recompositions	Considering how to implement feedback at subsequent site visits and/or future practice	Melissa: "We need to remember to look at ourselves and ask, 'Did that go well? Were we going through the paces?'"
Adaptive Expertise	PPP journals prompt reflection around differentiation and high-leverage practices	Tom: "Instead of having students only take notes, I try to give them multiple ways to show me what they have learned."
Critical Consciousness	Reflecting on identity and positionality after conducting photovoice process with diverse students	Giulia: "One student expressed that he gets frustrated when people or teachers assume 'all of Latin America is Mexico.' It is crucial that we do better to learn about students' cultural backgrounds, including but not limited to ethnicity, heritage."

Listening Pedagogy: Photovoice

CPB clinical experiences require an embedded social justice framework. This case implemented listening literacy, an artful, democratic orientation towards listening to young people as a form of criticality and activism (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025). Listening pedagogies (in this case photovoice) task teachers with the implementation of authentic, student-centered assessments with PK-12 students; these strategies offer pathways for educators to cultivate their own capacity for reflection and empathetic consciousness through artful activities (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025). Leading the photovoice process with secondary students provided a method for early career teachers to practice some of the most foundational skills of inquiry-based instruction: prompting student thinking, eliciting deeper responses, and interpreting student knowledge (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015).

While the photovoice lessons with the secondary students offered opportunities to practice powerful, inquiry-based pedagogy, the PPP journal may actually be the crux of the course. The PPPs tasked POETs to employ photovoice as a method for reflecting on their own practice through the lens of individual high-leverage strands. This process explicitly prompted POETs to decompose their own professional development across multiple forms (e.g., photography, written reflection, and external resources/readings; see Appendix A). Through this assignment, the POETs wrestled with the science of teaching alongside their perspectives of themselves as teachers, creating a sort of imagined classroom between theory and practice (Jay, 2023). In this manner, the PPPs might serve as constructivist, practice-based professional development or "artifact of practice" (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 17) that tasks teachers with deeply examining their own capabilities; in the process, they connect their professional development to both their teacher preparation experiences and their future/current secondary classrooms.

One element of the merged course not captured in our data were opportunities for POETs to demonstrate potential growth based on these reflections or engage in recompositions (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Janssen et al., 2015). However, data did reveal considerable reflection on pedagogy and an explicit connection to implementing those structures in future practice – both within and beyond the bounds of the course. Central to these data were articulated connections between POETs own pedagogies and potential impacts on secondary students. Further, the photovoice process was conducted multiple times both during "Perspectives" class time and at each of the three site visits. We believe these iterations offered POETs opportunities to practice critical high-leverage practices related to eliciting student thinking and operating "experimentally in response to students and situations," (Ball & Cohen, 1999, p. 11) a foundational skill in teacher development (Kavanagh et al., 2020).

Professionalization and the Theory/Practice Divide

Our findings also revealed the ways in which the merged course design offers important benefits for participating educators. Some critics have suggested that an overreliance on clinical structures can diminish the traditional university-based teacher educator role, resulting in these capacities being reduced to a form of job training (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Furlong et al., 2008; Newman, 2022). However, our case demonstrates the ways in which embedding PBTE elements with CPB clinical experiences necessitated a highly skilled university-based teacher educator serving in capacities well beyond that of a deprofessionalized "job trainer" (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Ball & Forzani, 2009; Furlong et al., 2008; Newman, 2022; Zenkov & Rudder, in press). For example, as apparent in our findings, teacher educators must be

adept at constructing feedback and scaffolding decomposition in ways that grow early career teachers. Targeted feedback during approximations and through decompositions requires advanced proficiency in identifying and dissecting pedagogy for the benefit of their university students (Grossman, 2011; Jay, 2023).

Further, the course we analyzed also required skilled school-based teacher educators: by inviting guest educators to offer representations of extraordinary teaching – a strategy long supported by PBTE scholars (Grossman, 2011; Jay, 2023) – the course merged the expertise of university-based teacher educators with the expertise of school-based practitioners, fostering a bridge across the oft critiqued theory/practice divide in teacher education. In the process, both teacher educator roles are professionalized, an avenue that should be explored in future studies of PBTE/CPB models.

Finally, we suggest the design of this course may also help professionalize early career teachers. PBTE alone must be cautious of prescribing standardized, overly general teaching practices (Kavanagh et al., 2020; Philip et al., 2019). In designing lessons for the site visits, the merged PBTE/CPB framework instead structured the practice of teaching in ways that valued the POETs' judgment and adaptability (Kavanagh et al., 2020) – trusting their own expertise as novice educators with the support of university- and school-based teacher educators in the room. While this case illustrates the benefits of such iterative practice and feedback for the POETs, potential long-term impacts of a merged PBTE/CPB model on teachers' pedagogies and practice need additional study.

Engagement with Students and Pedagogical Agency

As noted throughout this article, the PBTE model alone may not adequately develop teachers' skills in differentiation (Moody et al., 2022a) and critical, social-justice oriented praxis (Phillip et al., 2019). Researchers are explicit that teachers need opportunities to practice their adaptive expertise (Janssen et al., 2015) alongside explicit instruction in criticality (Kavanaugh et al., 2023). While CPB clinical experiences have the ability to develop teachers as pedagogues and advocates because of their embedded social justice framework (Roegman et al., 2020) – in this case, listening literacy (Zenkov & Rudder, 2025) – these experiences must integrate explicit coursework related to notions of equity and social justice. Without unambiguous instruction in these complex topics, these might manifest as classroom practices that trivialize the realities of systemic oppression, potentially perpetuating a neoliberal notion that systemic inequality can be countered by individual action (Phillip et al., 2019; Zenkov & Rudder, in press). Based on the findings of this study, CPB clinical experiences paired with PBTE coursework show promise for addressing both of these limitations by not only offering teachers opportunities to practice these skills in authentic settings but also in allowing them to identify their own power as social justice advocates.

As highlighted above, perhaps the most promising outcome of a blended PBTE/CPB model is the impact on preservice and early career teachers' pedagogical agency: POETs not only reflected on the need for differentiation, they also took ownership of the instructional and ethical imperative of employing such strategies. Working with a variety of students during the site visits revealed the existence of individual secondary students' needs and allowed POETs to practice their adaptive expertise. Facilitating the photovoice process centered the act of *listening* to students lived experiences and beliefs which oriented the POETs towards reflection and interpretation of student thinking rather than POETs' own assumptions or beliefs. And, prompted and encouraged by Author 2's feedback, they recognized the professional

urgency to get to know students and adapt instruction accordingly. In their journals, they consistently articulated the teacher's responsibility for navigating such adaptations.

However, while POETs articulated pedagogical agency, as noted, there was limited evidence of recomposition in practice from our data. Future studies should incorporate a variety of data to better measure the characteristics of an augmented PBTE/CPB architecture and adapt course activities accordingly. Additionally, our findings revealed that few POETs explicitly acknowledged their own social/racial identities and positionality. Future iterations of the course might incorporate explicit activities that task POETs with reflecting on their individual social identities (Wing, 2015) and challenge notions of colorblindness (Kim & Marshall, 2024).

Limitations

This study has some additional limitations that warrant consideration. First, our data relied on self-reported reflections from POETs' journals and the instructor's written feedback, which may not fully capture the complexity of teaching practices or the actual implementation of pedagogies in classroom settings. Second, the scope of our analysis was limited to 18 participants from one six-week summer course across three years at a single institution, restricting our ability to generalize findings to other teacher preparation contexts or programs. Finally, while we strove to implement systems to promote reliability in our analyses, four of the five authors have been directly involved as teacher educators with the "Perspectives" course; our positionalities may have influenced our interpretations of the data. As with any instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), our attempt was to examine a phenomenon in an early stage of implementation to assess its promise as a teacher education structure. While our findings reveal the potential of such a model, it also represents a long history of teacher education being measured through small-scale case studies and narrow data sets (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Rudder et al., 2026b). Future research is needed to rigorously generate a formal framework of a merged PBTE/CPB architecture.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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In this case, we illustrated how a merged PBTE/CPB graduate-level course impacted early career teachers' considerations of pedagogy, specifically their orientation to differentiation and equity. We propose now that the social justice orientation of the CPB edifice (in this case, the listening pedagogy of photovoice) during repeated rounds of site visits offered these teachers a "way in" to the realities of young people's lives and learning, as well as allowed them to rehearse their pedagogical power, adapting to meet these youths' needs. The evidence of their reflections indicated that these preservice/early career teachers' social justice orientations to teaching were enhanced by the diversity of youths and perspectives they encountered. Importantly, these teachers took ownership and agency for their power in honoring and responding to the identities and needs of their future students.

Finally, we are conscious of one additional outcome that, while not unheard of (Grossman, 2011), should be considered more systematically in future scholarship: the impact of this work on us (this article's authors). Developing, implementing, and examining this hybrid PBTE/CPB model represented a form of decomposition not only of effective teaching but also of effective teacher education. For a profession that has long been criticized for failing to address what is perhaps its most foundational flaw – that

theory/practice divide – we welcome such opportunities to answer this assessment by examining our own pedagogies.

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Appendix A

Illustrative Examples of PPP Journals

Figure A1

An Entry from Daniela's PPP

Figure A2

An Entry from Cody's PPP

The empty room serves as a stand in for the evidence that a teacher is extraordinary. If a teacher is not extraordinary, then their room will likely look something like this: a barron room, devoid of any fun or students. The blank study room reminds me of what teachers dread their room to look like. Recently I had the pleasure of talking with Brian, a 9th grade student at Freedom High School, and through our conversations he made it clear to me that what he wants from teachers are two things: support and opportunities for creative freedom. Brian said that he loved his engineering class because the teacher allowed for creative freedom and supported his students. When I briefly looked in on that class, the room was full of students, all of which seemed to be enjoying themselves and their learning.

This idea of teacher's embracing student creative freedom and supporting their students connects to the core practice of "Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons" as the lessons that the teacher makes in order to prevent their classroom from looking like an empty study room support student thinking and allows for students to express inquiry and creativity. These are conscious choices that the teacher is making when designing their lessons and it shows in how the students appreciate them.