Teach Toledo employs aspects of Emdin's (2016) *reality pedagogy*, which employs students' lived realities in everyday teaching. We model this to our students—future teachers—so they may do so in their future classrooms in P-12 education

Creating Commons:
Photovoice Philosophy in a Third Space

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Abstract: *Teach Toledo* is an initiative using community assets to confront systemic racism's impact on teacher education programs and facilitate *hybridity* via provision of a *third space* (Bhaba, 1994). "Creating commons" relies on physical and temporal provision of a third space and refers to the creative act of fashioning and communicating a common purpose, i.e., a common philosophy of education. In their first semester, diverse student cohort members use their lived experience as the basis for their individual and shared urban educational philosophies, coordinated in a first-year horizontally and vertically integrated curriculum including written compositions and a PhotoVoice project. A shared philosophy of possibility for urban education helps create a communal expectation that functions as a philosophical third space. The collective philosophy reflects students' lived experiences and their intention to create hopeful, joyful, and kind public P-12 schools and universities. Curricular initiatives to create shared, relevant philosophy can be foundational to urban reform initiatives, but to succeed, initiatives require material support for both individual students and institutional structures.

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U.S. urban school districts are damaged by economic and political forces that push toward a globalized, Eurocentric, privatized, market-driven culture, described as neoliberal (Saunders, 2010; deMarrais et al., 2019), and their curriculum and pedagogy are conventionally irrelevant to the reality of urban-dwelling students (Emdin, 2016). A largely black and brown student population learns to keep its place through what Spring (2016) described as *deculturalization*: "the educational process of destroying a people's culture (cultural genocide) and replacing it with a new culture" (p. 5). Deculturalization occurs via both the curriculum that is taught and the inherent biases of the white, middle-class, non-urban-dwelling teaching force (Toldson, 2008; Villegas et al., 2012). The problem is sustained by faculty and preservice teachers in traditional teacher education programs continuing to be predominantly white, middle-class, and suburban or rural (Feistritzer et al., 2011; Policy and Program Studies Service, 2016; Taie, S., & Goldring, 2017). Achieving diversity, equity, and cultural relevance in teacher education and the teaching profession requires consistent, collective examination of the purposes of schooling, the roles of teachers and students, and the curriculum necessary to achieve the purpose (Oakes et al., 2018) toward a planned and purposeful disruption of business as usual in teacher education. The twin problems of deculturalization and an unrepresentative, culturally irrelevant teaching force will persist until colleges of education make it a priority to diversify—students, faculty, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Art educators have worked to disrupt deculturalization by emphasizing the need to appreciate community assets. Moje et al. (2004) emphasized the need to recognize that "teachers and students bring different instructional, home, and community knowledge bases and discourses to bear on classroom texts" (p. 41), and to use these resources. Hutzel, Bastos, & Cosier (2012) called for art educators to recognize students' cultural capitals and to blur the boundaries between the stakeholders, with student-led creation of learning environments and community-oriented arts integration. Hutzel (2012) noted that "schools

serving working- and middle-class urban populations are often places where various cultures come together, presenting unique possibilities for multicultural education through collaborative learning and community building" (p. 96). Daniel (2005) and Guimarães (2012) both argued for student investigations through the arts that emphasize the everyday experience of the students, because doing so highlights areas of overlap between the students and contributed to the development of a community-based pedagogy. In terms of purpose, Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr (2001) called for recognizing "beliefs, values, and patterns that give meaning and structure to life," while Bodilly, Augustine, Zakaras (2008) invoked education focused "on refining perception and discrimination; developing imagination, mutual sympathy, and the capacity for wonder and awe; and developing the deep understanding that is critical to all learning." Outside of art education, Emdin (2016) coined similar work as *reality pedagogy*, emphasizing the need for all teachers to "understand the oppression … youth experience, the spaces they inhabit, and the ways these phenomena affect what happens in social settings like traditional classrooms" (p. 9). Emdin conceptualized specific pedagogical techniques, including *co-teaching*, where teachers would "be humble enough to become students of their students—especially the students who have been most harmed, and will benefit most from a teacher listening to their experiences" (Emdin, 2020, para. 9). Including student and community knowledge in art education and teacher education has thus been well explored, and our work constitutes an intervention to bring diverse students into classrooms with the goal of contributing to diversifying the teaching workforce and articulating a shared educational philosophy for it, using these pedagogical approaches.

Such work, however, requires a space within which it can grow to reach its fullest potential. Bhaba (1994) theorized *third space* as "a place of intervention, in the here and now" where oppressors and the oppressed can create new possibilities together (p. xx). Third space connotes creativity, a place where "strategies of representation or

empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of community" (Bhaba, 1994, p. xx). Rochielle and Carpenter (2015) emphasized the artistic aspect of third space as "a site of learning formed when educational, artistic, creative, and other cultural practices intersect and move outside traditional paradigms and norms" (p. 131). Collaboration within third space results in what Bhaba (1994) identified as *hybridity:* the new cultural forms and expressions that result from collaboration, drawing on multiple cultures of participants, in third spaces and characterized by transformative power (pp. 37-38). We envision *Teach Toledo* as a third space—a place of collaborative possibility in which we, as white faculty members in a predominantly white institution, can work with students of color from an economically depressed urban community to challenge systemic racism and to work actively for change.

Teach Toledo

The work described in this paper took place at the University of Toledo, where both authors are faculty with appointments in the college of education and co-coordinate the *Teach Toledo* initiative. UToledo is a metropolitan public research university which at the time of this study served approximately 20,000 students. UToledo's mission includes that students become "part of a diverse community of leaders committed to improving the human condition in the region and the world." Congruent with this mission, *Teach Toledo* addresses the need for diversifying the teaching workforce by supporting the development of a racially and ethnically diverse, working class, urban-dwelling cadre of teachers and by creating space for collective development of a shared, culturally-relevant philosophy of teaching in urban neighborhoods. *Teach Toledo* recruits residents of urban neighborhoods, with experience working in urban schools, as already having the necessary cultural competence to teach in urban schools because they have grown up and chosen to live and work in urban neighborhoods.

The mission specific to *Teach Toledo,* "supporting Toledo's citizens to become tomorrow's teachers,"

responds to the need for contextualized teacher education (Matsko & Hammerness, 2014) that prepares teachers for the particular schools in which they will teach—in our case, our city's schools. A contexualized approach prepares teachers for the characteristics and key problem of urban schools, as described by Chou and Tozer (2008): "cultural heterogeneity, in terms of racial and ethnic diversity, paired with high poverty, in ethnically- and economically-segregated institutions, and coupled with the lack of urban cultural capital among the primarily white, middle class teaching force and student resistance to resultant demeaning experiences" (p. 10). At the time of the study, students in the teacher education pipeline at University of Toledo were 82% white, non-Hispanic (Teacher Counts By District, 2017, p. 110), Through focused recruitment through the public school system and library system, combined with a 22% discount on tuition offered by UToledo as part of the Workplace Credit Program (since discontinued), cohort I of *Teach Toledo* achieved much greater diversity than the existing teacher population and the teacher education pipeline. Cohort I (n=19) had 16% Latino students compared to 0% in the comparable on-campus program, and 58% Black/African American students compared to 0% in the comparable on-campus program (n=12).

Beyond focused recruitment for diversity, the commons was achieved through location and scheduling. *Teach Toledo* cohort students took all their classes together during their first two years—at first in a public middle school building, which felt familiar and was easily accessible, and later in a designated classroom at the university, in a building that had easy parking.

Teach Toledo is a two-year course of study culminating in an earned Associate of Arts degree. However, all Associate degree coursework on the plan of study also is acceptable on the four-year Bachelor of Education, Intervention Specialist (special education) degree plan of study, in order to avoid "losing credits" in the transfer from one degree program to another. This allows students options: to continue seamlessly beyond the *Teach Toledo* two-year program for their B.Ed. and state teaching

licensure; to bank their credits toward the four-year teaching degree if their coursework were disrupted; or to use the completed Associate degree toward enhancing earning potential in other fields. Having to choose one licensure area for the plan of study, we chose special education as it is the licensure most in demand locally and nationally. However, we advised students that if they wanted to pursue a different teaching degree and certification, we would help them determine changes to their specific plans.

The Associate degree plan of study focused on the urban teaching career and allowing for integration of coursework, both horizontally across the four courses per semester in which students enrolled, and vertically from semester to semester in the four-semester sequence. We selected all coursework not only to match B.Ed. requirements but also to provide foundation for teaching in urban settings. For example, students took African civilization and African American culture courses for their humanities credits, as global, non-Eurocentric knowledge is especially important in (though not limited to) urban schools with high numbers of African Americans. In addition, the cohort model facilitated integrating curriculum across courses, as in the focus of this article, the courses *Introduction to Education* and *Composition I*, taken in fall 2017 being horizontally integrated and paired for vertical integration with *Art Education for the Pre-Primary and Primary Student* in spring 2018. In this way, the cohort model supported work by the students on a creative, common, reality-based philosophy of education.

The combination of philosophical and visual investigations created a third space for learning and producing knowledge—which transversed home and school and brought students' lived realities including racism and equity issues into school spaces. *Teach Toledo* is a third space *physically*, in the location of classes in community spaces; *temporally*, with a special schedule and plan of study; and, as is the focus of this article, *philosophically*, with creation of a purpose of urban schooling based in the realities of the urban-dwelling, future teachers, but brought into the academic world, in words and photographs, through course assignments and scholarly

presentation. This third space accommodates Emdin's (2016) instruction that to begin to practice reality pedagogy, urban teachers must experience their students' physical places—their neighborhoods and homes. Teachers can then begin to understand students' emotional spaces—the meaning they make and their feelings. Our pedagogical practices also foregrounded students' understandings and built up student voices (cf. Emdin's (2016) cogenerative dialogue) through the integration of student thoughts and ideas into the curriculum, the facilitation of students' expression of ideas, and the inclusion of students' critiques of inequitable social practices. Third space, hybridity, and reality pedagogy frame our work creating opportunities for students to bring visual images of places and to explain their desires and goals, the spaces of education.

We matriculated two cohorts—cohort I in fall 2017 and cohort II in fall 2019; however, in this article, we discuss only cohort I, as completion and presentation of the shared philosophy was interrupted for cohort II by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Here, we describe our collaboration with the first cohort of the *Teach Toledo* program to create a shared educational philosophy, phrased as a collective belief drawn from individual philosophies; illustrated on a personal level through PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997); and presented publicly at an academic conference. We asked ourselves, in designing the curriculum and pedagogy, as well as reflecting on its results: How can faculty and students develop a shared philosophy of possibility for urban P-12 education and for teacher education?

PhotoVoice philosophy in a third space

In their first year of *Teach Toledo* students were assigned a yearlong project: to write individual philosophies of education, illustrate them with photos from their own experiences and observations, and finally to distill these, through thematic analysis, into one illustrated, group philosophy of education that provided a rich representation of their third space. Students developed ideas in *Introduction to Education* and writing skills in *Composition I* in fall

semester, and conducted a PhotoVoice-style documentary project from *Art Education for the Pre-Primary and Primary Student* in the following spring semester.

The written philosophy of education assignment encompassed a progression from a student's personal philosophy into a communal philosophy accomplished through *Composition I* and *Introduction to Education*. To fulfill a composition assignment and using content from the intro class, students each wrote their own essay inspired by the classic *This I Believe* series (https://thisibelieve.org/). On the due date, each student selected a key passage from their individual composition to read aloud to the group. Their peers analyzed the passages as they were presented, noting what stood out as the main ideas and identifying *beliefs* and *purposes* as expressed by the author. As a class, they listed these as exemplars under the categories of belief and purpose (see figure 1).
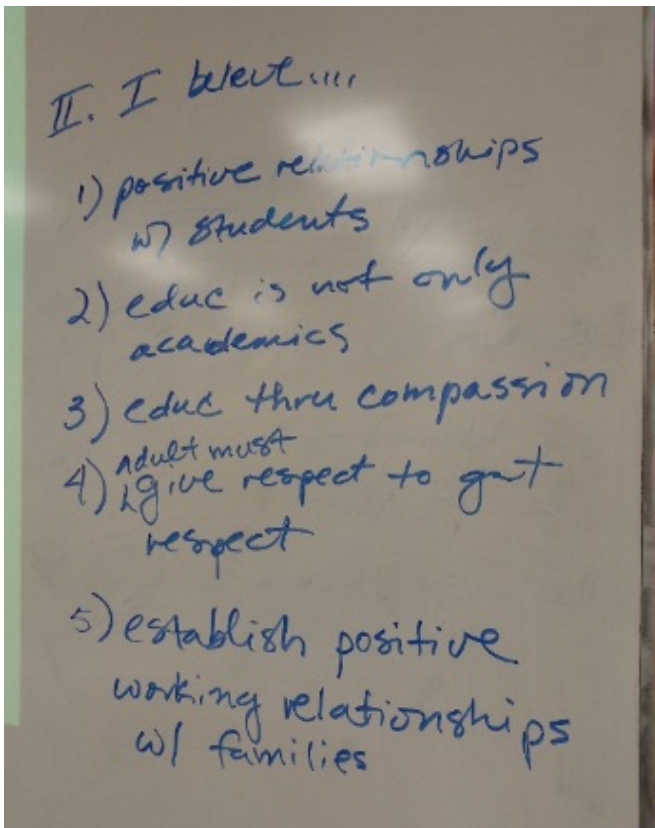

Figure 1: Example of data analysis of individual philosophy statements according to category of beliefs

The cohort then worked together to compare individuals' beliefs and purposes to identify and code themes. Next, referring to the thematic analysis, the group drafted a shared statement that built on parts of the individuals' statements, drafting to make sure all identified beliefs and purposes were included. They repeatedly revised the statement for sentence structure, punctuation, clarity, and logic. Finally, from the integrated the themes, they produced their *Cohort Philosophy of Teaching and Learning*, which read as follows:

> We believe that our purpose as educators in urban schools is to create and maintain positive relationships between students, teachers, and families by working from the circumstances students experience in contemporary urban neighborhoods, and teaching with compassion and affection, with the belief that all students are teachable and all need to learn practical life skills while at the same time all are exposed to and held to high academic standards.

This cohort philosophy was the culminating assignment for the first semester, and students carried the philosophy with them into their second semester of classes.

In the second semester, students took *Art Education for the Pre-Primary/Primary Child*. In one assignment, they went back to their individual teaching philosophies as thematic guides for a PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) study, in which they documented their lives in the communities where they lived and worked. PhotoVoice is a method of community-based participatory research that combines photography and social action to enable a person or a community – especially those who are historically marginalized—to express themselves (Becker [2001] and Kress [2006] in Zenkov & Sheridan, 2012). Participants express their perspective or that of their communities by photographing scenes that highlight research themes. The photographs are collaboratively interpreted through group discussions between artists and researchers, and narratives can be developed to highlight a particular theme. These narratives are then used to promote a dialogue and to facilitate change. In the art education course,

students first explored how representative methods like PhotoVoice have been used to tell stories of people who had been unseen and ignored. Examples included artists like Gordon Parks who depicted African American culture (Gordon Parks Foundation, n.d.), as well as researchers like Smith (2015), who worked to deconstruct stereotypes of Muslim women, and Zenkov and Sheridan (2012), who worked with students to represent the city in the "Through Students' Eyes" project. We also considered the various citizens who used their cellphones to document the Baltimore uprising in 2015. The students then documented the communities in which they lived and worked, with the assignment that they each curate at least ten images that related to their personal philosophies of education. The class discussed each other's photo collections for both their aesthetic effectiveness and their reflection of the student's philosophy. Using this feedback, each participant selected the "top three" images they had taken that related to a key paragraph from their philosophy.

Beyond course requirements, students chose whether to participate in creating a PhotoVoice illustrated group philosophy to present at the Ecojustice and Education Conference, an international event hosted annually by Eastern Michigan University: Of the seventeen students in the cohort, eleven participated as co-authors and eight as presenters. Individual students developed their own parts of the photojournalistic presentation, with feedback from the group. They helped select and format the excerpts and photos to be included in the presentation, and they rehearsed the presentation and revised it, ultimately arranging individuals' statements and photos to mirror the cohort's philosophy, which provided the framework for the final presentation. Each presenter chose three of their own PhotoVoice images to illustrate aspects of their individual philosophies. These images were displayed during the presentation of the paper, in which each author read a key piece of their philosophy and participated in a lively discussion of their work.

Emergent Philosophies: Representation and Analysis

The emergent individual philosophies of the students mirrored and defined what they articulated as a shared philosophy. Furthermore, their words and especially their images demonstrated how their philosophy was grounded in their individual and shared realities, providing context for understanding the shared philosophy's core concepts in a way that highlighted their specific purposes in becoming urban educators. Here, we present a text version of the students' oral conference presentation, which they organized according to the three clauses of their cohort philosophy (stated above). Our representation includes the students' individual, verbatim statements, and a selection of images from those that they presented (figures 2-5). We have added to the text to identify speakers and to indicate the flow of topics, which was more apparent in the live presentation than in the static text. edited to provide description of the presentation features. We then analyze their work, drawing upon *a priori* concepts from reality pedagogy as well as noting emergent themes, i.e., the students' insights and emphases based on their unique experiences.

1. We believe that our purpose as educators in urban schools is to create and maintain positive relationships between students, teachers, and families....

Student 1 began discussion of this first section by emphasizing the relationship of teacher to students, saying:

> I believe that teachers need to develop, maintain, and achieve a positive relationship with all children, while providing them with quality education. Teachers that know what a child has against them should be adaptive in their teaching. It is my belief that "a happy child is a receptive child." This is where reality pedagogy comes into play. I believe establishing a healthy relationship begins with not only the child but also the family.

Student 2 extended the need for relationships into homes and communities:

I believe that the connection between the community and teachers are key in a successful school environment. Incorporating the parents in the school life of the students will allow the parents to see what their children are learning and understand how they are being taught. Parents are the ones that motivate their children to learn and working with the school system allows the children to see that their parents and teachers do care about their education and want them to prosper in their lives. "Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it" (Edelman, 2001). This I believe.

Student 3 concluded the first section with their elaboration on the relationship of teacher-student and how it extends into the community:

I believe teaching is an art…. An art that is designing and developing the knowledge between the instructor and student. The purpose of education is to gain knowledge throughout every aspect of life. To know all. The more you know the further in life you can succeed. Schooling does not stop at the schoolhouse doors.

2.   …We do this by working from the circumstances students experience in contemporary urban neighborhoods and teaching with compassion and affection….

Student 4 began elaboration of the second section focused on the students' circumstances, declaring the ethical responsibility of the teacher and emphasized their own, current commitment to fulfilling that responsibility:

This I believe: that children should be provided with an equal education in a happy, self-expressive environment. Children come from very different backgrounds and deserve to feel safe at school. As a future educator, I believe that they should feel safe and loved. I have the advantage right now, being a paraprofessional, to practice these qualities.

Figure 2:"This is my child and my partner's child, they equally have wonderful teachers that make them feel safe at school." (Student 4, 2018, photovoice)

Student 5 further developed the teacher's ethical responsibility to acknowledge and build from children's circumstances:

I believe that teachers should remember why they became a teacher. They should always ask themselves, "Why did I want to be a teacher in the first place?" Teachers should have a mission statement and remember that mission statement every day. Children are open books who love to learn and have fun learning. Teachers should acknowledge that and remember that. I believe that children are our future. We should nurture and teach them as much as we possibly can. I believe we should give them as much assistance as needed. Children are different and they all have different needs.

Student 6 called on teachers to recognize and respond to their students' realities and how they affect their students' classroom experience:

I believe that as educators, we should learn that students are people and have issues just like we do. Some of their situations are greater than ours, but we don't see it or acknowledge them. We tend to think that students should sit up, pay attention, and be quiet in the classroom. The reality is that most of them have their heads down, they are daydreaming, or talking to a peer close to them. I think Emdin (2016) said it best by saying, "Reality pedagogy does not draw its cues for teaching from "classroom experts"....it focuses on teaching and learning as it is successfully practiced within communities physically outside of, and oftentimes beyond, the school."

Figure 3: "We tend to think that students should sit up, pay attention, and be quiet in the classroom" (Student 6, 2018, photovoice)

Student 7 turned the emphasis to teaching with affection and compassion:

Yes, I want my students to get good grades and receive honors. I would love to say my class scored in the top on their state tests. I want to

see them involved in community programs and excel at sports. What really matters to me is making sure each and every one of my students feel valued, supported, and cared for by individuals in their school.... The purpose of education is to gift our students with something new that will stick with them as they move on in life. This can be achieved if compassion is always a factor in how I relate to my students. I believe that my students are my family, too, and with everything I am, I will treat them this way.

Student 8 concluded this section emphasizing the awesomeness of taking on these responsibilities as a profession:

A teacher's job does not end when he or she leaves the classroom. When you become a teacher, you are taking an oath to dedicate your life to the young lives of the students who look up to you. Teachers hold such a valuable role in our society because we are role models for our future generations and we get the privilege of practicing this every day. It is our responsibility to mold today's youth into tomorrow's men and women.

3.   ...Our belief is that all students are teachable and all need to learn practical life skills, while at the same time all are exposed and held to high academic standards.

In beginning section 3, Student 9 turned attention to developing pedagogy to reach all children:

I believe as a teacher, I am responsible to inspire every child to do their best to learn. Every child learns in a different way. All children deserve a quality education regardless of public or private school. As a teacher, I will design a way to incorporate a teaching style that helps the student to learn by being a role model. If the student isn't retaining the information, it is the teacher's responsibility to find different techniques to ensure the student is gaining the knowledge.

Student 10 identified specific content that students need for success in their worlds:

I believe education is not solely academic, but also mentally by teaching students skills needed in order to survive everyday life. Life skills are

skills that is necessary or desirable for full participation in everyday life such as tying your shoes, driving a car, counting money, swimming and using a computer just to name a few. Life skills help us to accomplish our ambitions and live to our full potential.

Figure 4:"This is the area in my classroom where the students take a break from academics" (Student 10, 2018, photovoice)

Finally, Student 11 emphasized that teachers should teach all students equitably:

> I believe that students learn in many different ways and all students are teachable no matter the disability. I believe that the littlest accomplishments like just eating in the cafeteria for autism is an accomplishment for our students. We should not take the simplest of tasks for granted or overlook them. This is why I think teacher should teach more than just academics to all students with or without disabilities. We need to teach students valuable life and social skills. All students have potential and the ability to learn no matter what their disabilities and it is our job as an educator to help them.
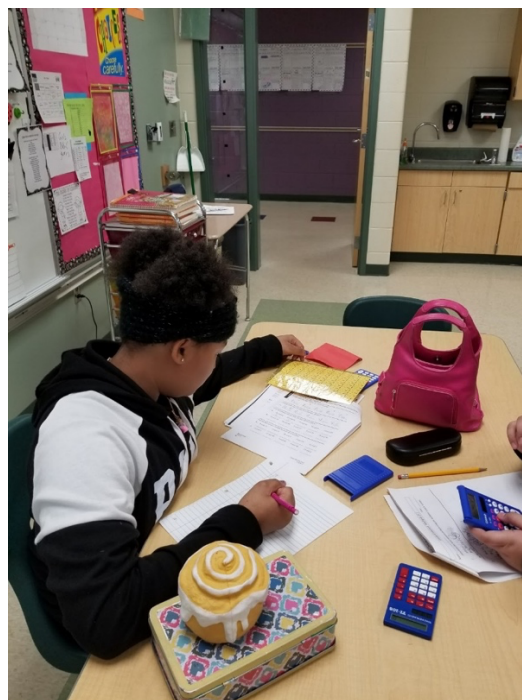

Figure 5:"A student working on math problem using a calculator as an intervention if needed" (Student 11, 2018, photovoice)

Thematic analysis of the students' presentation, with excerpts of their personal philosophies and images from their PhotoVoice elaborating their cohort's group philosophy, both supports the theoretical validity of efforts in culturally relevant pedagogy and reality pedagogy and suggests the usefulness of the frameworks for describing what students need. The students emphasized that teaching ought to 1) address emotional needs, 2) use cultural diversity to frame understanding, 3) be critically responsive, and 4) utilize pedagogical foundations that meet the cognitive needs of students. Within these broad a priori principles, students' specific concerns were unique. These principles did not all receive equal emphasis from every student philosophy, which reflected their author's own needs as educators and context as community leaders, but the cohort philosophy integrated the concepts that matter the most into the communal identity students chose to present.

The first clause of the cohort group philosophy expresses the students' desire to address emotional needs: "*We believe that our purpose as educators in urban schools is to create and maintain positive relationships between students, teachers, and*

families." Themes for this principle included the idea of the educator as mentor and a guide, rather than as a delivery system for educational content; the necessity for students to feel safe in order to be able to learn, and the elimination of the division between home and school lives so that teachers understand the context of students and students are nurtured in every environment. Student 8 expressed this concept as follows: "A teacher's job does not end when he or she leaves the classroom. When you become a teacher you are taking an oath to dedicate your life to the young lives of the students who look up to you." Student 4's image (figure 2) of the children from their blended family walking into the distance underscored the necessity of balancing supervision with room for exploration and growth, both in the classroom and beyond. In their caption for their photo, student 4 noted that their children "equally have wonderful teachers that make them feel safe at school."

The idea that cultural diversity frames understanding was expressed in the second clause of the cohort group philosophy: "*We do this by working from the circumstances students experience in contemporary urban neighborhoods and teaching with compassion and affection.*" This principle explored themes of duality between an individual student and the collective voices of their communities, the value of cultural identities, and the pursuit of liberatory opportunities through education. Student 3 summed this up elegantly: "We can't forget about our students. We must listen to them when they tell us how they want to learn." Student 6's image (figure 3) features faded blue, whiteboard instructions to "Take your seats & wait for directions" as background to rows of rigid desks and chairs. In their caption, student 6 critiques the devaluing of student voice and identity, lamenting, "We tend to think that students should sit up, pay attention, and be quiet."

The third phrase of the cohort group philosophy points to the students' desire to be critically responsive: "*Our belief is that all students are teachable and all need to learn practical life skills.*" Here students evoked themes of teaching that is social-action oriented, a teaching practice that is self-aware and reflective, and the idea of the teacher

as a facilitator of knowledge instead of its guardian. Student 6 provided a context to frame that idea when he said, "I try to be the example to them, showing them how a black man should conduct themselves. Most of them don't have a male figure in their lives and it's a hard task to fill that void." Student 10's image (figure 4) depicts a substantial area of a classroom, with six soft seats and a rug— enough room for many students to gather. While student 10 captioned the photo simply as "where the students take a break from academics," it is in that break from teacher-directed knowledge acquisition that students create common understanding. The break area is their commons.

The idea that pedagogical foundations meet cognitive needs was expressed in the final phrase of the cohort group philosophy: "… *while at the same time all are exposed to and held to high academic standards.*" This final principle covered how the cohort believed that knowledge is individually constructed, the importance of knowledge of students for educational institutions, the benefit of high expectations, and the utility of a continual process of assessment and reorientation. Student 1 used her lived experience to express these ideas as, "I have seen in the classrooms, and come to the realization that a child that is hungry, tired, and has issues from home, these things will ultimately have an adverse effect in their retention of knowledge." Student 11's image (figure 5) shows two students with access to accommodations for their academic work, with the background of an open door. This establishes them as learners rather than inmates. Student 11's commentary emphasized "a calculator as an intervention if needed."

The students' PhotoVoice images contributed concrete grounding of their verbalized beliefs in the physical features of their worlds. The images remind us that educational philosophy is not an abstraction but is as substantial as the boards of a river walk, the surfaces of rigid desk/chairs, the squishiness of comfy corners, and the pink purses students carry to class. Whereas often educational philosophy is seen as an extra, non-essential nicety in contrast to the skills and materials of a methods class, PhotoVoicing their educational philosophies embodied these

future teachers' ideas, depicting exactly where their commitments were grounded in their realities and in their children's and students' realities.

Discussion

We conclude that a shared philosophy of possibility for urban education helps create a communal expectation that functions as a philosophical third space that mirrors the physical third spaces students and faculty are working to create. The students in cohort I of *Teach Toledo* brought their own experiences in urban classrooms as former students and as current paraprofessionals and parents into coursework at the university, and transformed them through written and photographic art into a strong philosophy that reflects the urgency and groundedness of their professional commitment.

We believe the core strength of *Teach Toledo* is not simply the diversity of participants and the attention to curriculum, but rather the pedagogy of integrating both academic content and academic participants (students and faculty) in order to build a community together. *Teach Toledo* is, therefore, multicultural education in both theory and practice in the it was (i) grounded in students' lives; (ii) provided a critical lens; (iii) established a safe environment; (iv) incited investigations of bias; (v) presented justice for all as a goal; (vi) allowed participatory and experiential involvement; (vii) and is "hopeful, joyful, kind, visionary, affirming, activist, academically rigorous, integrated, culturally sensitive, and utilize(s) community resources" (Stuhr Ballengee-Morris, and Daniel, 2008). The collective philosophy crafted by our students reflects their experience that through working together they are creating the kinds of hopeful, joyful, and kind public spaces within public P-12 schools and universities that are essential to revitalizing our urban communities.

However, hope and joy require institutionalized support to be sustained. Bhaba's concept of third space has been criticized for its lack of attention to historical and material conditions. Bhandari (2022), for example, concluded that Bhaba's notion of third space and hybridity might help for the psychological and spiritual liberation such as the decolonization of

the mind. However, it ignores the material conditions and the role of ideology that structures the exploitative relationships between the colonizer and the colonized . . . [and fails adequately to account for] the unequal access to opportunities and resources" . . . [resulting in reification of] discourses of their inherent superiority against the inferiority of the colonized people and their culture. (p. 179)

Sadly, the condition of *Teach Toledo's* third space at the time of this writing demonstrates the veracity of the critique, and we can identify specific historical and material conditions that contributed to its failures. Most of cohort I, the students who created the philosophy featured in this article, did not become certified classroom teachers. Eight of the cohort's original 15 completed the two-year Associate's degree. The students' material conditions were the greatest challenge: Cohort I received a 22% tuition reduction, courtesy of a university program that gave this reduction for courses taught off campus, and all received Pell grants, but tuition and fees still caused hardships. Of the eight students achieving the Associate degree, half decided that due to financial, work, and family requirements, rather than go onto campus to pursue the Bachelor's degree, they needed to stop.

Historical conditions were relevant: Four of the students attempted to continue into professional education, which at that time required passing the Praxis I "basic" skills test of reading, writing, and math, a nationally-used assessment that was adopted as part of the neoliberalism arising in the 1980s. The Praxis skills tests were widely used despite the mass of research (e.g., Henry et al., 2013; Nettles et al., 2011) showing it did not predict teaching success and it did mitigate against people of color and from lower socioeconomic statuses getting into the teaching profession. In that historical context, two of the students passed all three sections of the Praxis I and were admitted to the professional education program; however, financial challenges and family responsibilities prevented their pursuing the degree. One cohort member continued as a non-education major, completed a Bachelor's of Arts, became a classroom teacher with an alternative

license through the state, and continued for a Master's degree.

Structural conditions have also affected the current state of the *Teach Toledo* initiative. Cohort II numbers decreased when the university ended the off-campus tuition credit. Cohort II students were largely successful in their first semester, but they were derailed by another historical condition: the onset of Covid-19 and wholesale move to online classes starting in their second semester and continuing into what would have been their second year. Online coursework did not suit their learning needs and increased financial and family responsibilities were not conducive to paying tuition nor to having time for coursework.

Working across colleges to schedule coursework and build shared understandings among faculty, *Teach Toledo* requires minimal additional university resources as it collaborates with the local public schools and library systems to reach out to non-traditional, first-generation students from marginalized urban communities. The program appeals especially to those already working as paraprofessionals (teaching assistants) in the schools, who are in many ways already teaching but with lower salaries and less influence than they could have as licensed teachers. However, despite efficiencies and enthusiasm, and though the university still has *Teach Toledo* on its website, it has not found the capacity to resume cohorts post-pandemic, as the initiative does require resources to assure courses are scheduled when cohorts can attend. Judged by these results, the students appear to have failed to master the university's superior culture, and the initiative appears to have been futile. However, creating the third space and its pedagogy of purpose rooted in the students' material realities was successful, as attention to the words and images they produced, and the purpose they embodied, reveals. We contend that the creation and presentation was valuable in showing how it could be done and in making audible and visible a philosophy grounded in future teachers' lived urban experience. It is important for us to present these results in order for all to see the power, insight, compassion, and commitment of the students who, due to historical

and material conditions, did not become the teachers we need. Perhaps cohort I's words and images will inspire material investment for future cohorts.

In conclusion, initiatives such as *Teach Toledo* are viable, practical ways to address urban education needs and that co-created understanding, artistic expression, and public presentation of a shared philosophy should be foundational to such initiatives, but they must receive material support to sustain both individual students and institutional structures. The co-created cohort philosophy, grounded in the realities of the students as concretized through PhotoVoice demonstrates the value of bringing students with lived urban experience into teacher education and the passion and commitment for teaching that they would bring, if supported to the degree needed to complete licensure requirements. We need initiatives like *Teach Toledo* to provide the third space necessary to humanize both P-12 and higher education to support locally dedicated preservice teachers to develop philosophies and pedagogies that represent their lived experiences and push back against the status quo.

Acknowledgements

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