

**Speaking Up for ALL Kids: Developing Pre-Service General Education Teachers as Advocates  
through Critical Coursework and Simulated IEP Meetings**

by

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the Black and Brown children identified with (dis)abilities, you are exceptional, you are beautiful, you are loved.

## **Acknowledgements**

### **My Prayer of Thanks**

Lord, I first want to thank you for this journey – of life, of marriage, of academic growth, of friendship – without You, none of this would have been possible. If You told me in my youth that I would have met so many beautiful people, many of which have become lifelong friends, and accomplished this much in my life, thus far, I would have had a hard time believing You. That is what makes You so great, You can see and make a reality things we can only dream of and I am so thankful to You for that. Lord, I thank you for my growing family, my husband, Zeeke, and my stepdaughters, P'man and Chyna, they have helped me to grow as a wife and stepmother. Thank You Lord for blessing us with a little one, Ezekiel, and I pray that God that you will strengthen him as he experiences the complexities of life.

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## **Abstract**

Broadly, this study is a springboard for thinking about how teacher educators (TE) use critical frameworks, participation in simulations of IEP meetings, and reflection to help develop the next generation of special educators, general educators, school psychologists, social workers, and other professionals who support students identified with (dis)abilities. Specifically, this study focuses on how to support general educators in learning the collaborative and advocacy skills necessary to work with other members of the IEP team as well as disrupt exclusionary practices that marginalize families of color through the application of critical frameworks, simulated IEP experiences, and reflection.

Research demonstrates discriminatory and inequitable practices related to students identified with (disabilities). Direct instructor support is needed to improve awareness of teacher practices regarding IEP meetings and general instruction to support students identified with (dis)abilities. Inequitable practices and discrimination reveal the necessity of collaboration and advocacy as an integral part of the pedagogy of professional development for members of the IEP team. By taking an advocacy stance, which requires a teacher to have knowledge of students, knowledge of context (i.e., classroom, district, historical), knowledge of resources to support their student (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003), and the ability to effectively collaborate (TeachingWorks 2013; McLeskey, 2017), educators attempt to disrupt the ways discrimination and bias impact the decisions made by the IEP team.

Incorporating critical theoretical frameworks can help to unify PST's knowledge base and reflection on their field experiences. Uniting the theoretical frameworks of The Color of Mind, intersectionality, and Disability Critical Race Theory provide a bridge between historical and current discriminatory practices at the intersection of race and ability. These theories provided a framework to support TEs' development of special education curriculum, PSTs' understanding of the intersection of race and ability, and a method to analyze PSTs collaboration and advocacy practices. For example, the tenets of DisCrit recognize that racism and ableism are interdependent and often manifest in neutralized and invisible ways, which is highlighted, for example, by the dismal education statistics of Black students identified with (dis)abilities. DisCrit rejects singular notions of identity, recognizing that people exist at various intersections of social identity. This is important to PST development because it can serve to disrupt deficit-assumptions about who students are based on their race *or* class *or* gender *or* ability status, etc.

This study focuses specifically on general educators because they are members of the IEP team positioned to make special education referrals (Johnson, 2016). Research has demonstrated racial disparities in referral rates of students of color to special education (Skiba et al., 2008). General educators bring valuable assets to the IEP team: they are knowledgeable in the general education curriculum, assessment of that curriculum, and teaching strategies. In order to support and advocate for students identified with (dis)abilities in the least restrictive environment and make equitable referrals to special education, general educators need an understanding of the historical inequities embedded in special education and tools to disrupt those inequities. The ability to see when inequitable practices are taking place and respond effectively to them can help general educators assist in the development of goals and the assignment of appropriate accommodations and modifications for their students and advocate for student needs.

As the researcher/practitioner that conducted this study, I noticed that there is limited literature capturing what pre-service general education teachers are learning in teacher education coursework related to special education and (dis)ability, their conceptualizations of inequity in special education, and their ability to apply the knowledge gained from their coursework. The purpose of this multi-case study was to explore if and how pre-service general education teachers' (PSTs) understandings of inequity shift when engaged in a course that specifically focuses on inequity in special education, particularly at the intersection of race and ability. This study also explores whether PSTs' discourse shifts during a simulated IEP meeting with a Black parent of a child identified with a (dis)ability before and after engaging in this course.

I believe that a deeper understanding of how pre-service general education teachers are conceptualizing inequity in special education and are applying this knowledge will support teacher education programs to develop more comprehensive programming that prepares general educators to support students identified with disabilities and their families. Therefore, this study explores the following research questions: (1) How do preservice teachers' *understandings of inequity and their roles* as members of the IEP team *shift* over the course of a 12-week class that integrates issues of inequity in special education and the use of critical frameworks? (a) How do PSTs' understandings of inequity *shift from the beginning to the end of the course*? (b) How do PSTs' understandings of their role as members of the IEP team *shift from the beginning to the end of the course*? (2) How do PSTs respond to issues of racism and ableism when it is shared by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability during initial and final simulations? (3) How do PSTs engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability?

In their initial simulations, PSTs ranged in their recognition of and response to the racist/ableist incident presented by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability which ranged from novice to expert levels of enactment (LoE). Although PSTs were able to recognize that the Black girl student identified with a (dis)ability was harmed, their difficulty in either recognizing or discussing the specific type of harm Mariah experienced seemed to inhibit their ability to present a recommendation that fully met Mariah's needs as a Black student identified with (dis)abilities. During the initial simulations, PSTs also ranged from conveying deficit-based perspectives to asset-based perspectives of students identified with (dis)abilities through their language use and underlying perspectives. PSTs were probed about their language, perspectives, and recommendations in order to support reflection on their practice while also engaging in discussions focused on inequity at the intersection of race and ability during the course.

PSTs also ranged in their approach to the subject matter within the course and varied in their desire and/or ability to take up the frameworks of intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) as well as discussions related to stereotypes of people identified with (dis)abilities, recognizing racism/ableism, and connecting structural inequities to their practice. PSTs demonstrated resistant deflection, resistant engagement, quiet adoption, and active adoption. At the beginning of the semester PSTs split into two camps (demonstrating resistance), the first rejecting the content presented and the other supporting it (demonstrating adoption). As the course progresses, the first camp splits into two groups, the PST who continued to reject what was presented and the PST who worked to reconcile his beliefs with the class content. The data also demonstrates that engagement manifested in different ways for each PST as they made choices about whether to actively engage or avoid particular discussions. The PSTs that engaged the frameworks consistently took up the frameworks as analytic tools throughout the course.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

When pre-service general education teachers (PSTs) enter the teaching force, an integral component of their work will be supporting students and families. During their teacher education programs, PSTs begin to develop the expertise necessary to execute their role as teacher. They may not, however, be aware of the institutional power and privilege that come with being teachers or the power and privilege they hold based on their social identities (i.e. race, SES, ability status, gender). They also may not understand that social identities, such as race and ability, are socially constructed, and that misuse of power can lead to the marginalization of students and their families. It is therefore important that PSTs are provided with opportunities to think critically about these concepts and how they impact their role as teachers, colleagues, and collaborators within schools.

While ample educational research is devoted to uncovering the need for PSTs to attend to race, class, and gender (DiAngelo, R. J., 2010; DiAngelo, R., & Sensoy, Ö., 2014; Gay, G., & Kirkland, K., 2003; King, J. E., 2015), less attention has been paid to the need for PSTs to attend to ableism at the intersection of these identities, their own blind spots with regard to ability-based privilege, and the power derived from that privilege (Broderick, A., & Lalvani, P., 2017). With the move toward inclusion of students identified with (dis)abilities in general education, PSTs must also be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of a variety of students with a myriad of different strengths and areas of need. One of their responsibilities in supporting their students will be attending Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, where they will work with their students, the students' families, and their colleagues in the special education department to

meet the social, academic, and/or physical needs of their students. Collaboration and advocacy are key for all members of the IEP team in meeting the needs of students identified with (dis)abilities because students identified with (dis)abilities have been marginalized in society and schooling at the intersection of the multiple identities they may hold (Annamma, S. A., Connor, D., & Ferri, B., 2016). The need for collaboration and advocacy is especially important during IEP meetings for students of color identified with (dis)abilities because, relative to their White peers in special education, these students have historically experienced disproportionate exclusion, suspension, and lower academic and post-secondary outcomes (Wakelin, M. M., 2008; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Broadly, this study is a springboard for thinking about how teacher educators (TE) can use critical frameworks, practice-based simulations (Dotger, B., Masingila, J., Bearkland, M., & Dotger, S., 2015; Khasnabis, D., Goldin, S., & Ronfeldt, M., 2018), and reflection (Khasnabis, D., Goldin, S., Perouse-Harvey, E., & Hanna, M. O., 2019) to help develop the next generation of special educators, general educators, school psychologists, social workers, and other professionals who support students identified with (dis)abilities. Specifically, this study focuses on how to support pre-service general educators in learning the collaborative and advocacy skills necessary to work with other members of the IEP team as well as to disrupt exclusionary practices through the application of critical frameworks, simulated IEP meeting experiences, and reflection. This “study is trying to find this sweet spot—where future general education teachers are advocates who avoid the abuses of segregation, racism, and ableism—but also maintains the option (for students to receive) specialized instruction” (Troy Mariage, personal communication, March 4, 2020).

Learning critical frameworks provides PSTs an entry point for beginning to identify inequity and take up discourses and practices that disrupt inequity. Like all teaching skills, skills in collaboration and advocacy must be learned and practiced over time. The purpose of integrating

practice-based opportunities into coursework helps PSTs begin building collaboration and advocacy skills prior to entering teaching. Working to disrupt inequity is an aspect of the lifelong work of teaching and that work should begin before they step into a classroom. Therefore, this study aims to explore how PSTs' understandings of inequity and their role as members of the IEP team shift over time, how they respond to issues of racism and ableism during their initial and final simulations of an IEP meeting and how they engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability.

### **Researcher Positionality**

As Dyson and Genishi state, “Every person has a biography that precedes her existence as a researcher...”(p. 57). Who I am impacts the work that I do, I am a Black Christian woman and a former special educator of students of color (predominantly Black students). Living, playing, and working in predominantly Black (and racially diverse) spaces throughout my youth and early adulthood provided me a protection and comfort that became particularly salient when I began attending and then later on teaching at predominantly White institutions (PWI). This was impactful because I realized that I was able to navigate potentially painful interactions since undergraduate school by limiting my community engagement at these institutions. As a teacher educator, I became a member of the educational community of a PWI which required my commitment to the school and to the development of future educators.

In my courses, my desire is to build a community where learning flows in both directions. However, this issue of identity complicates things—particularly my racial and gender identities, which overlap in very complex ways because I am seen as both Black and a woman. There are moments within the classroom where marginalization at the intersections of these identities can mute the privilege my graduate education and position as an instructor grants me. I have had to

learn how to navigate the ways that White people respond to my race and gender identities at a PWI.

For example:

I received anonymous feedback at the end of a class session saying that I needed to improve concealing my annoyance with students.

A White male PST told me that he told the special education teacher he knew nothing about special education—five weeks into our class focused on special education.

A White male PST looked up cognitive impairment on the internet and began reading the definition out loud to another White male student, immediately after I had given a definition and examples. He read it loud enough for me and the other people at his table to hear.

A White male PST suggested that we ask a White male professor the meaning of words in a legal definition that I had given them to read and discuss in class. The same student, during the following class, called across the room for a White female student to tell me that I was setting up a class debate incorrectly.

But there have been moments where my students have held each other accountable and pushed back on one another,

A White female PST attempted to refute something that I said at least one time each class session but her colleagues often provided correction by responding to her comments.

Nested within those painful moments are reminders of the shared work I do with my students and that we are each on our own journey of understanding inequity, recognizing when it occurs, and having the courage to disrupt it.

I have struggled with the experience of microaggressions as a Christian because Jesus calls us to love everyone. He says, "...For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?...And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?" (Matthew 5:46-47). The message here is that despite the harm we may endure, we are to do good in return, recognizing the importance of human dignity to God. Every time I walk into a classroom, I am making a decision to meet my PSTs where they are and do good despite the harm that I may endure as a Black woman educator and the challenges that may arise.

In addition to my identities as a Black woman, my identities as a former special educator of students of color, predominantly Black children, and a current teacher educator are most salient to me. I taught Black students identified with (dis)abilities throughout my career and it is from them that I draw my inspiration and passion to support teacher learning. I want teachers to do right by them—emotionally, socially, and academically—but my experience and research demonstrates that this is not always the case. This awareness drives my research and practice.

As soon as teachers enter the field, they are expected to be knowledgeable about the special education process and their role within it. I found in my own experience in a teacher education program that the racialized history of special education, issues of discrimination and bias, and disproportionality were not areas of focus. Detachment from history dooms us to repeat the same mistakes. Preparing PSTs to participate in the special education process requires a serious examination of the connections between past and current practice. Providing opportunities for PSTs to learn, practice, and reflect helps me to learn how PSTs understand inequity and their roles as actors within the process.

My goal is to teach my special education courses from a critical perspective, beginning with the history of inequitable practices across race and (dis)ability that continues to impact the educational system as well as the actors within it. This approach seeks to connect the larger system

of inequality to PSTs' daily practices and to help them develop critical perspectives in their approach to their work in schools. I designed the course which is the focus of this study to support PSTs historical understanding of special education and its impact on their current teaching practices. It was also developed to provide them with opportunities to engage in individual practice and reflection. It is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of (Dis)ability Critical Race Theory (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016), *The Color of Mind* (Darby & Rury, 2018), and intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Each of these frameworks is powerful in its own right; when combined they have helped me and my PSTs to unearth and critically analyze the historical institutionalization of racism and ableism that permeates our educational system and shapes the behaviors of the actors within it.

Thus, reflecting on how educators' and teacher educators' practice can exclude the voices and experiences of the marginalized is integral to the work I do with PSTs. We must acknowledge how the belief system of the dominant culture has impacted our inability to engage in topics like marginalization, racism, discrimination, ableism, etc. As both the researcher and practitioner in this study, my reflexivity was essential to the design, enactment, and analysis of this course.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Educational Context**

Historically, for Black students, the intersection of race and the assumption of deficiency whether justified by pseudo-science (Darby & Rury, 2018) or cultural deprivation theories (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006) has left a lasting mark on the U.S. educational system and processes, like special education, that exist within it. The stated purpose of special education is to provide students that are identified with (dis)abilities within the United States equitable access to the educational opportunities provided to their non-(dis)abled peers, yet, ensuring educational opportunity has not been a linear trajectory for all groups identified with (dis)abilities. As noted by

various scholars, White middle-class families have benefited most from the U.S. educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Children from families of color, low-income, and linguistically diverse families have been forced to navigate educational spaces that continue to be dominated by White middle-class norms (Gaff & Vasquez, 2013; Wakelin, 2008) and biased perceptions of racial, socio-economic, and ethnic/linguistic groups that are perceived to fall outside of that norm (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006).

Further, Annamma, Ferri, and Connor (2016) remind us that the “forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy” (p.19). Special education has historically been used as a tool to reinforce “unmarked norms of Whiteness,” (p. 19) signifying who is abled and disabled, and who can be included or excluded from educational opportunities. These norms continue to impact the treatment of minoritized students today. Statistics that capture students at this intersection reveal troubling patterns in the areas of (dis)ability identification, achievement, suspension/expulsion, participation in gifted programs, and post-secondary outcomes. Whiteness and ability as property confers “benefits to those who can claim Whiteness and/or normalcy” and those that exist on the outskirts of these identities must face a different reality (p. 24).

Black students identified with (dis)abilities live at the intersection of two marginalized identities (race and ability) and “have experienced double jeopardy in the American educational system” (Blanchett, 2009, p. 373) as a result of the fallacious connection between Blackness and intellectual deficiency present throughout America’s history (Du Bois, 1917; Darby & Rury, 2018). Current issues such as overrepresentation, high suspension and expulsion rates, and low post-secondary outcomes of Black students identified with (dis)abilities have demonstrated the “double jeopardy” to which Fierros & Conroy (2002) refer (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2007; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). The *PARC* and *Mills* cases, discussed below,

demonstrate the academic and social implications of being labeled as disabled. In these two cases, identification equaled exclusion from educational spaces, and later, physical separation within schools. In the cases of *Mills* and *Larry P.*, medical diagnosis as well as in-school ‘diagnosis’ led to the physical separation of minoritized groups from being educated with their peers and has served to perpetuate deficit narratives of these students (Blanchett, 2009; *Larry P. v. Riles*, 1979; *Mills v. Board of Education*, 1972).

The notion of ability/disability in special education is rooted in the medicalization model that defines (dis)ability as pathological—residing in the individual (Baglieri, S., & Shapiro, A., 2012). This orientation does not consider the sociopolitical forces that impact who is considered abled or (dis)abled. The notion of who is able or (dis)abled is conflated with racial, linguistic, gender, ethnic (and other) differences that vary from White, middle-class, able-bodied norms rather than recognizing that “variations among bodies and minds and changes in physical and cognitive function (are) natural parts of human experience” (Bagliere & Shapiro, 2012, pg. 26). The medicalization model is then perpetuated by special education programs through the use of IQ testing, educational testing, and other assessment tools modeled on these norms (Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, Cuadrado, & Chung, 2008; Wakelin, 2008). Children at the intersection of race and (dis)ability have to compete with harmful cultural messages surrounding race and (dis)ability that color decision making in special education.

### **Historical Context of Special Education**

Prior to 1975, there was no coherent structure for ensuring students identified with (dis)abilities received an education (Skiba et al., 2008). (Dis)ability advocates created private facilities for people/children identified with (dis)abilities but there was no national requirement for students identified with (dis)abilities to obtain a public education or have the same rights/access to opportunities as able-bodied students. The story of the (dis)ability movement moving to the national

stage begins with *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* (1954). *Brown* deemed that ‘separate does not mean equal,’ thereby becoming the driving force of public school desegregation efforts across the United States. (Dis)ability rights advocates modeled their arguments for securing educational opportunities for students identified with (dis)abilities based on the equal protection and due process arguments made by the plaintiffs in *Brown*.

Although the Court was considered to have made the right decision in this case, it is important to note that the plaintiff’s attorneys in *Brown* used a “discourse of Black inferiority to bolster their case,” Ladson-Billings explains (2004, p. 5). She further states, “the experts for the plaintiffs argued that Black inferiority...was exacerbated by segregation (as) the reason to overturn the separate by equal principle” (p. 5). This sentiment is found in Judge Warren’s decision that explains the negative educational and psychological impacts that being in segregated schools had on Black children. He wrote,

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children...Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to (retard) the education and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial(ly) integrated school system. (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954)

This statement is based on the assumption of a unidirectional benefit from White students to Black students as Black people were excluded from White institutions. This sentiment of a unidirectional benefit (White to Black, able-bodied to disabled) continues to permeate the discourse of schooling related to African-American children, children identified with (dis)abilities, and children that live at the intersection of these identities.

Similar to African-Americans, people identified as having a (dis)ability were also excluded from many segments of society. *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of*

*Pennsylvania (1972) and Mills v. the Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972)* are two seminal (dis)ability cases that take up the arguments of equal protection and due process made in *Brown*. Both cases demonstrate the historical exclusion of children identified with (dis)abilities from schooling. Further, the outcomes of these cases established provisions such as free appropriate public education (FAPE), individualized education plans (IEPs), zero reject, suspension/expulsion procedures, and due process, laying the foundation for what would eventually become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

*Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972)* challenged the denial of a public school education to students identified with intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania and established that every child is guaranteed the right to a free and appropriate public education, regardless of the severity of their (dis)ability. The court found that the children in *PARC* were arbitrarily denied a public education mandated by state law and that being completely excluded from public education or having their programs changed without notice or a hearing was a violation of their due process rights. Additionally, the court found that their right to equal protection was violated because there was “no rational basis” for assuming that students with intellectual (dis)abilities could not be educated (Alexander & Alexander, 2009).

*Mills v. the Board of Education of the District of Columbia (1972)* expanded the right to a free and appropriate public education to all students identified with (dis)abilities in the District of Columbia and laid the foundation for IDEA and other federal legislation to protect the rights of people identified with (dis)abilities. In *Mills*, students who had been identified with behavioral issues, intellectual disabilities, emotional impairments or hyperactivity were denied admission into public school or were excluded after being admitted. The court found that these children's due process rights were denied because they were excluded, suspended, expelled, reassigned or transferred without notice or a hearing. All of the students in this case were Black, but they represented all

students in the District of Columbia who were eligible for free education but would be denied because of an identified (dis)ability or “exceptionality” (Alexander & Alexander, 2009). It is important to note that this is one of many cases where the intersection of race and ability manifest. Although race was not taken up by the court, *Mills* highlights the ways in which race and ability have been inextricably linked in this country contributing to the exclusion of children from our educational system.

At the time of the *PARC* and *Mills* decisions and for some time thereafter, parents, educators, and activists also engaged in litigation seeking relief from biased testing that placed students of color in segregated classes for the intellectually disabled (or educable mentally retarded) (Heward, 2013, p. 15). In *Larry P. v. Riles* (1972) for example, the court found that African-American children in California were inappropriately placed in special education based on IQ testing. At the time of the *Riles* decision, IQ testing was a major determinant of placement in special education despite California legislation declaring

...there should not be disproportionate enrollment of any socioeconomic, minority, or ethnic group of pupils in classes for the mentally retarded and that the verbal portion of the intelligence tests which are utilized by some schools for such placement tends to underestimate the academic ability of such pupils.

That law also required a complete psychological examination by a credentialed school psychologist incorporating developmental history, cultural background, school achievement, and adaptive behavior (*Larry P v. Riles*, 1972). The plaintiffs showed that most students’ records did not contain the information listed above, which was to be utilized when making placement decisions. In addition, the plaintiffs presented evidence that when given different tests that were adjusted for race, these same children were not found to be mentally disabled.

The school district's arguments were based on the theory of genetic inferiority which states "that natural selection has resulted in black persons having a 'gene pool' with lower intelligence than whites" (*Larry P v. Riles*, 1972). They also made a socioeconomic argument "that because of black's lower socioeconomic status, they are at greater risk for all kinds of diseases due to malnutrition and poor medical attention." The court found both arguments suspect. This case made plain that the belief that intellectual inferiority is linked to Blackness has detrimental impacts on Black students' access to the educational opportunities that should have been afforded to them. Darby and Rury (2019) identify this belief as The Color of Mind.

The Color of Mind can cloud the judgment of those, like district administrators, who are tasked with making decisions in the best interests of children. For instance, the IQ tests students in *Larry P.* received were normed on White middle-class children. Although adjustments were made for gender when these tests were developed, testing companies deemed it unnecessary to make adjustments based on race. The California Department of Education was aware of "disproportionate enrollment of minority children" in EMR programs in California schools as well as the cultural bias inherent in IQ testing, but they chose not consider these factors in their determination to use IQ testing for student qualification in their EMR programs (*Larry P v. Riles*, 1972).

*Larry P. v Riles* (1972) is one historical example (of many) that demonstrates the insidious ways racism, grounded in arguments of intellectual and cultural inferiority impacts how (dis)ability laws have been implemented in schools. This case speaks to the high level of discretion that school personnel have to implement special education regulations. While some level of discretion and flexibility is necessary to implement legal mandates, there is a danger of bias and deficit-narratives informing placement practices of school personnel.

In the 1950s, during the time of *Brown*, there was a sharp rise in standardized testing based on White middle-class norms that was used to determine who was normal or average and who was

deviant from the norm. By the time of *Larry P. v Riles* (1972) such standardized testing was believed to be one of the primary reasons for the overrepresentation of African-American students classified as needing special education services (Ferri & Connor, 2005; *Larry P v. Riles*, 1972). These tests determined the entry or exclusion of students of color to rigorous academic programming. They also reified the rationalization of “minorities’ contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks’ imputed cultural imitations” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 2).

*PARC*, *Mills*, and *Larry P* demonstrate the complex intersections of race and ability in the history of schooling in the United States. Intersectionality theory highlights the relationships among power, oppression, and social identity (Crenshaw, 1997), revealing the ways that students identified with (dis)abilities, some of whom were Black, and their families were disadvantaged based on students’ ability status and/or racial identity. The schools in each case based their exclusionary practices on the premise that Black students and/or students identified with (dis)abilities were uneducable. In order to disrupt historical discriminatory practices, intersectionality provides a framework that makes visible instances of institutionalized discrimination and oppression and identify the impact on children.

These cases demonstrate the orientation of society toward people identified with (dis)abilities. They highlight the widespread assumption that this group has very little of value to offer and are a burden (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2012), and illustrate how this assumption has been used as justification for their exclusion and limited access to social interaction, rigorous curriculum, and educational opportunity. Over the past 25 years, in the wake of these cases and others like them, there has been a shift in public schools from placing students identified with (dis)abilities from more restrictive settings into more inclusive settings such as general education. The number of students identified with (dis)abilities spending 80% or more of their time in general education has increased from approximately 30% (1988) to 61% (2013) (Bakken, 2016). Although this does represent

progress, issues such as students identified with (dis)abilities only receiving a minimal educational benefit from schools continue to be debated in the courts, highlighting that inequities persist (*Andrew F. v Douglas County School District*, 2017).

### **Current Challenges**

Litigation to protect the rights of students identified with (dis)abilities paved the way to the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1975), later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These laws created special education programming and protections to ensure equitable educational access to all students identified with (dis)abilities. Under IDEA students identified with a (dis)ability must be educated with their general education peers to the greatest extent possible (least restrictive environment, LRE) so that they can receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Families' rights are also protected under IDEA. Parents must be provided with prior notice of evaluation, given informed consent when placement determinations are made, have an opportunity to examine records, be allowed to obtain an independent evaluation at the public's expense, and initiate an impartial due process hearing if they believe that their or their child's rights have been violated (Yell, Katsiyannis, & Bradley, 2011; 20 U.S.C 1414(a)). Lastly, parents must be involved in initial evaluation, IEP meetings, and placement decisions (Yell, Katsiyannis, & Bradley, 2011; 34 CFR 300.503). These protections outlined in IDEA are pivotal in shaping the responsibilities of members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.

In their integrative synthesis of literature on disproportionality in special education, Cruz and Rodl (2018) state that bivariate analysis revealed “race (as) a strong predictor of disproportionality in identification for special education” (p. 58). Black (African-American) students are more likely to be classified as emotionally disturbed (ED) when compared to groups identified as American Indian/Alaskan, White, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Islander, and they are also overrepresented in the category of intellectual disability (ID) (Donovan, M.S., & Cross, C.T., 2002;

Cruz & Rodl, 2018). For example, nationally African-American students are three times as likely to be classified as having an intellectual disability, more than twice as likely to be identified with an emotional impairment, and 1.4 times more likely to be identified with a learning disability than all other racial/ethnic groups combined (US Commission on Civil Rights, 2009; Darby & Rury, 2018). Studies have also found that Black students are underrepresented in special education when aggregated nationally (Morgan, Farkas, Cook, Strassfeld, Hillemeier, Pun, & Schussler, 2016), in contrast, other studies have confirmed continued overrepresentation of Black students (and other students of color) nationally and within specific school districts throughout the United States (Skiba, Artiles, Kozleski, Losen, & Harry, 2016; Zhang, Katsiyannis, Ju, & Roberts, 2014). Both groups of studies highlight the need for more effective identification and support practices in special education.

Research has demonstrated varying patterns of disproportionality on state and district levels. These patterns could be based on a multitude of factors, such as bias in referral, testing procedures, and placement practices, inequitable disciplinary referrals, and cultural mismatch (Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, Cuadrado & Chung, 2008)—all of which can increase the likelihood of referral of students of color to special education. Additionally, once students are referred to special education, it is highly likely that they will be found eligible for services (Artiles & Trent, 1994). Research has also shown that students of color who are identified with intellectual disabilities and emotional impairments are more likely to be removed from regular classrooms (Fierros & Conroy, 2002).

Further, students identified with (dis)abilities experience disproportionate rates of suspension, referrals to law enforcement, and seclusion, when compared to general education students, and these rates are most starkly disproportionate for Black students across each of these categories (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). IDEA does not provide

concrete means for curbing overrepresentation, which can be caused by subjective and unreliable identification procedures, biased referrals, and misdiagnosis (DeCuir, 2004; Adkinson-Bradley et al., 2006). Despite efforts to attend to this issue through litigation and revisions in the law, educators' discretion continues to be required for implementation with fidelity. This opens space for biased practices based on race, socioeconomic status, and/or gender to continue to shape opportunities and experiences available to students of color.

Exclusionary practices also impact parents of students of color who are identified with (dis)abilities. Currently, the majority of conflicts that occur between school districts and parents happen during IEP meetings (Mueller, 2015; Wakelin, 2008). Research documenting the experiences of parents of color during the special education process has demonstrated that this process is often complicated, confusing and frustrating to parents (Fish 2008; Mueller, 2015). Parents of color report participating in meetings where they are ignored (Pang, 2011), their suggestions are not seriously considered (Salas, 2004), their requests are denied or they are openly criticized by school personnel (Lo, 2008). Additionally, institutional barriers, such as racial discrimination, linguistic differences, conflicts in values/belief systems and prior experience with schools in their country of origin may account for the incongruity between school personnel and views of parents of color (Salas, 2004; Lo, 2008). Parents of culturally and linguistically diverse learners often feel excluded from the special education process because the information presented is difficult to understand (Lake & Billingsley, 2000; Mueller, 2015), they are reluctant to demonstrate lack of knowledge (Fish, 2008), and they feel intimidated by the process (Lo, 2012), which leads to limited collaboration and partnership in decision-making and conflict over placement decisions (Fish, 2008). Lack of IDEA enforcement on the federal and state levels often leave advocacy up to low-income families who have difficulty traversing the system (Wakelin, 2008; Mueller, 2015).

### ***Professional Preparation and Development***

Unfortunately, exclusionary practices that limit full parent participation in decision making (Mueller, 2015; Pruitt, Wandry & Hollums, 1998) and overrepresentation of students of color (Adkinson-Bradley, Johnson, Rawls & Plunkett, 2006; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2009) persist. These two issues continue to plague the special education process and harm the students who rely on effective implementation of the law. One potential explanation is that members of the IEP team may lack the knowledge and skills they need to mitigate these issues due to inadequate professional development and support.

I was unable to find studies that attend to the frequency and/or quality of professional development that general educators receive in special education. In addition to being required members of the IEP team under IDEA, general educators bring valuable assets: they are knowledgeable in the general education curriculum, assessment of that curriculum, and teaching strategies. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), a major professional and advocacy organization for special educators and their students, outlines clear expectations around the role of collaboration among IEP team members, including general educators:

Collaboration with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings (e.g., co-taught). Collaboration with individuals or teams require the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning (McLeskey, 2017, p. 28).

Further, the push towards inclusion requires general educators to become more adept at understanding the special education process and to be more active participants at each stage. In order to actively participate in IEP meetings, general educators must leverage their knowledge of students, knowledge of the context (classroom, school, district, state, national), and knowledge of resources (content, strategies, accommodations, supports, etc.) (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Ball, 2018) to collaborate across difference (race, gender, class, (dis)ability, etc.). At the same time, in light of historical practices of exclusion in society and in schooling, members of the IEP team also need to advocate for the rights and needs of students and their families, appropriate placement decisions, and resources in order to promote equity. In order to support students identified with (dis)abilities in the least restrictive environment, general educators need an understanding of historical inequities embedded in special education and tools to engage in the process in order to disrupt inequities. The ability to see when inequitable practices are taking place (i.e. in their classrooms, within the school building) and respond effectively to them can help general educators assist in the development of goals and the assignment of appropriate accommodations and modifications for their students and advocate for student needs. Therefore, effective professional development for general educators to improve the quality of their work in special education is an act of social justice.

Without ongoing professional development to hone general educator awareness of discriminatory and inequitable practices, they can perpetuate discrimination in IEP meetings, in addition to other aspects of their practice. These challenges reveal the necessity of collaboration and advocacy as an integral part of the pedagogy of professional development for members of the IEP team. By taking an advocacy stance, educators can begin to disrupt the ways discrimination and bias impact the decisions made by the IEP team.

### ***Critical Theoretical Frameworks***

Incorporating critical theoretical frameworks can help to unify PSTs' knowledge base and reflection on their field experiences. In addition to incorporating *The Color of Mind* and intersectionality, *Disability Critical Race Theory* (Darby & Rury, 2018; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Annamma, Ferri, & Connor, 2016) provides a bridge between historical and current discriminatory practices at the intersection of race and ability by providing a framework to support TEs' development of special education curriculum, PSTs' understanding of the intersection of race and ability, and a method to analyze PSTs' collaboration and advocacy practices. The tenets of DisCrit recognize that racism and ableism are interdependent and often manifest in neutralized and invisible ways (Annamma, Ferri, & Connor, 2016). This is highlighted, for example, by the dismal education statistics of Black students identified with (dis)abilities. DisCrit rejects singular notions of identity, recognizing that people exist at various intersections of social identity. This is important to PST development because it can serve to disrupt deficit-assumptions about who students are based on their race *or* class *or* gender *or* ability status, etc.

DisCrit also acknowledges the social construction of race and ability and the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced and/or (dis)abled. It is particularly important for TEs to provide examples of how this may occur in schools and to provide PSTs with opportunities to discuss and enact the ways students and families should be supported. DisCrit foregrounds the voices of the marginalized, considers both the legal and historical aspects of how race and (dis)ability have been used to deny the rights of individuals, and recognizes that gains that have been made by people identified with (dis)abilities have been made because the interest of White, middle-class, able-bodied citizens converged with those of people identified with (dis)abilities. Finally, DisCrit also “requires activism and supports all forms of resistance” (p. 11). Thus, DisCrit requires PSTs to engage in ways that disrupt discriminatory practices. DisCrit highlights for us that it is essential for

PSTs to hear voices that are typically excluded from special education curriculum, make connections between past and current practices, and understand how rights and privileges have been connected to social identity throughout history.

### ***Developing the Practice of Advocacy***

To effectively serve students and disrupt inequity in the special education process, educators must develop an advocacy stance toward their work with the IEP team. I define advocacy as the **actions** a teacher takes to **publicly safeguard the rights and consider the views** of parents and students who are potentially **vulnerable to inequitable practices** by acting **on their behalf** or ensuring they have agency to speak/act and make informed decisions **on their own behalf**. Advocacy protects the rights of students identified with (dis)abilities, serves to balance uneven power dynamics, and promotes equitable interactions and decision-making. The CEC outlines the actions required to advocate for children by requiring that the IEP team engage in collaborative behaviors such as questioning, planning, problem-solving, negotiating, and “coordinat(ing) expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning” (McLeskey, 2017, p. 28). The CEC identified advocacy as a high-leverage practice.

High-leverage practices are “tasks and activities that are essential for skillful beginning teachers to understand, take responsibility for, and be prepared to carry out in order to enact their core instructional responsibilities” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 504). Framing advocacy as a high-leverage practice indicates that teachers who will participate as members of the IEP team must be able to facilitate meetings with colleagues and families and collaborate as a group to secure services for the student that will support their learning. Because both special and general educators’ will be responsible for participation in IEP teams, TEs need to consider how they can train general education PSTs to engage in collaboration that meets the need of students identified with (dis)abilities and upholds equity.

To support PSTs to take up the high-leverage practice of advocacy, TEs must assist PSTs in developing language to discuss the practice, cultivating the critical understandings and orientations necessary to disrupt inequity, and must provide opportunities for PSTs to engage in the practice and receive feedback. In this study, I seek to unpack this definition of advocacy to develop PSTs' understanding of the work involved, provide them with opportunities to engage in collaboration and advocacy practices, and analyze the implementation of their practice in order to improve it.

### ***Practice-Based Teacher Education***

I employ a practice-based teacher education (PBTE) framework to design and enact instruction for PSTs. A PBTE framework “include(s) significant attention not just to the knowledge demands of teaching but to the actual tasks and activities involved in the work” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 503). Utilizing high-leverage practices within a PBTE framework enables me to attend the “array of challenges” (Dotger, Masinglila, Bearkland, & Dotger, 2015, p. 578) faced by PSTs during their clinical experiences that make it difficult for TEs to anticipate, control, or track their development. Dotger et al. explain that for PSTs there is a divide between what they learn in their teacher preparation program and how they might employ that learning during field experiences. Depending on the varied contexts they encounter at field sites, PSTs may be more or less likely to take up practices they learn about in teacher education coursework. PSTs' perception of authenticity is important: if they view the practices they engage in during coursework as connecting and having similarities to the practices in their future professional community, it has a deeper impact on their future application of those practices (Dotger et al., 2015).

When they enter teaching, beginning teachers will be expected to collaborate with parents and their colleagues to meet the needs of their students identified with (dis)abilities. In order to make appropriate recommendations and advocate for their student's needs, they must know the academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs of their student, as well as know their content

area, context(s), and the available resources to support student learning (Cohen, Raudenbush & Ball, 2003). This is complex practice that PSTs are unlikely to develop without explicit guidance. TEs must provide structured opportunities (e.g., engaging in a case study of a student, analyzing videos of student interactions, developing questions to ask parents about their student) for PSTs to approximate the practice of building their knowledge of students (i.e., academically, socially, emotionally) through guided practice and reflection.

Additionally, collaborating with families and colleagues across difference and advocating for students in ways that disrupt inequity are intricate skills that are integral to teachers work with students identified with (dis)abilities. Ball and Forzani (2009) make clear that such skillful work does not occur by happenstance and that professional judgment must be taught in a careful and deliberate manner. Therefore, training for teachers must be *designed* to support their development of these skills. Engaging in elements of complex practice can make visible to PSTs important aspects of practice that are “almost second nature to more experienced educators” (Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shahan & Williamson, 2009, p. 2078).

**Simulations.** Simulated experiences provide PSTs opportunities to practice specific teaching skills in an environment outside of schools. PSTs have the opportunity to engage with a simulated student, parent, colleague, paraprofessional, etc., and attend to a “problem of practice” (Dotger et al., 2015) presented in an experience scripted by a teacher educator based situations that would occur in school settings. However, research that examines PSTs’ ability to partner with families across racial difference during parent-teacher conferences through the use of simulations is uncommon. Additionally, most research on simulations and other approximations of practice do not focus on preparing PSTs to engage in equitable teaching practices (Khasnabis, Goldin, & Ronfeldt, 2018). Therefore, continued study of simulations to support PSTs' uptake of equity practices is needed, particularly developing simulations that support PSTs’ practice at the complex intersections

of institutionalized power and oppression with race and other marginalized identities. Providing opportunities for PSTs to recognize and enact practices that utilize this complexity is essential to promoting equity in schools.

General educators (as well as other school personnel) should receive professional development opportunities in (1) working collaboratively in general education classrooms, (2) implementing supports, accommodations, and modifications, (3) implementing effective teaching pedagogy, (4) working effectively with caregivers, (5) utilizing strategies to support students identified with (dis)abilities, (6) effectively constructing/preparing for/implementing IEPs, and (7) preparing students identified with (dis)abilities for statewide assessments (IDEA, §1462 (b)(2)). As a community of practitioners and researchers, we need to study and evaluate the practices necessary to build general educators' understanding of the potential for bias in special education referrals, placement, and execution of services and their role as members of the IEP team. General educators are in a unique position to support the team's work in building a collaborative space, especially with the move toward inclusion, where there is an increase of students identified with (dis)abilities in general education classrooms. General educators' increased contact with parents of students identified with (dis)abilities with different racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds than themselves requires a deeper knowledge of students, their families, and the ways in which they are positioned in society and schooling.

This study contributes to this body of literature by studying PSTs' ability to engage and reflect on issues at the intersection of race and ability status through their engagement in simulations and in-class activities focused on inequity in special education.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework

Racism and ableism have the potential to manifest in “neutralized and invisible ways” to support conceptions of normalcy (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016, p. 19). They routinely show up in PSTs’ ideas, speech, and interactions with parents because “we are all swimming in it” (Bettina Love, personal communication, September 27, 2019). At the same time, the United States is currently in an era of resegregation of schools and resegregation within schools caused by the implementation of inequitable social policies that have left low-income Black students and Black students identified with (dis)abilities in schools with limited resources (Ferri & Connor, 2005; Blanchett, 2009). These realities require educators to develop an awareness and understanding of how racism and ableism in schooling can be perpetuated in teacher ideas, speech, and actions. The situation also requires an intersectional understanding of how the label of (dis)ability impacts groups along the lines of race and other marginalized identities. To develop these understandings as well as begin the trajectory of life-long development, PSTs need opportunities to disrupt deficit-based conceptions of children through structured discussion, practice (i.e. simulations), and reflection in pre-service teacher education.

Researchers have demonstrated that issues of race and racism are challenging to tackle in teacher education courses because of PSTs' beliefs that we live in a post-racial society, beliefs that discussions of race are irrelevant to teaching, and/or because White students, in particular, may feel attacked when these discussions occur (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2012; DiAngelo, 2010; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014). This raises several unique challenges for teacher education because

social, academic, disciplinary, and post-secondary outcomes of students of color identified with (dis)abilities are dependent on the type and quality of education they receive from the teachers who educate them and engage with their families (Wakelin, 2008).

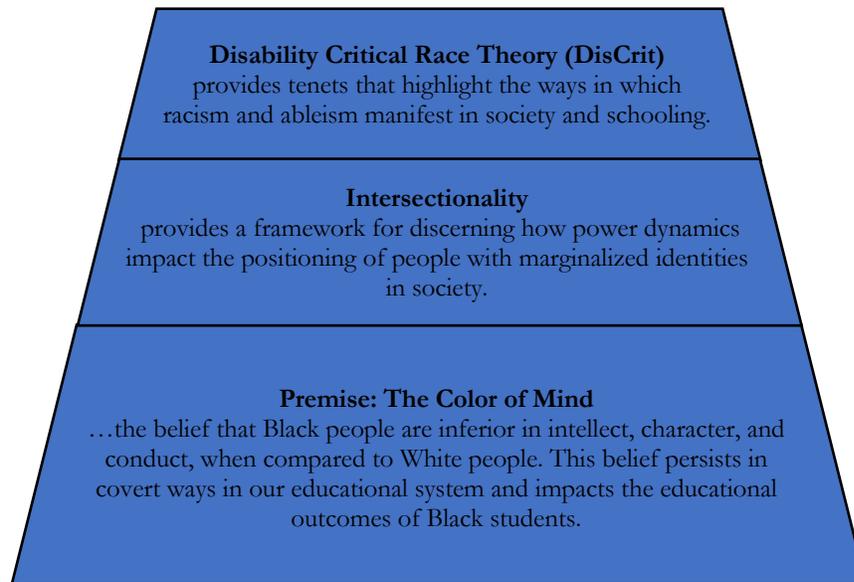
The first challenge is related to understanding how and why current inequities exist. Unless teacher educators demonstrate the connections between racial discrimination of the past and current manifestations, it is often difficult for PSTs to understand the relevance of racism to their current teaching practices (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2012). The second challenge involves PSTs' ability to understand experiences they may not have had themselves. The privileged identities that many PSTs hold may make it difficult for them to understand marginalization at the intersection of identities in which they are privileged (e.g. race, ability status, class, gender) (Brunsma, Brown, Placier, 2013; DiAngelo, 2020). The third challenge is that, for White and/or able-bodied PSTs who have had limited exposure to people of color and/or people identified with (dis)abilities, their lack of familiarity may lead them to rely on can perpetuate assumptions that serve to marginalize and homogenize these groups (Sleeter, 2008).

I bridged *The Color of Mind* (Darby & Rury, 2018), intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016), and Disability Critical Race Theory (Annamma, Ferri, & Connor, 2016) to construct a framework to support curriculum development that attended to each of the challenges outlined above. *The Color of Mind* articulates the dominant perspective of the Black intellect in the United States that "...Blacks (are) not equal to Whites in intelligence, character, or conduct" (Darby & Rury, 2018, p. 2). Identifying this perspective laid the groundwork for me to apply the theories of intersectionality and DisCrit to teacher practice. Intersectionality offers a concrete framework to analyze how power in various domains of society (e.g., schooling) is utilized to marginalize groups of people at the intersections of race, ability, and other social identities. DisCrit builds on intersectionality in that it

highlights the specific intersection of race and ability and provides tenets that can guide efforts to disrupt inequitable outcomes at this intersection (see Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1**

***Theoretical Frameworks Pyramid***



The Color of Mind enabled me to respond to the first challenge (i.e., understanding how and why inequities exist) by providing a frame of reference for discussing race and racism that ensured continuity throughout the course and guiding the examples that I used to demonstrate how past inequities connect to current inequities for Black students in special education. To respond to the second challenge (i.e., supports PSTs to understand experiences they have not had themselves), I supported PSTs to apply intersectionality in class discussions, assignments, and activities in order to build their capacity to critically analyze how the power that comes with a teacher’s privileged identities can serve to oppress students of color identified with (dis)abilities and their families. Additionally, I used intersectionality to analyze PSTs’ reflections on inequity at the beginning and end of the course to determine their ability to see the layered ways power and oppression manifest in schools. In response to the third challenge (i.e., the ways that limited exposure to others can

reinforce negative assumptions), I also asked PSTs to use DisCrit to attend closely to students identified with (dis)abilities in their classroom and think carefully about how these students engaged with and were engaged by their teachers and peers. I also encouraged PSTs to share their observations of their field placements during class discussions using DisCrit as a lens. Finally, I used DisCrit to analyze PSTs' interactions with a Black parent of a Black student identified with a (dis)ability during simulations at the beginning and end of the course.

This chapter will first address the distinct contributions of each of the three frameworks I draw on and then focus on how these frameworks, taken together, supported curriculum development, learning opportunities, and data analysis. The chapter is organized into four sections. The first three sections focus on The Color of Mind, intersectionality, and DisCrit and describe their major elements and distinct contributions. The fourth section focuses on how I bridged these three frameworks together to develop the course curriculum, learning opportunities, and data analysis.

### **The Color of Mind**

This study is built on the premise that race and ability have been inextricably linked throughout the history of the United States (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2016; Darby & Rury, 2018). Darby and Rury (2018) describe this phenomenon as the “The Color of Mind.” As noted above, The Color of Mind captures the belief that Black people are inferior to White people in intellect, conduct, and character. According to the authors, The Color of Mind has been sustained throughout the history of the United States, including in schooling. Its most recent manifestation is visible in the operation of tracking, disciplinary, and special education referral policies in schools where White conceptions of the social and academic are privileged.

Seemingly neutral policies have been implemented in ways that have historically discriminated against Black students identified with (dis)abilities. For example, when students with (dis)abilities as a group were integrated into schools they were placed in segregated placements to

meet their academic and social needs which differed from the needs of students who were considered able-bodied (Skiba et al., 2008). Over time, Black students came to be overrepresented in the areas of emotional disability, intellectual disability, and, eventually, learning disability (Skiba et al., 2008). These disability categories are considered subjective, meaning that students are recommended for evaluation and classified in these categories based on the discretion of faculty and staff. In addition, testing materials and practices used to determine students' eligibility for classification in these categories has, historically, been biased against marginalized students. There has been a pattern of Black students identified with (dis)abilities from low-income communities in particular receiving a lower quality of education and facing difficulty moving out of special education, which then impacts their academic growth, engagement, and prospects for employment and higher education (Wakelin, 2008; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014).

Currently, schools place a high value on standardized assessments, which are assumed to be “objective” but have been shown to be culturally biased (Proctor, Graves & Esch, 2012). Additionally, these assessments do not account for contextual factors that may impact a student’s performance on these tests (e.g., social history, teacher observations, parent reports, etc.). Although IDEA recommends a multi-tiered approach to special education identification that incorporates these contextual elements, standardized tests (e.g., psychological testing, intelligence tests, educational testing, etc.) continue to weigh heavily in identification practices and placement decisions (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Newell & Kratochwill, 2007; 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004)). This coupled with negative assumptions about Black students’ academic, social, and emotional abilities leads to discriminatory identification practices. It is important to note that no one that participates in these processes needs to have any conscious ill-will to perpetuate racism and ableism. Rather, the persistence of inequitable outcomes that systematically disadvantage Black students identified with

(dis)abilities speaks to the insidious nature of 'The Color of Mind and how it permeates seemingly neutral educational structures.

Additionally, race and narratives of intellectual (and social) inferiority have historical roots that are foundational to how racism and ableism are perpetuated through covert practices in our public institutions (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016; Darby & Rury, 2018). In order to critically analyze the manifestation of racism and ableism in educational spaces, decision-making, and other challenges that arise in practice, critical frameworks like intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) are integral to PSTs' practice.

### **Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is

... a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and *conditions of social and political life and self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor.* They are generally shaped by many factors in *diverse and mutually influencing ways.* When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the *organization of power* in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, *but by many axes that work together and influence each other.*

Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves. (Collins & Blige, 2016, p. 2, my emphasis)

Intersectionality provides a framework for discerning how power dynamics impact the positioning of people with marginalized identities in society by addressing how multiple axes of oppression intersect to shape their experiences in complex and nuanced ways. Collins and Bilge (2016) provide a framework for analyzing how power can manifest in society by dividing these interactions into four domains: interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural, and structural. Although these domains overlap with one another, focusing on individual domains provides researchers (and

teachers) with the opportunity to analyze complex systems in fine-grained detail. It also provides opportunities to see the interdependency among domains of power.

### ***Interpersonal Domain***

The interpersonal domain concerns those “...power relations (that) are about people’s lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 7). Focusing on this domain allows the researcher/teacher educator/PST to uncover how power manifests in human relationships with one another, keeping in mind that this is a small part of a larger, more complex system of marginalization. One salient example of how power and oppression can manifest on the interpersonal domain of power with respect to special education concerns IEP meetings. The development of IEP meetings, through litigation and legislation, were meant to ensure that parents have the opportunity to speak/act on their child’s behalf and that decisions that impact the educational future of a child will not be made without the consent of the most integral stakeholders. The assumption is that power will be shared equally among members of the IEP team. However, parents of color of students identified with (dis)abilities often report feeling confused by the complex process and the jargon used by other members of the IEP team during IEP meetings (Fish, 2008; Lo, 2008; Pang, 2011). In this space where collaboration is necessary for equitable decision-making, parents are excluded even in times where they are physically present at meetings.

Although overt exclusion is illegal, covert exclusion persists. These experiences expose the inequitable interpersonal power dynamics that exist in these meetings. Parents are disadvantaged because they are excluded from expressing their perspective on their child’s strengths and needs and may not be provided with the support they need to understand and make informed decisions. This reality tips the scales of power in favor of school personnel, who are equipped with knowledge of the special education process, vocabulary connected to that process, familiarity with the educational

space, and if necessary, colleagues who can support their learning in any of these areas. When applied to interpersonal interactions such as the IEP meeting, this frame for analyzing power prompts us to ask and answer questions like: Who has the advantage in this interaction? Who is disadvantaged? Whose discourses and actions during the IEP meeting serve to disadvantage one group while providing advantage to the other?

### ***Disciplinary Domain***

Collins and Bilge (2016) remind us that “when it comes to the organization of power, different people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented” (p. 9). Within education’s disciplinary domain some students are disproportionality represented in special education (impacted by test bias and implementation of the special education process), placed in separate settings, and/or subjected to harsh discipline policies.

Historically, Black students are more likely to be identified in the areas of emotional disability, intellectual impairment, and learning disability than their peers of other races (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2007). These categories are considered subjective because placement relies on educators exercising professional judgment and discretion to determine categorization. On the other hand, in categories that are considered objective (i.e., requiring a medical diagnosis), they are placed in special education at the same rate as their peers (Parrish, 2002). Black boys in particular are more likely to be identified with emotional disabilities as compared to White boys (National Education Association of the United States, 2007). Once placed in special education, Black students are more likely than their White peers to be placed in segregated settings, to be suspended, and to be expelled from school (Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons, Feggins-Azziz, 2006). They are less likely than their peers to be placed in gifted programming or to be exited out of special education (Grissom & Redding, 2016). “In essence, power operates by disciplining people in ways

that put people's lives on paths that make some options seem viable and others out of reach”  
(Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 9).

These examples demonstrate how the intersecting identities of race and ability (and class and gender) work to disadvantage some students, particularly, students of color identified with (dis)abilities, and advantage others, particularly White students and White students identified with (dis)abilities. PSTs must be aware of how students of color identified in particular (dis)ability categories are positioned in both national and local school contexts and its impacts on the application of rules, patterns in program placement, and post-secondary outcomes.

### ***Cultural Domain***

Cultural narratives reveal that “when it comes to the organization of power, ideas matter in providing explanation for social inequity and fair play” (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 10). Imaginings of Black intellectual inferiority have been justified by skull measurements, aptitude tests, and a consistent narrative of their mental and social inferiority (Darby & Rury, 2018). Although Black intellectual inferiority has been scientifically disproven, narratives of Black mental and social inferiority persist.

For instance, the theory of compromised development rests on the argument that Black children have been “culturally deprived” and therefore lack academic and social skills, which hinders their achievement in school (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006). Achievement testing is used as proof that Black students are culturally deprived, reifies the belief that Black students are intellectually inferior, and justifies Black students' disproportionate placement in restrictive settings and disproportionate experiences of exclusionary disciplinary practices. This disproportionality, then, further reifies the belief that Black students are intellectually and socially inferior. If we look more broadly, implementation of “zero tolerance” policies, mass incarceration, and negative images of Black men have served to promote the ideology that Black people, including Black children must be

controlled, segregated, and put away (Morris, 2016; Skiba et al., 2008; Winn, 2016). These larger cultural narratives impact school personnel beliefs about Black families and their children and the application of disciplinary policies in school (Skiba et al., 2008). It is important for PSTs to be aware of the harmful narratives that plague Black students and its potential to impact referral, identification, and program placement practices.

### ***Structural Domain***

The structural domain of power “refers to how [schooling] itself is organized or structured. Because intersectionality embraces complexity, it questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, [etc.] shape the institutionalization and organization of [schooling]” (Collins & Bilge, p. 12). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) codified special education processes—for example, referral, placement, and exit—yet, definitions for subjective (dis)ability categories are vague and the application of evidence to determine identification is flexible, which opens space for the discriminatory application of the law. This perpetuates inequitable dynamics that occur in the interpersonal, disciplinary, and cultural domains.

For example, IQ testing based on the norms of White middle/upper middle-class knowledge and experiences has long been the primary tool for entry into special education. A recent reauthorization of IDEA (2004) provided an alternative for supporting children before they are identified with a (dis)ability, Response to Intervention. Despite this modification to the law, IQ testing continues to be used as an important element of identification in the special education process (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005). This example demonstrates how power can be organized and structured through laws like IDEA and differently position groups based on their intersecting identities.

### ***Implications for Teacher Education***

Teachers not only work with content, but they are constantly engaged with the social identities of others who exist within various power structures. When we think about the relationship between a teacher and student (whether we use an interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural or structural lens), a teacher is considered the authority within that relationship. Therefore, a power dynamic is created. Teachers must learn how to manage this complexity (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Lampert, 1985) in ways that are equitable and are anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-classist, and anti-sexist. Research consistently demonstrates that students of color across class, gender, and (dis)ability status are marginalized within schools (Blanchett, 2009; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Therefore, schools of education must take on the task of preparing teachers to work within this complexity, using critical lenses to help them attend to the unseen. Intersectionality can help the researcher (as well as the teacher educator and teacher) unearth actions and discourse that perpetuate marginalization of students color identified with (dis)abilities.

### **Disability Critical Race Theory**

Although intersectionality can be used to analyze how marginalization takes place at the intersections of peoples' various social identities within society, intersectionality does not address the intersection of racism and ability specifically. DisCrit (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016) highlights how these identities intersect and how people who hold these identities have been marginalized in society and schooling. Intersectionality uses domains of power as a framework to focus on specific social identities. It is important to note that even though race and ability are the focus, DisCrit accounts for other marginalized identities as well.

DisCrit helps to unearth how ableism<sup>1</sup> and racism intersect with other marginalized identities within power structures as well as to interrogate the impact these intersections have on the experiences of students identified with (dis)abilities in special education (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016). As a framework, DisCrit addresses how racism and ableism are structurally ingrained within society—historically, socially, politically, and economically—which negatively impacts the access students of color identified with (dis)abilities have to education. This framework pushes back against the binaries of able/disabled that occur in various aspects of our society from segregated classrooms for students identified with (dis)abilities who are placed in separate areas of school buildings to how ability/(dis)ability is represented in the media:

A DisCrit theory in education is a framework that theorizes about the ways in which race, racism, dis/ability and ableism are built into the interactions, procedures, discourses, and institutions of education, which affect students of color with dis/abilities qualitatively differently than White students with dis/abilities (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2016).

### ***Seven Tenets***

DisCrit also proposes seven tenets to help unearth the ways in which (dis)ability and race intersect to cause multiple layers of marginalization for people of color identified with (dis)abilities in every sphere of society (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016). Each tenet within DisCrit provides a different lens through which to examine each domain of power.

DisCrit distinctly recognizes that the label of *inability* has been used at the intersection of (dis)ability and race to classify students as “at risk” because they are a person of color and reinforce

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<sup>1</sup> Ableism is used here as defined by Hehir (2002), “the devaluation of disability results in societal attitudes that uncritically assert that it is better for a child to walk than roll, speak than sign, read print than read Braille, spell independently than use a spell-check, and hang out with nondisabled kids as opposed to other disabled kids...” (p. 3)

the consistent and overt/covert comparison to Whiteness that has been present throughout history (Tenet 1). It also recognizes that specific markers of social identity have been considered abnormal and as a result stigma and segregation based on those markers have allowed “teachers, other school personnel, and society to perceive particular students as deficient, lacking, and inferior” (p. 12). Instead, DisCrit takes up the complexity of social identity and rejects singular notions of identity as the antithesis to human experience (Tenet 2).

DisCrit recognizes that social identities, such as race and ability, are socially constructed and that false acceptance of these two categories as biological fact has led to the continued mistreatment of people that live on the intersection of these identities (Tenet 3). This framework rejects ignoring the voices of people who have been traditionally marginalized, speaking for or in place of them, which has happened repeatedly in society and educational spaces (Tenet 4). In IEP meeting this may look like ignoring contextual factors in schools that may be impacting a student’s academic, social, and emotional well-being, as well as, not considering the student or parent’s perspective in decision-making.

Further, DisCrit recognizes that race and (dis)ability have been used separately and together to deny the rights of certain groups, which has been rooted in White superiority and has created a racial hierarchy “because racial difference has been explicitly linked with an intellectual hierarchy (therefore) racial differences take on additional weight” (authors, year, p. 15) (Tenet 5). It also acknowledges Whiteness and Ability as property (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016; Harris, 1993), which provides economic benefits to those who can claim either. It argues that throughout history individuals and groups have claimed both Whiteness and Ability in order to resist oppressive labels and obtain the benefits stolen from them. Additionally, oppressed groups obtain civil rights if their interests converge with those who are White and able-bodied (Tenet 6). Finally, this framework

acknowledges diverse forms of resistance, the diverse ways in which people exist in the world, and the need for the perspectives of the community to inform action (Tenet 7).

As an analytical framework, DisCrit enables us to critically interrogate the ways that the experiences of students of color who are identified with (dis)abilities are impacted by social structures and power dynamics that multiply marginalize them. In teacher education, this framework has the potential to be a powerful tool for enabling PSTs to begin to see how these structures operate and learn to disrupt them in their interactions with students and families. Figure 2.2. below outlines the domains of power associated with intersectionality and the tenets of DisCrit, including two important modifications (bolded). The modifications are of Tenet 2 (multidimensional notions identities v. singular notions of identities) and Tenet 4 (marginalized v. dominant voices). I incorporated these modifications to help PSTs understand what each tenet is disrupting and to support them to analyze whether their observations or actions are aligned or misaligned with DisCrit. For example, Tenet 2 upholds multidimensional notions of identity in order to disrupt singular notions of identity. Similarly, Tenet 4 upholds foregrounding marginalized voices which disrupts the historical preference of foreground dominant voices. When applying the tenets of DisCrit to scenarios, legal cases, audio recordings, and reflections of their own practice, this allowed my PSTs to see explicitly see and name the inequity that was occurring.

Figure 2.2

*Domains of Power and Modified DisCrit Tenets*

<p>Intersectionality (Collins &amp; Bilge, 2016) Domains of Power</p>	<p>(Dis)ability Critical Race Theory (Ferri, Connor, Annamma, Eds., 2016) Tenets (modified)</p>
<p><b>Interpersonal Domain</b> “...power relations are about people’s lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions” (p. 7)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Racism and ableism work interdependently in “neutralized and invisible ways.”</li> <li>2. <b>Multidimensional notions identities</b> v. singular notions of identity.</li> <li>3. Material and phycological of the social construction of race.</li> <li>4. <b>Marginalized</b> v. dominant voices.</li> <li>5. Historical legacy of racism and ableism.</li> <li>6. Whiteness and Ability as Property and interest convergence.</li> <li>7. Activism and resistance.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Disciplinary Domain</b> “when it comes to the organization of power, different people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented” (p. 9)</p>	
<p><b>Cultural Domain</b> “when it comes to the organization of power, ideas matter in providing explanation for social inequity and fair play” (p. 10)</p>	
<p><b>Structural Domain</b> “The structural domain of power...refers to how (schooling) itself is organized or structured. Because intersectionality embraces complexity, it questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, (etc.) shape the institutionalization and organization of the (schooling)” (p. 12).</p>	

Combining intersectionality and DisCrit not only allows us to examine how power operates in a space (e.g., classroom, IEP meeting, school rules, and procedures) but also the multiple and specific ways that racism and ableism can manifest within that space (identified through the tenets). DisCrit and intersectionality as analytic tools for teacher education can help TEs and PSTs to

analyze how racism and ableism may manifest in “neutralized and invisible ways” to support conceptions of normalcy (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016, p. 19)—in PSTs’ ideas, speech, and interactions. This combined framework raises question like the following: Are PSTs’ discourses revealing racist and/or ableist frames or speaking back against them? Are their actions aligning with their discourse? Answers to these questions will help to reveal how PSTs are understanding inequity, their role as members of the IEP team, and how their discourse and recommendations are either perpetuating or pushing back against racist and ableist discourse and practices.

### **Bridging The Color of Mind, Intersectionality & DisCrit**

I designed and taught a semester-long course for general PSTs pursuing certification in secondary education. In developing the curriculum for this course, I provided structured learning opportunities and practice-based opportunities that were undergirded by the frameworks of The Color of Mind, intersectionality, and DisCrit. The research questions that explore PSTs’ uptake of these frameworks during coursework are the following: (1) How do preservice teachers’ *understandings of inequity and their roles* as members of the IEP team *shift* over the course of a 12-week class that integrates issues of inequity in special education and the use of critical frameworks? (2) How do PSTs respond to issues of racism and ableism when they are shared by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability during initial and final simulations? (3) How do PSTs engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability?

### ***Curriculum Development & Structured Learning Opportunities***

I began the course by building PSTs’ understanding that The Color of Mind, the belief that Blackness equals intellectual inferiority, has historically shaped the ways Black students experience school. I shared a historical survey to demonstrate the connection between race and ability beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* (year) and cases such as *The Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (year) and *Mills v. The Board of Education of*

*the District of Columbia* (year) that laid the foundation for the development of special education.

Within this discussion PSTs analyzed a case (*Larry P v. Riles*, year) that exemplified how racism and ableism intersect in special education and discussed the educational implications of the decisions made by the district and school personnel. To enable them to more carefully analyze this case, I introduced PSTs to intersectionality through the Domains of Power (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The Domains of Power supported the PSTs in identifying the individuals who were advantaged and disadvantaged by determining what individuals or groups had power to make decisions and what individuals or groups were impacted. They were also able to identify the ways power and oppression manifested in different elements of the case and any overlaps they observed. After applying the Domains of Power to understand inequity across multiple domains of power, PSTs applied the tenets of DisCrit to the same case to think more specifically about the ways inequity manifested at the specific intersection of race and ability.

To support this work, I selected texts to help build PSTs' understanding of intersectionality and DisCrit as well as apply these frameworks to in-class activities. The first chapter of *Intersectionality* by Collins and Bilge (2016) and *Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit): Theorizing at the Intersections of Race and Dis/ability* by Annamma, Connor, and Ferri (2013) were the anchor texts for this course. Before applying these frameworks to historical court cases, assignments, and in-class discussions, we discussed and pulled examples from each anchor text that exemplified the Domains of Power and DisCrit tenets. PSTs used these examples as reference points when applying the frameworks to different texts throughout the course.

I developed the initial simulation where PSTs would engage in an IEP meeting with a parent and special educator around of issue of racism/ableism and academic placement, as a curriculum pre-assessment. PSTs were required to respond to a racist/ableist incident that occurred between two students in their homeroom. One student was a Black girl identified with a learning disability

(Mariah), and the other was a White boy with no identified (dis)ability (Brian). During the simulated IEP meeting, Mariah's mother, Mrs. Johnson (played by an actor), reports that Brian expressed his belief that Mariah was placed in special education, which he names the “slow class” because she is Black.

The fictional incident was written to highlight key features of *The Color of Mind*, intersectionality, and DisCrit. First, this incident takes place in the interpersonal domain of power and reflects *The Color of Mind*, with Brian equating Mariah’s Blackness to intellectual inferiority. Embedded in his statement is Whiteness and Ability as property (Tenet 6) and a singular notion of Mariah’s identity (instead of a multidimensional view, Tenet 2) when contrasting himself, a White student who is in general education to Mariah, a Black student in special education. The material and psychological impacts (Tenet 3) of this incident are demonstrated in Mariah’s subsequent behavior: She decided to begin going to homeroom late in order to avoid Brian and his friends, and she withdrew from participating in class. This scenario presents an example of how racism and ableism can work interdependently (Tenet 1). Within the simulated IEP meeting, PSTs were expected to develop a recommendation to respond to this incident that took Mariah’s perspective into account because of the harm she had experienced (Tenet 4). After providing their recommendation, PSTs were also asked to weigh in on Mariah’s current special education placement.

In the final simulation, PSTs were asked to offer a recommendation in response to learning that Mariah was not using her accommodations in her algebra and global history classes after being transferred into general education. In this scenario, Mariah’s teachers comment that she needs to take advantage of the extended time outlined in her IEP because she has not been completing her examinations, and it is negatively impacting her grades. Mariah expressed to her mother that she did not want to take her accommodation of extended time because she is the only Black student in her algebra class and the only student identified with a (dis)ability. Mrs. Johnson tells the IEP team that

she is certain that the incident with Brian at the beginning of the school year is having a lasting impact on Mariah.

This scenario, like the one PSTs encountered in the first simulation, was designed to highlight key features of *The Color of Mind*, intersectionality, and DisCrit. Here, PSTs must again tackle the interdependence of racism and ableism but in this instance it is implicit (Tenet 1), must remain aware of Mariah's multidimensionality (Tenet 2), and must grapple with the material and psychological impacts of Mariah being labeled as raced and (dis)abled (Tenet 3). At this point in the course, PSTs had had multiple opportunities to reflect and engage in discussions about the actions they might take to privilege the voice of marginalized populations (Tenet 4), and they were expected to apply these experiences to the final simulation. PSTs were also asked to weigh in on Mariah's academic placement during this simulation as well.

Although the simulations provided opportunities for PSTs to practice the skills of collaboration and advocacy informed by critical frameworks of race and ability, Loughran (2002) reminds us that “experience alone does not lead to learning” (p. 35). Engaging in reflection provided PSTs with meaningful opportunities to grapple with ideas and experiences in relation to race and ability that may have diverged from their own. It also directed them away from rationalizing their practice based on status quo norms and values and toward justifying their practice in terms of the critical frameworks they were studying. This is particularly useful when supporting PSTs in the work of engaging with students, parents, and colleagues across difference because it assists PSTs with unpacking assumptions they may have made prior to and when engaging with the parent and to think about their future approach. PSTs were also asked to reflect on the intersection of race and ability and their ability in these scenarios and on the ways they did or did not signal to the parent that they recognized the incident as both racist *and* ableist. Additionally, they were asked to reflect on the recommendations they provided the team on how they will respond to these situations and

whether their responses addressed the material and psychological impacts the incidents had on Mariah, Brian's belief in Whiteness and Ability as property, and his singular understanding of Mariah's identities.

Providing meaningful opportunities for PSTs to reflect on issues that may cause them discomfort is particularly important for their work with families across race, ability, class, and gender. Throughout the course, I supported PSTs to engage critical frameworks like intersectionality and DisCrit, to analyze their practice in ways that expanded their perspectives. I also guided their reflection in ways that were intentionally designed to push back against common maneuvers used by PSTs to avoid conversations that address race and racism. Gay and Kirkland (2003) discuss several such obstacles to effective pre-service teacher reflection, including: (1) PSTs "confuse reflection with describing issues, ideas, and events; stating philosophical beliefs; or summarizing statements made by scholars"; (2) they have "few high-quality opportunities for guided practice in self-reflection"; and (3) they believe that teaching is objective and requires mastery of technical skills that are "applicable to all teaching contexts and student populations" (p. 182). These authors also describe how PSTs may engage in maneuvers to avoid direct discussion about race by shifting conversations to discussion of "class, gender, and individuality" (p. 183); using silence; and/or undermining the significance of issues raised regarding race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity. With TE support, PSTs can learn to engage critical frameworks to analyze practice in ways that expand their perspectives.

In addition, navigating special education, specifically around inequity and PSTs' roles, requires a common language between the TE and PSTs related to social identities, power, oppression, advocacy, and collaboration. Developing a common conceptual framing allows the TE and PSTs to rely on shared language and definitions to articulate what they see in their practice and the practice of others. Using a shared definition of intersectionality, for example, allows PSTs and

TEs to think through together what they mean when they use this term in discussion, identify instances when power and oppression manifests in educational spaces, identify strategies that disrupt oppression and balance power dynamics in these spaces, and plan how to apply these new strategies to their practice. Additionally, engaging critical frameworks (e.g. intersectionality, DisCrit), providing activities that overlap coursework with clinical experience (e.g., attending and reflecting on an IEP meeting at one's field placement), providing tools in coursework that PSTs can apply in the field (e.g., reading an IEP), designing class discussions that directly grapple with the incongruities between the field and coursework, and offering opportunities to practice new skills (e.g., accounting for accommodations in lesson planning) all work to bridge the field/teacher education program divide.

Finally, these theoretical frameworks were beneficial in keeping me, as a teacher educator, accountable to designing instruction at the intersection of race and ability throughout the semester and ensuring the multiple elements of the course (readings, assignments, and activities) connected to one another. As a researcher, combining these frameworks allowed me to make sense of the abilities and knowledge that PSTs entered my course with, the areas where they needed support in knowledge and practice development, and what they learned and were able to apply to practice by the end of the course. Engaging *The Color of Mind*, intersectionality, and the tenets of DisCrit together was a powerful and concrete way for me to help PSTs to conceptualize issues at the intersection of race and ability as well as enabling me, as a researcher, to articulate and critically interrogate PSTs' reflection and practice in this study.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

The purpose of this multi-case study is to explore if and how pre-service general education teachers' (PSTs) understandings of inequity shift when engaged in a course that specifically focuses on inequity in special education, particularly at the intersection of race and ability. This study also explores whether PSTs' discourse shifts during a simulated IEP meeting with a Black parent of a child identified with a (dis)ability from before to after engaging in this course. I noticed that there is limited literature capturing what pre-service general education teachers learn in teacher education coursework related to special education and (dis)ability, their conceptualizations of inequity in special education, and their ability to apply the knowledge gained from their coursework. I believe that a deeper understanding of how pre-service general education teachers conceptualize inequity in special education and apply this knowledge will support teacher education programs to develop more comprehensive programming that prepares general educators to support students identified with (dis)abilities and their families. Therefore, in this study I investigate the following research questions:

(1) How do preservice teachers' *understandings of inequity and their roles* as members of the IEP team *shift* over the course of a 12-week class that integrates issues of inequity in special education and the use of critical frameworks? (a) How do PSTs' understandings of inequity *shift from the beginning to the end of the course?* (b) How do PSTs' understandings of their role as members of the IEP team *shift from the beginning to the end of the course?* (2) How do PSTs respond to issues of racism and ableism when they are shared by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability during initial and final simulations?

(3) How do PSTs engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability?

This chapter describes the: (a) rationale for research design, (b) research sample, (c) research design, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, (f) ethical considerations.

### **Rationale for Research Design**

This qualitative study is a first-person inquiry, where I, as the practitioner, am also the principal investigator of this research study (Ball, 2000). My reasoning for engaging in first-person inquiry is that I am creating the very thing I wish to study. In "Working on the Inside," Deborah Ball (2000) describes three cases in which researchers use first-person inquiry. One such study was conducted by Magdalene Lampert (1986), who "constructed a context in which to investigate" her students' understanding of multiplication (Ball, 2000, p. 377). Similarly, I am constructing the context in which to investigate how my students, PSTs, conceptualize inequity in special education and how this may or may not transfer to their enactments with parents of color who have children identified with (dis)abilities. The course at the center of this study is based in a social justice approach, I am studying the work PSTs did in the context of this approach. Like Lampert, I could not "simply locate a classroom" with the type of special education teaching I wanted to explore; I had to develop and implement the type of special education/(dis)ability instruction I envisioned.

I am curious about how to help teachers apply the frameworks of intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) to their practice in order to develop their ability to reflect critically about what takes place in educational spaces, where *critical* is defined as "criticizing, rejecting, and/or trying to fix the social problems that emerge in situations of social injustice" (Collins & Bilge, 2016). In order to understand PSTs' conceptualizations of inequity in relation to learning and applying these frameworks, I have to create the structures in which this is possible.

More simply, I took a specific approach to teaching about special education and my question is, what did this reveal about my students' understandings when engaging with the content?

If an “outsider” designed and/or executed the course there would have been the danger that it would not have aligned with my goals for the course or my dissertation study (Ball, 2000).

Teaching requires a level of flexibility and responsiveness to students and context that can easily change the trajectory of a course toward or away from its intended purpose. Due to the need for flexibility as I developed and implemented the very thing I envisioned, I, as a practitioner, made choices and shifts as the course progressed based on the needs of my students and the goals of the course.

First-person research situates me inside the work of teaching in a way that being an outside observer does not. Teaching is a complex practice, and interviews and observations only give a glimmer of how teachers and students make sense of the complexities of the classroom. By taking on the roles of both practitioner and researcher I am able to provide a fuller, more holistic understanding of the context that I have developed, the decision-making behind what is included in the curriculum, and the modifications made to the curriculum based on student engagement with the content. My desire as a researcher and practitioner is to push pre-service general education teachers (and the field) towards critically examining the intersections of race, ability, and other marginalized identities in teaching practice which is not consistently done within and across teacher preparation programs.

In order to analyze the process of developing a course like this with its affordances and constraints, one cannot get closer to its intricacies than being the person who develops and executes the curriculum. This means also tracking the personal judgments I make in developing the trajectory of the class, modifying the trajectory as I get to know my PSTs, and determining the needs of my PSTs individually and as a whole. However, as Ball (1993) cautions,

... to allow that wise practitioners must, at times, deviate from (institutionalized) requirements is risky. It is risky due to the lack of ways to judge these deviations. Irresponsible and capricious departures will be mixed in with proper and defensible ones, although our ability to discriminate one from the other is very rough and our opportunities to do so at all are infrequent. (pp. 203-4)

How do we (i.e. practitioners, researchers) determine the “responsible or capricious departures” unless we investigate our own practices and its ability to promote student learning?

### **Rationale for Case Study Methodology**

Each research question lends itself to conducting case studies of PSTs in order to best understand (1) PSTs’ understandings of inequity over time and (2) how their discourse during the simulations may or may not change over time. Studying PSTs’ individual engagement in the material (simulations, reflections) and situating this within class discussions offers a robust representation of their thinking over time.

### **Research Sample**

PSTs who agreed to participate in this study were pre-service general education teachers in the last semester of coursework of an intensive 12-month master’s program (June 2018 – June 2019) in secondary education at a large Midwestern university. The 18 participants were preparing to teach students in grades 6-12 in the following content areas: English, social studies, science, mathematics, and world languages. The PSTs engaged in fieldwork at various schools surrounding the large Midwestern university.

### **Research Context**

PSTs had the option to be placed in schools with predominantly (over 50%) Black and Brown students, that have 50% or more of their students on free/reduced-priced lunch, that have a Title I designation, and/or that have a significant (25%+) population of English language learners.

Throughout the program PSTs engaged in multiple clinical/fieldwork experiences. At the beginning of the program, they spent several mornings at a local school district's Title 1 summer school program. During the fall semester, they worked two days a week at placement schools and took content area methods courses and other education-focused coursework. During the winter semester, they spent two full days and three additional mornings at their placement schools and continued to take education courses to support their growth. During the spring, PSTs spent five full days a week at their placement schools. Throughout the program, PSTs took courses in content area methods, educational technology, educational psychology, educational research, educational linguistics, exceptionalities (grades 6-12), and teaching and learning, as well as participating in professional development seminars. PSTs took the exceptionalities course, which is the focus of this study, in the winter semester (January – March) of their 12-month program.

## **Data**

The 18 PSTs in the course all consented to participate in this study, and I selected six of them to be the focus of this paper. I chose PSTs whose understandings were the most clearly apparent because they participated verbally with peers and during instructor-facilitated discussions, either in whole or small group, consistently throughout the course. I decided to choose students who participated in this way so that I would have as many opportunities as possible to see how PSTs thought about inequity over time and how they expressed their perspectives in class discussions. Five PSTs were excluded based on this criteria.

Each PST participated in simulations at the beginning and end of the course. Data from the simulations were collected by the simulation team. The simulation team was composed of a Black woman simulated parent, a White woman simulated special educator, and a facilitator (multiple racial and gender identities). Each simulation was recorded and timed by the facilitator. Each team was provided with a rubric (Figure 3.1), and each PST received a level of enactment (LoE) rating based

on the criteria in the rubric. The LoE in the rubric ranged from novice to expert for a beginning teacher. Each LoE has a description that focuses on how the PST attends to the racist/ableist issue presented, how they engage the parent, and the type of rationale (weak, limited, adequate, strong) they provide when sharing their recommendation to the team. The terms "weak," "limited," "adequate," and "strong" bolded in the descriptions are defined specifically in the second row of Table 3.1. It is important to note that PSTs could exhibit strengths in different levels of enactment on the rubric.

**Figure 3.1**

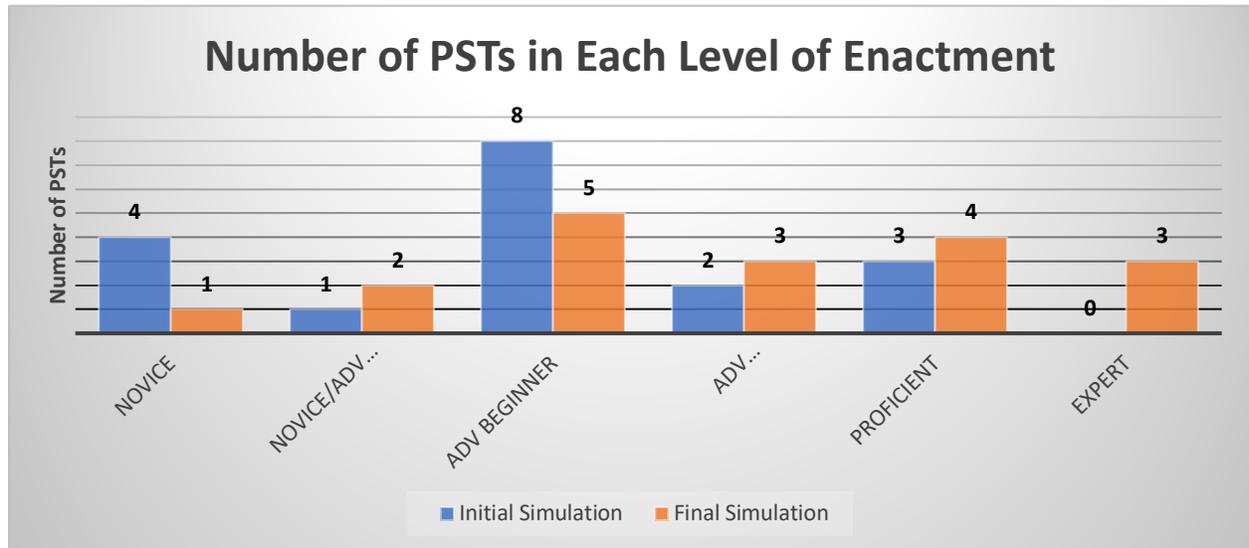
***Simulation Team Rubric***

Categories	Novice Level of Enactment	Advanced Beginner Level of Enactment	Proficient Level of Enactment	Expert Level of Enactment
<b>Description</b>	Has difficulty attending to issues (ableist, racist) presented in conference; makes moves that has the potential to cause parent disengagement/hinder relationship building; provides <b>weak</b> rationale for recommendation, etc.	Attempts to attend to issues, may attend to one issue with more detail and specificity than the other; attempts to engage parent but may falter; provides <b>limited</b> rationale for recommendation, etc.	Attends to both issues, provides solutions that are executable but does not lay out in detail how and when they will be executed unless nudged; engages parent in conversation about both issues; provides an <b>adequate</b> rationale for recommendation, etc.	Partners with parent and special educator throughout the conference; attends to both issues, naming the issues and confirming with parent; engages parent's perspective in conversation; attends to all relevant data presented in decision-making; provides a <b>strong</b> rationale for recommendation, etc.
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>weak</b> – rationale is not supported by information provided by PST materials, special educator, and/or parent	<b>limited</b> – rationale demonstrates that PST attended to some but not all of the information provided	<b>adequate</b> – rationale attends to all the relevant information but explanation requires a bit more clarity	<b>strong</b> – rationale attends to all the relevant information in PST materials and the information provided by the parent and special educator; direct and clear

Figure 3.2 outlines the number of students who rated as having novice, novice/advanced beginner, advanced beginner, advanced beginner/proficient, proficient, and expert LoEs during the initial and final simulations.

Figure 3.2

*Number of PSTs in Each Level of Enactment for Initial and Final Simulations*



Note. n=18

Simulation teams wrote comments that listed PSTs' strengths and areas for improvement to help me understand which areas I should focus on when providing PSTs with feedback on their simulations as well as which aspects of the simulations I should analyze when reviewing PST video recordings (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4). Simulation team members attended 3.5 hours of training prior to the initial simulation and two hours of training prior to the final simulation in which I provided a detailed review of the simulation materials. There were opportunities for the simulated parents, simulated special educators, and facilitators to ask questions, discuss previous simulated experiences, and provide comments on the materials. They were informed that they would provide written comments on the PSTs' performance as a team, and they would focus their comments on how the PST attended to the racist/ableist issue presented, how they engaged the parent, and the type of rationale PSTs provided when sharing their recommendation to the team. These rating discussions took place immediately after each simulation, and during these discussion, the simulation team would

determine PSTs' levels of enactment. The PSTs listed in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 are the focal PSTs for this study.

**Figure 3.3**

***PST Initial Performance Rating & Rationale***

<b>PST's Name &amp; Level of Enactment</b>	<b>Rationale for Level of Enactment (Initial Simulation)</b>
<b>Jeffrey (Novice LoE)</b>	(-) Language issues were troubling, used phrases such as “normal classes.” (-) Also asked if family has a computer at home could potentially precariously position families who do not have access to technology. (-) His rationale for recommendations were weak.
<b>Nicole (Adv Beginner LoE)</b>	(+) Highlighted aspects of Mariah’s academic and social progress that were positive and detailed. (-) Did not explicitly address issues of race and ability even though Mrs. Johnson specifically mentioned that she is concerned about both issues. (+) Provided recommendations but the (-) rationale was not very clear. (+/-) Transparent about not knowing what steps to take but she seemed (-) hesitant to provide create/specific recommendations.
<b>Jacob (Adv Beginner LoE)</b>	(+) Asset-based comments – “young biologist,” “knows how to hold a room,” “socially adept” to describe Mariah. (+) Apology for what happened to Mariah, that is perceived as deep and kind by the parent. (+) Provided action steps to follow up with Brian about the racist/ableist action. (-) Needed a nudge from special educator to keep from centering Brian more than Mariah and to consider classroom community. (-) Seemed to not have experience talking about race. Names differences by using the phrase “other than them” but does not name race. (-) Represented general education teachers as likely not to “welcome” Mariah.
<b>David (Adv Beginner LoE)</b>	(-) Did not explicitly name or address issues of race or ability. (-) He implied that getting into college might not be a realistic option based on Mariah’s ability. (-) ... but seem to depend on the parent to give recommendations. (+) Gave specific recommendations about a course of action for the issues presented and gave a (+) strong rationale. (-) The special educator and the parent had to push him toward building a plan.
<b>Madison (Adv Beginner LoE)</b>	(+) Provided a stronger response later in the conversation. (-) Had to be nudged to talk more about Mariah’s academic placement. (-) Deferred to the parent and the special education teacher.
<b>Audrey (Proficient LoE)</b>	(+) Warm toward parent. (+) Attended to issues of race but (-) used coded language to acknowledge issue. Focused on academics but not race as directly. (+) Provided rationale for her recommendations.

*Note.* (+) denotes identified areas of strength; (-) denotes areas identified for further focus.

Figure 3.4

***PST Final Performance Rating & Rationale***

PST's Name & Level of Enactment	Rationale for Level of Enactment
<p><b>Jeffrey</b> (Adv Beginner LoE)</p>	<p>(+) Focused on not making Mariah feel “singled out,”                      (-) Did not share his perspective on whether general education remained a good fit for Mariah.                      (+/-) Did not directly name racism/ableism but worked to attend to it in his recommendation.                      (+) Provided strong rationale for accommodation recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Nicole</b> (Proficient LoE)</p>	<p>(-) Made an assumption about why Mariah was not taking her accommodations (+) verbalized that Mrs. Johnson’s concern presented her with a clearer picture of why Mariah was not taking her accommodations.                      (+) demonstrated flexibility in thinking when she changed her initial recommendation from Mariah going straight to the testing room, which would still serve to “single her out” based on Mrs. Johnson’s comment, to having Mariah start the test in class and complete it during a (+/-) free period/lunch.</p>
<p><b>Jacob</b> (Novice/Adv Beginner LoE)</p>	<p>(+) Brought up the issue with Brian and how he attended to the issue presented in the first simulation.                      (+) Expressed concern that Mariah was being “singled out.”                      (-) Suggested modified/short test and only addressed the issue of academic rigor when Mrs. Johnson brought it up. Did not have a strong rationale for modified test or why it would be sufficient.                      (-) Did not specifically mention working with the intersections of race and (dis)ability but spoke about social identities.</p>
<p><b>David</b> (Adv Beginner/ Proficient LoE)</p>	<p>(+) Described class-based activities in homeroom but (-) spoke in generalities.                      (+) Demonstrated that he recognized discrimination (-) but did not name the intersection of race and ability.                      (+) Presented a viable solution to the issue Mrs. Johnson presented but (-) backtracked on a viable recommendation.</p>
<p><b>Madison</b> (Proficient LoE)</p>	<p>(-) Seemed to the team that she framed Mariah’s confidence as a personal problem. Needed a more nuanced understanding of Mariah.                      (+) She was warm as demonstrated through her body language, demeanor, and language.                      (+) She demonstrated active listening and contributed to building a plan that attended to the ideas and concerns presented by parent.                      (+/-) Named race and (dis)ability as institutional barriers and highlighted the need for support.                      (-) Although this was named, it was not clear or helpful to the parent.</p>
<p><b>Audrey</b> (Expert LoE)</p>	<p>(+) Connected to the parent through her body language, demeanor, and language.                      (+) ...and built ideas based on what is shared by the parent and special educator and background information.                      (+) Demonstrated knowledge of the student by sharing what she learned about Mariah’s culture and favorite classes.                      (+) Initiated the conversation about racism and leveraged previous meeting and how she responded to the incident with Brian.</p>

*Note.* (+) denotes identified areas of strength; (-) denotes areas identified for further focus.

I took into account the simulation team's notes from the initial and final simulations to better understand PSTs' enactments according to the rubric (Figure 3.1). In addition to the initial and final simulation data, I determined whether I had sufficient class discussion data to capture PSTs' perspectives on inequity and their roles as members of the IEP team. Based on class discussion data, I excluded three students. This left two PSTs who had been rated at the novice LoE, eight PSTs who had been rated at the advanced beginner LoE, two PSTs who had been rated at the advanced beginner/proficient LoE, and three PSTs who had been rated at the proficient LoE during the (initial? Final?) simulation. I focused only on the PSTs who had been rated at the novice, advanced beginner, or proficient LoE during the initial simulation in order to identify distinct strengths and areas of improvement along these individual ratings. PSTs who showed overlap between LoEs (e.g., novice/advanced beginner) were not chosen; this excluded an additional two PSTs from the study. There remained two PSTs who had been rated at the novice LoE, eight who had been rated at the advanced beginner LoE, and three who had been rated at the proficient LoE.

To narrow the number of focal participants further, I took into account PSTs' social identities of race, gender, and ability. This was important to consider because at multiple times throughout the course I encouraged PSTs to discuss their social identities, and they specifically discussed their gendered and racialized identities when providing examples and connecting to texts presented in class. Additionally, during the course we discussed the intersection of ability with raced and gendered identities, and PSTs discussed their work with students identified with (dis)abilities in their classrooms.

Of the 18 PSTs in the course, four self-identified as people of color (Asian, Latinx, Middle Eastern), 14 self-identified as White. Half of the class identified themselves as women, and the other half identified themselves as men. Seventeen of the 18 PSTs identified themselves as able-bodied. One PST self-identified as having a (dis)ability. I have excluded them from the sample to preserve

their anonymity. This reduced the number of possible focal participants to 12, with only one PST who had been rated at the novice LoE remaining.

The PSTs I selected for more specific case study paralleled the racial and gender demographic breakdown of the class as closely as possible. Thus, I aimed to develop a participant sample that included an equal representation of PSTs by gender and at least one PST of color. Taking racial demographics, gender composition, and representation of multiple performance categories into account, I automatically included one White man who had been rated at the novice LoE and one Latinx man who had been rated at the advanced beginner LoE.

The advanced beginner category was the largest represented category during the initial simulation, with seven PSTs remaining in this category (two White men; five White women) after my initial rounds of selection. Out of the two White men, I selected the PST who wavered in his engagement with the frameworks. In order to balance gender representation, I chose two White women (out of five) who had also been rated at the advanced beginner LoE. At this point, my sample included three men, one of whom was a person of color, and two White women. I then selected one White woman (out of one White man and two White women who had been rated at the proficient LoE) to complete the sample. I chose a White woman PST who had participated consistently in class discussions throughout the course, although how much she participated varied over time.

My final focal sample for this study includes three men (one Latinx, two White) and three White women participants who the simulation team had rated across the levels of engagement of novice (one PST), advanced beginner (four PSTs), and proficient (one PST) during the initial simulation.

### **Course Development**

In this section I discuss how I developed the course, simulations, and assignments prior to conducting this study.

## **Overall Course Design**

The course that is the site of this study provided opportunities for PSTs to grapple with tensions they encountered between their field placements and what they learned in class about special education. The goal of the course was to expose the existence of covert discriminatory practices that educators have the potential to perpetuate or disrupt through the learning and application of critical frameworks. I used DisCrit to help PSTs unpack how racism and ableism intersect and work in complex ways to marginalize students of color in schools. I introduced intersectionality as an analytical frame to provide PSTs with a lens through which to understand the complexity of how power manifests from the micro (e.g., interpersonal interactions, disciplinary decisions) to the macro (e.g., cultural traditions, structural organization). As a theoretical frame of the course, intersectionality helped PSTs analyze how power manifests in different educational spaces and how it differentially impacts individuals with varying identities. PSTs applied the DisCrit and intersectionality frameworks when engaging in class activities, reflecting on their participation in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, analyzing varying arguments for and against special education, reflecting on their engagement with students during their teaching, and reflecting on their engagement with a Black simulated parent during a simulated IEP meeting.

Throughout the course, I incorporated opportunities for PSTs to engage in class discussions in which they were supported in identifying and problematizing structural inequities, inequitable interactions, disciplinary practices, and cultural practices that are documented in special education literature but that may go unrecognized at their school sites (Collins & Bilge, 2016). PSTs were challenged to critically analyze their own collaborative and advocacy practices and their knowledge of inequity in special education during a simulated IEP meeting, to develop next steps to improve their practice, and to reflect on what this means for their practice at their school sites. I included

simulations of a segment of an IEP meeting at the beginning and end of the course as pre- and post-assessments to develop and assess PSTs' racial literacy, collaborative and advocacy practices, and their growth over time.

Out of 12 class sessions during the semester, I devoted 10 to three major themes, (1) Understanding Inequity (6 weeks), (2) Special Education (5 weeks), and (3) Practice (throughout); the remaining two sessions were devoted to conducting the initial and final simulations. It is important to note that (dis)ability and the history of special education was the grounding for teaching about inequity and that our discussion on special education (which overlapped with the time we spent on understanding inequity) focused on special education implementation in schools. Class sessions were video recorded and small group discussions were audio-recorded. In-class whole and small group discussions captured how PSTs processed the content of the course across the semester by allowing me to track moments of cognitive dissonance and integration as PSTs were presented with new information that may or may not have aligned with their previous understandings of how race and (dis)ability intersect to cause inequitable practices in special education.

Figure 3.5 outlines the topics covered under each major course theme. The assignments and assessments served to interweave the major themes of Understanding Inequity, Special Education, and Practice together. I analyzed the bolded course topics, assignments, and assessments to capture PSTs' understandings of inequity and their roles as a member of the IEP team over time.

Figure 3.5

*Course Themes, Topics, Assignments & Assessments*

Major Themes	Course Topics	Assignments
<p><b>Understanding Inequity</b> Weeks 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11</p> <p>(Week 1 is omitted because it was an introduction to the course and Week 4's class was cancelled because of snow)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Social Identity</li> <li>• Social Construction of (Dis)ability: Medical &amp; Social Models of (Dis)ability</li> <li>• <b>Stereotypes &amp; (Dis)ability</b></li> <li>• <b>Intersectionality</b></li> <li>• Teacher Discretion</li> <li>• <b>Disability Critical Race Theory</b></li> <li>• History of (dis)ability in the United States: Race, Litigation, &amp; Legislation</li> <li>• <b>Recognizing an Issue of Inequity Presented by a Parent at the Intersection of Race &amp; Ability/Parent Resistance</b></li> <li>• School Discipline</li> <li>• <b>Connecting Structural Inequity to Teacher Practice</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inequity Reflections (3)</b></li> <li>• Case Study               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reading Reflection</li> <li>○ Introduction to Student</li> <li>○ Reflections on an IEP Meeting</li> <li>○ My Student, My Teaching</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Education</b> Week 8, 9, 10, 11, 13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundational Components of Special Education (An Overview): FAPE, IEP, LRE</li> <li>• Participating in IEP Meetings</li> <li>• Using the IEP as a Tool for Instruction</li> <li>• Subjective (Dis)ability Categories: SLD, ED, ID</li> <li>• Low Incidence (Dis)abilities</li> <li>• Autism Spectrum Disorder</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Simulations (2)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial Simulation Immediate Reflection (1)</li> <li>○ <b>Initial Simulation Reflections (3)</b></li> <li>○ <b>Final Simulation Immediate Reflection (1)</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Practice</b> Throughout course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Simulations (Weeks 2 &amp; 12)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reflections</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Applying Critical Perspectives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Class content (Weeks 8-11 &amp; 13)</li> <li>○ School site experiences (assignments)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

**Simulation Development**

The simulations focused on attending to issues presented by a Black Caribbean mother, Mrs. Johnson, relating to the academic and social progress of her Black Caribbean-American daughter, Mariah, and Mariah's placement in special education. The focal issue of each simulation was designed to sit at the intersection of racism and ableism, thus foregrounding and rooting in practice

the major critical frameworks I introduced throughout the course. PSTs were tasked with listening to the parent, Mrs. Johnson, considering what they knew about Mariah, and incorporating critical frameworks to make recommendations to support Mariah's ongoing academic, social, and emotional development.

### ***Representation of the Focal Simulation Family***

I gave a great deal of care to how simulation materials and simulation teams represented students and families of color, in this case Black families. This is a particularly important aspect of simulation design because 80% of PSTs are White (Bireda & Chait, 2011), many with limited experience engaging with people of color and possibly arriving in teacher education having only been exposed to stereotypical representations of people of color in society and the media, (i.e., not caring about education, not knowledgeable, unable to learn, etc.; Sleeter, 2008). I decided to make the family in this simulation, the Johnsons, Black in order to both surface and intentionally interrupt the negative assumptions that PSTs may have had about students and families of color.

The Johnsons are a middle-class, Black, Caribbean family but have “working class” careers. Both parents were educated in Trinidad, but neither parent attended college. Rasheeda Johnson, Mariah's mother, is a beautician and hair salon owner, and Darrian Johnson, her father, works in construction. They are immigrants, and their children are first-generation American. Mrs. and Mr. Johnson had engaged in multiple IEP meetings previously, had some understanding of the special education process, and had an awareness of the disproportionate representation of Black children in special education classes. I purposefully constructed the focal simulation family in this way to demonstrate the complexity of Black identity. For instance, being in the middle class is often associated with being college-educated—I purposefully included Rasheeda and Darrian’s identity as a non-college-educated middle-class couple to highlight the diversity of the middle class (as measured by income). In this simulation, Rasheeda Johnson is the only parent present at the IEP

meeting, but it is clear from the materials provided to the PST and the discussion during the meeting that Darrian Johnson is actively involved in Mariah's life.

In this case, PSTs were provided with opportunities to develop the high-leverage practice of collaborating with families in ways that acknowledge, respect, and take up the assets that families of color and their children bring to educational spaces and maximize each child's learning opportunities. Such systematic opportunities for PSTs to develop partnering practices and engage in culturally responsive and sustaining teaching are essential because changes in thinking (via traditional teacher education learning methods) do not necessarily translate to changes in practice (Khasnabis et al., 2018). In other words, to shift PSTs' practice, teacher educators must engage them in opportunities to practice new ways of thinking and doing in moment-to-moment interactions with families.

### ***Practice-Based Teacher Education Framework***

The simulations constituted *approximations of practice*. *Approximations of practice* provide PSTs opportunities to enact portions of complex teaching practices and space to “experiment, falter, regroup, and reflect” on their enactment of those practices (Grossman, Compton, Igra, Ronfeldt, Shaha, & Williamson, 2009, p. 2078). Collaboration is a complex practice, so in order for PSTs to engage in this practice holistically, they “need opportunities first to distinguish, and then to practice, the different components that go into the professional work prior to integrating them fully” (p. 2068). During approximations, the TE scaffolds PSTs' learning and provides opportunities for them to enact these practices and grapple with incongruities they may see between the field and coursework through class assignments, discussions, and reflection. Additionally, the teacher educator supports PSTs' learning by providing them with the “technical language” they need to engage in and articulate their practice (p. 2074).

A practice-based teacher education (PBTE) framework “include[s] significant attention not just to the knowledge demands of teaching but to the actual tasks and activities involved in the work” (Ball and Forzani, 2009, p. 503). Ball and Forzani (2009) argue that teaching tasks, such as collaboration with parents and colleagues, do not occur by happenstance. Therefore, training for teachers must be *designed* to support their development of these skills. Engaging in elements of complex practice through approximations makes visible to PSTs important aspects of practice that are “almost second nature to more experienced educators” (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2078). In this study, engaging in simulated IEP meetings (i.e., approximations of practice), provided PSTs opportunities to “rehearse and enact discrete components of complex practice in settings of reduced complexity” while attending to issues of race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009, p. 283).

Decompositions of practice refer to instances when a complex practice, like collaboration, is broken down “into its constituent parts for the purposes of teaching and learning” (Grossman et al., 2009, p. 2069). A PST can only make appropriate recommendations and advocate for their student’s needs if they know the academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs of their student and have a thorough understanding of their school context. In IEP meetings, PSTs must use this knowledge and what they learn from parents and colleagues to advocate for appropriate placement and programmatic decisions for their students. In this study, I provided structured opportunities (e.g., engaging in a case study of a student, analyzing videos of student interactions, developing questions to ask parents about your student) for PSTs to approximate the “constituent parts” of the practice of building their knowledge of students (i.e., academically, socially, emotionally) and critically analyzing school contexts through guided practice and reflection.

To provide opportunities for PST to practice the skills of collaboration and advocacy, I applied McDonald et al.’s (2013) *learning cycle*, which is a process used to make aspects of complex

teaching practices visible to PSTs. The cycle includes introducing a practice to PSTs (quadrant 1); providing opportunities for PSTs to prepare, rehearse, and enact the practice (quadrant 2); enacting the practice (quadrant 3); and analyzing enactment to improve practice moving forward (quadrant 4; see Figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.6**

*McDonald et al's (2013) "Learning Cycle"*



**Figure 1.** Cycle for collectively learning to engage in an authentic and ambitious instructional activity.

Based on their particular goals and purposes, the teacher educator determines where on the learning cycle PSTs begin. In this study, PSTs began with the simulated IEP meeting as a pre-assessment (quadrant 3). Prior to the initial enactment, PSTs received materials that prepared them for an experience that would be both familiar and unfamiliar. At this point in their teacher preparation, they had been at school sites and had interacted with parents in meetings and/or

conferences with their mentor teachers. What was unfamiliar would be meeting with a parent in the context of an IEP meeting. Beginning with a pre-assessment allowed me and PSTs to see PST strengths in engaging with a parent across racial difference, their ability to collaborate and advocate, and their problem-solving abilities; it also made visible areas in need of improvement. Additionally, PSTs and I reflected together over the course of the semester (quadrant 4) as PSTs learned new frameworks (i.e., social construction of (dis)ability, intersectionality and DisCrit) for thinking about inequity and PSTs' roles as members of the IEP team (quadrant 1). Over the semester, PSTs had the opportunity to review their practice as they engaged in field instruction and learned new material about special education through class discussions and group and independent reflections. I developed each of these activity structures to provide opportunities for PSTs to grapple with the incongruities they notice between the field and the simulation activity and to discuss next steps for future practice (quadrant 4). These activity structures were used to support PSTs' preparation for another iteration of the enactment (quadrants 2 and 3).

### ***Authenticity***

For PSTs to see approximations of practice as applicable to their future practice, it is important that they consider the approximation to be authentic (Dotger, Harris, & Hansel, 2008). In addition, to help PSTs develop practice that critically engages with race, it is also important that representations of people of color are authentic and not tokenizing (Goldin, Khasnabis, & Atkins, 2018). Further, for PSTs to make sense of the task before them the simulation materials require depth and must enable PSTs to obtain knowledge of the student at the center of the simulation and engage in their role as member of the IEP team during the simulation (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Khasnabis, Goldin, & Ronfeldt, 2018).

To attend to potential issues of authenticity, I developed simulation materials by drawing from interviews with special educators (one Black woman, two White women, one White man), a

Black woman parent, exemplar simulations focused on racial literacy (building on the work of Dr. Debi Khasnabis and Dr. Simona Goldin), literature on simulations across racial difference (Khasnabis et al., 2018; Khasnabis D., Goldin, S., Perouse-Harvey, E., & Hanna, M. O., 2019), and the experiences of parents of color in IEP meetings (Lo L., 2008; Pang Y., 2011; Pruitt et al., 1998; Salas L., 2004). Prior to developing the simulations, I interviewed four special educators and one parent of students identified with (dis)abilities. Interview questions posed to parents and special educators were organized around the following topics: Background (race, schooling experiences, teaching experiences), steps within the special education process, documentation in special education, topics discussed during IEP meetings, participation during IEP meetings, and areas of confluence and conflict during IEP meetings. After reviewing these interviews, I organized participants' answers into broad themes that repeated across interviews. Four major themes emerged: *racial identity, power, deficit assumptions about Black families' involvement in their child's education, and ambiguity of (dis)ability identification and the special education process for general educators and families*. My analysis of these themes helped to shape my development of the racial and ethnic identity of the focal family in the simulation, issues at the intersection of race and ability that would be presented by the parent, and the materials used to support the members of the simulation team and the PST.

In Khasnabis et al. (2018), simulations of parent-teacher conferences were 10 minutes because typically teachers have approximately this amount of time for a parent teacher conference; additionally, 10-minute simulations are logistically feasible for an instructor to manage during a single class session. Unlike parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings typically run 40 minutes or longer, which is too long to be practical in my course in which class sessions were two hours long. Thus, the time constraints of the course raise tensions around authenticity when designing simulated IEP meetings. I was specifically concerned about the possibility that PSTs would not feel like the simulation was a realistic experience if the simulated meeting took less time than a typical

IEP meeting. To balance both the learners' perceptions of authenticity and logistical constraints, I informed PSTs prior to participating in the simulation that the enactment was only a small slice of what would take place at an IEP meeting and that it represented the segment of an IEP meeting where they, as the general educator, would share their ideas and engage with the parent. The PSTs' materials also explicated the purpose of the simulation and provided background information on IEP meetings.

In addition to logistical concerns, I considered the amount of stamina PSTs would have for engaging in an activity that was unfamiliar (for the first simulation) and their ability to engage in quality reflection of a simulated meeting. Thus, I designed the simulations to be approximately 15 minutes long to ensure PSTs' stamina to engage in the activity for the desired length of time, to provide them with an artifact that they could realistically watch and deeply reflect on multiple times across the semester, and to provide an opportunity for all students in the course to participate in the simulations.

### ***Simulation Teams***

I recruited 5 simulation teams to help run the pre- and post-course simulations and rate PSTs' performances. Each team included a simulated parent, a simulated special educator, and a facilitator. It was important to limit the number of simulations per team to avoid fatigue as well as mitigate the possible emotional and mental toll of engaging in the simulations (see Goldin, S., Khasnabis, D., O'Connor, C., & Hearn, K., 2019 for more information). There were 18 PSTs enrolled in the course. On the day of each simulation, I scheduled four to five simulations to run simultaneously, with each simulation team conducting a maximum of four simulations per day.

All simulations were conducted in-person and were video recorded. Each PST entered an office where the simulated special educator and facilitator were waiting. The facilitator read an introductory script to the PST, introduced the PST to the special educator, and began the

simulation. The simulated parent entered the room next and was greeted by the simulated special educator and PST. The PST, simulated parent, and simulated special educator enacted the meeting while the facilitator kept time, video recorded, and wrote notes on their observations of the simulation. Simulations ran for approximately 15 minutes (some ran a few minutes under or over time), with each simulation team engaging in simulations for a total of approximately 60 minutes. Simulation teams worked together for an additional 60 minutes to discuss and fill out the rubric for each PST they had worked with. PSTs completed a written reflection about the experience immediately after completing their simulation.

### ***Simulation Design***

For simulations to be effective, Each each participant in the simulation, (the simulated parent, PST, simulated special educator, and facilitator) must have enough information to engage in their respective roles. Further, if simulations are to support the development of truly critical practice, The student and family on which the simulation is based must be represented with a fullness that pushes back against singular notions of Black identity (Khasnabis et al., 2018). Building off of Khasnabis et al.'s (2018) design of simulated parent-teacher conferences, I created a robust family narrative that reflected complex and multi-faceted understandings of Black identity, a background profile of the student, Decision Rules to guide the simulated parents' and simulated special educators' enactments (see Appendix A), and a logistical script for facilitators.

**Preparation materials.** Each participant received the materials necessary for their role to review prior to conducting the simulations. PSTs received the family narrative and background profile on the day of each simulation. These materials included *context and goals for the simulation*, *information about enactment*, and *Mariah's background information* (with more school specific information, general personal background details, and special education programming) (Appendix B). The simulated parents' materials included information in the following categories: *home environment*; *Who is*

*Mariah?*; *classroom demographics*; *Mr. & Mrs. Johnson’s Hopes, Dreams, & Aspirations for Mariah*; *Mr. & Mrs. Johnson’s Observations & Concerns*; and *Mr. & Mrs. Johnson’s Request for an IEP Meeting*. The simulated special educator received information about *Mariah, classroom dynamics, context* that were not in the PST’s materials; *information about enactment*; and *Decision Rules*. Simulated parents, simulated special educators, and facilitators received all materials during preparation sessions held before each simulation. Figure 3.7 outlines the major components of the simulation materials with a brief description of each component and whether the component is found in the simulated parent, simulated special educator, and/or PST materials.

**Figure 3.7**

***Major Components of Simulation Materials***

Major Components of Simulation Materials	Description	Available to Parent	Available to Special Educator	Available to PST
Home Environment	Thorough description of Mariah’s home life is found in this section of the simulation materials. This portion of the material stays consistent for both the pre- and post-simulation since the PSTs are engaging with the same family for both simulations – this is realistic given that in most cases PSTs will engage with families over the course of a school year (Appendix B).	x		
Who is Mariah?	This section describes how Mariah interacts with peers and teachers at school and what she enjoys doing at home with her family. <i>It also discusses how Mariah bridges what she learns at home with school.</i>	x		
Information on Mariah’s Testing & Academic Performance	This section of the materials describes Mariah’s academic strengths and areas of need according to her IEP (and the special educator’s observations of Mariah in resource room – only special educator materials).		x	x
Mariah at School	This portion of the simulation materials describe Mariah’s personality, interaction with other students at school, and academic strengths and areas of needs.		x	x
Classroom Dynamics	This portion of the materials describes the demographics of Mariah’s school and her homeroom class.	x	x	x
Mr. & Mrs. Johnson’s Hopes, Dreams, & Aspirations for Mariah	This section describes Mrs. & Mr. Johnson’s goals for Mariah (i.e. going to college, pursuing her interests, etc.)	x		

Mr. & Mrs. Johnson's Observations & Concerns	This section describes Mrs. and Mr. Johnson's awareness of Mariah's strengths as well as her academic areas of need and the ways she is supported at home.	x		
Mr. & Mrs. Johnson's Request for an IEP Meeting	This section explains the incident(s) that Mrs. Johnson shares with the IEP team during the pre- and post-simulations:  Pre-simulation issue: a racist/ableist incident occurred between Mariah and Brian, where Brian called Mariah 'slow' because she was a Black student in a small special education class. The materials include an explanation of how Mariah responded.  Post-simulation issue: Mariah refuses to take her accommodation of extended time in the testing room due to the stigma she felt as the only Black student in her general education Global History and Algebra classes and the only one who would leave the classroom for testing accommodations.	x	x	
Mariah's Progress Report	Mariah's progress report, conveying information on about how Mariah is performing academically in each class, is given to the special educator and is shared with Mrs. Johnson and the PST during the IEP meeting.		x	
Mariah's Report Card	List of Mariah's grades and comments from teachers.	x	x	x
Special Education Programming	List of least restrictive environment placements in Mariah's school.		x	x
IEP excerpt (initial sim)	List of Mariah's goals and accommodations/modifications.	x	x	x
IEP (final sim)	Mariah's IEP in its entirety.	x	x	x
Decision Rules for Standardized Parent	These are the responses made by the parent and/or special educator based on PST's statement or response.	x	x	

**Simulation actors.** As a primary goal of the simulations was to help general educators learn to work across racial/cultural difference, I recruited XX Black women graduate students to portray the simulated parents. Each woman had previously been a teacher and/or taught in teacher education or educational psychology programs, and several were themselves mothers. Because over 80% of educators in the U.S. are White women (Grissom & Redding, 2015), I recruited White women graduate students, professors, and/or staff members who worked within the School of Education to portray the simulated special educators. The special educator also served as the Local Education Agency (LEA) representative. Facilitators ranged in racial and gender identities and were

all graduate students within the School of Education. The simulated parents and facilitators' investment in the growth of the PSTs, their knowledge of working with PSTs, their background knowledge as educators who have worked with families, and/or their experiences as mothers, aunts, sisters, and cousins of Black children were invaluable to strengthening simulation execution.

**Decision rules.** Decision Rules, an important component to the simulation, are responses that the simulated parent or special educator should give to the PST as the conversation progresses (Appendix A). They provide a level of consistency across simulations (from pre- to post- and from PST to PST) while also allowing for flexibility in response to specific PST enactments. For example, when PSTs are asked to share how Mariah is doing in homeroom, they may begin by sharing a balanced report about Mariah that describes both strengths and areas of concern, they may focus solely on their concern(s), or they may ask Mrs. Johnson if she has any questions before they proceed. In each case, the Decision Rules outline what Mrs. Johnson's response should be. There are multiple Decision Rules that cover the responses Mrs. Johnson should make to questions the PSTs might ask during the meeting, to recommendations PSTs might make to the team regarding Mariah's social engagement and academic progress, and to comments PSTs might make related to Mariah and her family. The special educator also has Decision Rules to guide their responses to both Mrs. Johnson and the PST if specific topics emerge during the course of the simulation.

**Initial and final simulations.** The initial simulated IEP meeting (pre-assessment) was called by Rasheeda and Darrian Johnson to discuss their daughter Mariah's academic placement, as well as to address an incident that had occurred involving their daughter. The critical incident occurred during homeroom and concerned Mariah, who is identified with a learning disability, and Brian, a White boy who is able-bodied. I purposefully designed the critical incident to create a space that requires PSTs to navigate issues of racism and ableism that exist in schools. The final simulation (post-assessment) focused on Mariah's placement in general education classes and the impact the

critical incident presented in the initial simulation had on Mariah's decision not to take her accommodations in some of her general education classes. I describe these critical incidents at the intersection of race and ability in detail in **Chapter 4**.

### **Assignment Development**

In order to disrupt PSTs' tendency to avoid direct conversations about race and minimize the importance of issues regarding race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity (Gay & Kirkland, 2003), I designed multiple opportunities for PSTs to engage with critical frameworks to develop the language necessary to discuss race and racism as well as for them to apply the frameworks with thoughtfulness and fidelity to actual teaching practice. In order to attend to the challenge of PST silence during discussions focused on race (Gay & Kirkland, 2013), I provided multiple opportunities for independent reflection: PSTs reflected on their own practice after engaging in simulations, and during class activities and assignments. In addition, I used case studies and vignettes during class to support PSTs' application of the frameworks and assigned structured individual reflections that also required use of the frameworks to scaffold PSTs' ability to discuss racism and ableism.

Throughout the semester, PSTs reflected on their simulations, completed a case study of a student identified with a (dis)ability in one of their classes at their field placements, and engaged in in-class inequity reflections (see **Chapter 5**). PSTs reflected on their enactment during the initial simulation as they learned about the history of inequity in special education (across race, gender, class, and (dis)ability), the special education process, (dis)ability categories, IEPs, teaching strategies, and critical frameworks (intersectionality, DisCrit). PSTs also identified and reflected on moments when they listened to an issue or challenge presented by the simulated parent, attended to the issue with sensitivity (to race and/or (dis)ability) and provided solutions that could be added (or subtracted) from a student's special education programming. They were provided with opportunities

to articulate how their new learning influences their reflective process. Reflection activities and class sessions also provided opportunities for PSTs to reflect on what they were learning in relation to their practice and experiences at their field placements. Throughout the course, I identified areas of strength and areas in need of improvement by probing PSTs thinking about their attention to issues of race and/or (dis)ability and supporting their use of critical frameworks introduced in class.

**Chapter 4** captures PSTs engagement in the initial and final simulations and their reflections over time. **Chapter 5** focuses on the inequity reflections PSTs responded to at the beginning and end of the course. These reflections document how PSTs defined inequity and whether their understanding of inequity changed over time, specifically their understanding of inequity in schools, how inequity relates to their teaching practice, and their role as a member of the IEP team. (**Chapter 5** also captures multiple PSTs discussions of inequity between their initial and final inequity reflections).

Each of these assignments aligns closely with the high-leverage practice of collaboration and advocacy and is designed to scaffold PSTs' exposure to and uptake of the complex elements of the practice in order to support the needs of students identified with (dis)abilities, particularly students of color.

### **Research Design & Data Collection**

I designed this multi-case study using pre- and post-assessments and course-based artifacts. The pre- and post-assessments comprise 36(?) video-recorded simulations that PSTs participated in at the beginning and the end of the course (18 pre, 18 post). The classroom artifacts consist of videos of whole-group discussions, audio recordings of small group discussions, two inequity reflections per PST, PSTs' simulation reflections completed throughout the course, and PSTs' reflections immediately after engaging in the final simulation. In this section, I describe my data sources and my approach to data synthesis and analysis.

## Data Sources

I analyzed video recordings of whole group discussions and audio of small group discussions as the primary sources of data to identify how PSTs' understandings of inequity and their roles as members of the IEP team shifted over time. In **Chapter 5**, I discuss what I learned about the six focal PSTs' developing understandings in response to the ideas and experiences they encountered throughout the course. I analyzed PSTs' inequity reflections as secondary sources of data to triangulate patterns in PSTs' conceptualizations of inequity. These reflections enabled me to understand how PSTs' were individually making sense of what they learned over the duration of the course. To capture how PSTs' discourse change between initial and final simulations, I analyzed the video recordings of PSTs' initial and final simulations (primary source of data), as well as their three reflections on the initial simulation and their immediate reflections after participating in the final simulation (secondary sources of data were). Figure 3.8 shows each research question and the primary and secondary data sources used to address each question.

**Figure 3.8**

### *Research Questions & Primary and Secondary Data Sources*

Research Questions	Primary Data Sources	Secondary Data Sources
How do preservice teachers' <i>understandings of inequity and their roles</i> as members of the IEP team <i>shift</i> over the course of a 12-week class that integrates issues of inequity in special education and the use of critical frameworks?	Whole/small group discussions (video & audio) Weeks 5, 6, 7, 8 & 11	Inequity Reflections (Weeks 1 & 13)
How do PSTs respond to issues of racism and ableism when it is shared by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability during initial and final simulations?	Pre-Simulation (video)  Post-Simulation (video)	Simulation Reflections on Initial Simulation (Weeks 4, 8, 13)  Simulation Reflection after Final simulation (Week 13)
How do PSTs engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability?	Pre-Simulation (video)  Post-Simulation (video)	Simulation Reflections on Initial Simulation (Weeks 4, 8, 13)  Simulation Reflection after Final simulation (Week 13)

### ***Whole/Small Group Discussions***

As I introduced topics and/or frameworks to PSTs, they engaged in both whole group and small group discussions which provided opportunities for them to engage with perspectives outside of their own. PSTs chose their small groups from week-to-week, and groups were composed of approximately 5-6 PSTs each week. Small group discussion provided students with opportunities to flesh out their thoughts, hear alternative perspectives, adjust their perspectives, and/or refute other perspectives. Whole group discussions typically followed PSTs' engagement in small group discussions or activities and/or occurred when a new topic or framework was introduced. Topics discussed in both whole and small group over the course of the semester included: social identities, intersectionality, DisCrit, the history of special education in the United States, discretion in teaching, legal precedents, statistics across (dis)ability/race/gender related to suspension, special education process, etc. I video- and audio-recorded all whole and small group discussion in order to capture how PSTs' understandings developed over the duration of the course. This allowed me to capture both consistencies and incongruities in their understandings over time.

### ***Inequity Reflections***

The purpose of the inequity reflection assignment was to get an understanding of how PSTs defined inequity, if they believed inequity exists in schools, whether they believed inequity impacts their teaching practice, and how they would describe their role as a member of the IEP team. As a secondary source of data, I used the inequity reflections to track if PSTs' understandings of inequity shifted over time as they gained knowledge about special education and (dis)ability more generally. The questions presented to the PSTs shifted over time to account for their previous responses and to encourage them to shift their thinking from inward reflection to outward action. For the final reflection, I modified the questions to focus more specifically on special education (Figure 3.9). PSTs completed inequity reflections during weeks 1, 8, and 13 of the course. I analyzed PSTs'

inequity reflections from weeks 1 and 13 in order to observe the shift in their thinking from the beginning to the end of the course.

**Figure 3.9**

***Inequity Reflection Questions***

Question Type	Week 1 – definitions	Week 13 – application to special education
<b>Inequity</b>	What is inequity?	What is inequity? <i>How would you explain it to your students?</i>
<b>Inequity &amp; Schools</b>	Does inequity exist in schools? Explain using one or more examples.	Provide an example of how inequity exist in <i>special education</i> .
<b>Inequity &amp; Teaching Practice</b>	Does inequity have any bearing on your teaching practice, generally? On your work with students identified with (dis)abilities? Explain.	<i>How does inequity impact your teaching practice, particularly when teaching students of color identified with (dis)abilities?</i>
<b>Inequity &amp; Roles</b>	Describe what you think your role may be as a member of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.	<i>What is your role as a member of the IEP team?</i>

***Initial and Final Simulations***

As described above, PSTs engaged in a 15-minute video-recorded simulation of a portion of an IEP meeting as a pre-assessment during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the course and a second 15-minute simulation as a post-assessment during the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the course. The purpose of the simulations was to support PSTs’ development of collaboration and advocacy skills. I assessed PSTs on their ability to (1) contribute to building a collaborative plan for the focal student’s academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress; (2) provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child; (3) demonstrate active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues; and (4) advocate for resources that would help the focal student succeed academically and socially. Given that PSTs would have greater

familiarity with special education by the end of the course, an additional goal of the final simulation was (5) to demonstrate knowledge of the focal student's (dis)ability category and use that knowledge to support their rationale for suggested next steps.

The simulation videos in combination with PSTs' reflections over time (simulation reflections) and immediate reflections after the final simulation provide a more robust picture of whether what PSTs *said* about their thinking and practice aligned with what they *enacted*.

### ***Initial Simulation Reflections***

After the initial simulation, I asked PSTs to watch their videos and label each point in the simulation where they greeted, shared knowledge of the student, connected with the parent, elicited ideas from the parent and/or special educator, listened to other participants, and contributed their own ideas and recommendation; they were then asked to elaborate in a few sentences how they enacted the move they'd identified and how well they felt they did, including specific points in the video that supported their evaluation (Khasnabis et al., 2019). PSTs engaged in three reflections of their initial simulation videos across the semester to help them analyze their actions as their understandings developed in response to coursework.

As a secondary source of data, these reflections offer a comparison between what PSTs said they would do and what they actually enacted during the post-simulation.

### ***Immediate Reflections***

PSTs completed a reflection immediately after the final simulation answering the following questions: (1) What do you think went well during the IEP meeting? (2) What do you think could be improved? (3) What aspect of teaching did this experience make you wonder about? OR What aspect of teaching would you like to work on in class following this experience? (4) In what ways have you demonstrated growth and/or development?

As a secondary source of data these reflections capture PSTs' immediate thoughts about how they engaged in the final enactment and, combined with their simulation reflections, provide a comparison between what they said they needed to improve and what they enacted.

## **Data Analysis and Synthesis**

### ***Class Session Coding***

I engaged in both descriptive and in vivo coding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) to capture PSTs' language and ideas related to critical frameworks and inequity across the course. Given that my level of personal involvement as a participant and as an instructor of the course made me a “complete member,” this approach helped me to stick closely to what PSTs said and to ensure the “data [was] rooted in the participant's own language” (Saldaña, p. 7, 2011). This helped me separate my responses to PSTs as their instructor from my interpretation of them as a researcher.

I began preliminary coding with the transcripts of the video and small group audio recordings of class sessions. My rationale for this was to revisit how PSTs understood major concepts that make visible instances of inequity within special education and societally, since this was the main focus of the course. I examined the first three sessions of the course in which social identities, social construction of (dis)ability, and intersectionality were introduced (Weeks 3, 5, and 6) to determine if codes across class sessions would be similar and if larger themes related to PSTs' understandings of inequity would emerge. As I coded each week, I looked at the patterns that were developing in the codes in order to refine and group these codes further (Saldaña, 2011).

I grouped my initial descriptive codes into three broad categories: *theoretical frames of the course*, *moves PSTs employ to express their ideas*, and *teacher educator (TE) pedagogical moves*. Codes that capture when critical frameworks were discussed, employed, or critiqued are found under *theoretical frames of the course*; vocabulary and discussion moves that PSTs employed to discuss topics presented in class are captured under *moves PSTs employ to express their ideas*; and codes that captured both the vocabulary

that I, as the instructor, used and pedagogical moves I made to provide opportunities for PSTs to participate or extend discussion are captured under *TE pedagogical moves*. My original purposes for coding for *TE pedagogical moves* were to (1) track whether students used vocabulary introduced by me or visiting speakers, and (2) to explain the context of discussions that provided opportunities for PSTs to express their understandings. However, I dropped these codes during the final stage of analysis because my focus was on PSTs' understandings of inequity and not the TE's practice. Finally, during the interrater reliability process, a group of codes emerged that specifically described the content of the ideas PSTs expressed to their colleagues. I grouped these under *PSTs' understandings*.<sup>2</sup> Figure 3.9 lists the broad categories of class session codes and rules for including codes in each broad category.

**Figure 3.8**

***Broad Categories of Class Session Codes & Rules for Inclusion***

Broad categories	Rule for inclusion or exculsion
Theoretical Frames of the Course	PSTs/Instructors discussion and responses to the theoretical foundation of the course: social identities, social/medical models of (dis)ability, intersectionality, DisCrit, inequity in special education.
Moves PSTs Employ to Express their Ideas	Discourse moves that PSTs make to express their ideas to others.
PSTs' Understandings	Captured the content of what PSTs shared in their responses to instructor and/or other PSTs.
TE Pedagogical Moves	Moves the TE make to engage PSTS in the content. These codes were excluded because they focused on the TE pedagogy and not PSTs understandings.

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<sup>2</sup> I will discuss this in more detail in the interrater reliability section of this chapter.

**Theoretical frames of the course.** Within each broad category I created parent and child codes to further specify analysis. This category includes codes that capture when critical frameworks were discussed, employed, or critiqued throughout the course. Three parent codes emerged within this category: *intersectionality*, *identity*, and *(dis)ability*. Here, I give an overview of what those codes capture in the data.

*Intersectionality.* The parent code intersectionality reflects our discussions of intersectionality as a critical framework (Crenshaw, 1997; Collins & Bilge, 2016) introduced in class. I further parsed intersectionality into the child codes employing intersectionality and critique of intersectionality.

PSTs were *employing intersectionality* in different ways throughout the course. Some PSTs seemed to use intersectionality in ways that aligned with my intentions as their instructor. That is, they used it as an analytic tool or frame for identifying inequity and bias. For example, David, one of the focal PSTs in this study stated,

... Low-income African-Americans from the inner city have a hard time getting into college, not these higher-income (African-Americans) or these individuals from the suburbs. So on and so forth, so it lets you really get at the, who is experiencing inequity specifically? ... (Class session 6)

Here, David uses intersectionality to make sense of how societal oppression can differentially impact groups at various intersections of identity.

I also identified a group of codes that revealed when PSTs seemed to be critiquing intersectionality as divisive. For example, Jeffrey, another focal PST, stated,

If this means that the only psychiatrist who can work with an Uzbekian, lesbian woman is another Uzbekian woman psychiatrist because only they can share the experience, I said, "Your therapeutic population's going to be pretty small"... So I don't know where I'm quite fitting that last piece in, but I think so much of what we're talking about is chopping the pie

ever finer and we're getting away from just being human beings and treating people as people. (Class session 5)

Here, Jeffrey interprets and critiques intersectionality as a theory that separates people to the point that only differences are left instead of allowing people to simply treat others as “human beings.”

*Identity.* These codes focus on social and personal identities, including understanding the difference between them. Whether they explicitly named context or not, each PST talked at some point about how context (e.g., schools, society) impacts how social identity is perceived. In addition, PSTs also spoke to stereotypes/assumptions people make based on an individual’s social identities.

*(Dis)ability.* The parent code *(dis)ability* captures instances in which PSTs spoke directly about (dis)ability. Under this parent code, the following child codes emerged: *social/ medical model*, *critiques of the medical model*, *medical model as an asset*, and *critiques of the social model*. In addition, I further parsed each of the child codes in this category into grandchild codes. For example, *critiques of the medical model* includes the grandchild codes *societal oppression*, *ability/ (dis)ability binary*, *able-bodied perspectives/ cultural narratives of (dis)ability*, and *critique of able-bodied perspectives*. Figure 3.10 contains an excerpt of this portion of the codebook.

Figure 3.10

*Excerpt of (Dis)ability Portion of the Class Discussions Codebook*

(Dis)ability	Social Model (social construction of disability)/Medical Model	Medical model and social models as coexisting (3 times)	<b>Jacob:</b> "I think it's great, yeah. I think that in contrast, it's easy to see, "Oh. We're being presented these two as a sort of value judgment. As in, this is an evaluative piece." <u>This is a piece that provides us with the correct way of viewing it, and the incorrect way of viewing it. This hackneyed or flawed way, which is the medical way, or the bright and future way, which is the social way. But in actuality, it's really just providing us with paradigms, as the article says. These are things that can coexist. Maybe the great hubris of humans is that they think that paradigms are hierarchical, as opposed to coexisting."</u>
	Critiques of the Medical Model	Societal Oppression	<b>Audrey:</b> ...civil rights were until it benefits us, you know? Or that we can become normal..."I feel like I've been spoken for and I've been spoken at, but I haven't been spoken to."  <b>Mary:</b> (reading what Ariana shared over the messaging feature of the video conferencing software): <u>Society generally constructs the rules on what's normal...like how long a 'normal' attention span is or what conventional behaviors are or what normal walking or talking is...</u>  <b>Madison:</b> ...Here's this definition for what you can't do that therefore, if you fit that definition, you are qualified as disabled. <u>Where the social model is pushing back on that and saying, "You have to consider how the society that you live in has made that disability exist."...</u>  <b>PSTs make an association between how PIWDs are treated and the way society is constructed.</b>
		Ability/Disability Binary	<b>David:</b> ... <u>the binary between able bodied and disabled is ... The medical model, it's just natural. It just exists. It's innate. As opposed to the social model, which we have constructed it.</u>

**Moves PSTs employ to express their ideas.** This category includes codes that capture the vocabulary and discussion moves PSTs employed to discuss the topics presented in class. I identified the following parent codes within this category: *naming*, *discussion moves*, *verbalizing thought processes*, *emotional response to content*, *participating but disengaging in content*, and *positioning*.

As I was engaged in preliminary coding, I found it important to capture how PSTs expressed complex ideas related to social identity, intersectionality, social/medical models of (dis)ability, etc., so I used in vivo coding to capture the words they used to point to inequity (e.g., race, SES, power). These instances are reflected under the *naming* parent code. I also developed codes to capture their actions, such as providing examples, directing colleagues to textual evidence, or sharing prior

knowledge under the parent code *discussion moves*. Additionally, the parent code *verbalizing thought processes* captures the ways they expressed and/or named their own thought processes, while the parent code *emotional response to content* reflects any emotional responses they expressed and/or named. I also noticed some instances in which PSTs seem to disengage with the content or activity (e.g., by ... [a quick example would be helpful here]). I named this group of codes *participation but disengaging in content* (Haviland, 2008). Finally, I defined the parent code *positioning* to encompass the ways PSTs positioned themselves as knowledgeable about particular subjects.

**PSTs' understandings.** These codes capture the content of the ideas PSTs expressed when they engaged in discussions with me and their peers. I grouped these codes by PST action and defined the following parent codes: *applying critical frames*, *rejecting critical frames*, and *ambiguous position on critical frames*, as well as an additional parent code of *miscellaneous* for instances in the data that did not fall into the other parent codes.

**Interrater reliability.** I conducted an interrater reliability check for two reasons. First, because I am so close to the data, as both instructor and researcher, it was necessary to allow a fresh pair of eyes to examine my initial coding and challenge any assumptions or biases I might have inadvertently placed on the data. Second, it provided an opportunity to see what, if any, patterns were emerging across classes, as well as to identify any codes that I needed to add or refine to better capture PSTs' conceptualizations.

I worked with a colleague who was not involved in either the course or in data collection to apply the preliminary codes based on weeks 3, 5, and 6 of the course to the transcripts from week 7. We coded the entire transcript separately and then met to discuss how we had coded a particular excerpt. This process led me to add *DisCrit* under the *(dis)ability* parent code (I introduced the DisCrit framework to PSTs during week 7) as well as additional *naming*, *discussion moves*, and *emotional response* codes. Further, I realized that I needed a set of codes to more specifically capture how

students articulated their understandings in ways that were not well-captured by the *naming* or *discussion moves* codes. Therefore, I developed the parent code *PST understandings* into a broad category containing its own parent and child codes. Some examples of these include *critiques of special education*, *engaging parent's perspective*, and *sharing perspectives of minoritized groups*. I then used these new codes to recode weeks 3, 5, and 6.

### ***Simulation Codes***

I developed a set of *a priori* preliminary codes for the simulations based on the reflection rubric provided to PSTs (Appendix C). PSTs were expected to (1) Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child; (2) Demonstrate active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues; (3) Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress; and (4) Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially. I added a final expectation, (5) Have knowledge of the student's (dis)ability category and use that knowledge to provide a support rationale for suggested next steps, for the final simulation after PSTs had completed the majority of the course (11 out of 12 classes). I also drew from the Decision Rules for the simulated parent and special educator to identify codes related to possible PST responses to them during simulations. In addition to these *a priori* codes, I also developed an initial set of descriptive and *in vivo* codes based on PSTs' actions in the simulation videos, following a process similar to that described above. Figure 3.9 contains an excerpt of the initial simulation codes I developed.

Figure 3.11

*Excerpt of Simulation Codebook*

Theme	Parent Code	Child Code
<p>[CBC]            Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress</p>	<p>Provides a <i>recommendation</i> for Mariah's academic placement. [both initial/final]</p>	Recommends that Mariah continues with the same schedule
		Recommends that Mariah is placed in general education for certain classes
		Recommends that Mariah is placed in all general education classes
		Recommends that Mariah be placed in all small special education classes
		Recommends that Mariah be placed in a more racially diverse class
		Defers to special educator
		Lack of clarity in recommendation
		Changes recommendation
		Provides no recommendation
	<p>Provides a <i>rationale</i> for recommendation for Mariah's academic placement. [both]</p>	Uses specific examples (e.g. Mariah's grades, teacher comments)
		Provides general descriptions (e.g. Mariah's leadership ability, work ethic)
		Provides no rationale
		Attempts to provide a rationale but direction of the comment is unclear
	<p>Provides an <i>action plan/ recommendation</i> to attend to racist incident/racialized issue. [both]</p>	Asks parent how they recommend they respond to the event
		Gives a response that does not attend to racialized issue
		Is vague about addressing racialized issue; provides generalizations
		Names ways they will work towards a resolution
		Names ways others can work toward a resolution
		Changes recommendation
		Defers to special educator
Names ways the solution they provide will support Mariah		

I first applied this codebook to the initial and final simulations of two students purposefully selected to represent a range of responses that may not have been captured by the rubric or other *a priori* codes. I followed a process similar to that described above for coding the class sessions to add and revise parent and child codes. Further, in addition to codes that capture verbal interactions between the PST and the simulated parent and simulated special educator, I developed codes that also captured non-verbal cues. This was important because one of the goals of these simulations was

to give PSTs opportunities to work with a parent across racial, ethnic, gender, and/or ability differences. Often when engaging across difference, both verbal and non-verbal cues can create either inclusionary or exclusionary spaces. Because I was coding videos of the simulations (instead of transcripts), I was able to attend to both verbal and non-verbal cues to interpret the interactions between the PST and the other actors more fully.

I reviewed the videos multiple times. During the first review, I coded videos using the simulation code book. During the second review, I wrote a memo and added additional codes as necessary. During the third review, I coded videos using the Class Discussion codebook to capture any cross cutting themes.

**Interrater reliability.** After coding the first two students, the same rater who had worked with the Class Discussion codebook and I coded the initial and final simulation videos for a third student. We focused on the PST's verbal and non-verbal cues during their interactions with the parent. We each broke up blocks of time in the video based on PST responses or interactions with the parent and write notes to correspond with the actions of the simulated parent, simulated special educator, and PST. Phrases outlined in red (Figure 3.12) indicate instances where the coder and I agreed that codes should be added or changed.

Figure 3.12

*Simulation Interrater Reliability Coding Charts*

Principal Investigator Coding Chart			2 <sup>nd</sup> Coder Coding Chart		
Time Stamp	Verbal Cues	Non-Verbal Cues	Time Stamp	Verbal Cues	Non-Verbal Cues
00:13-00:20	<b>Greets Ms. Johnson</b> "Hi, I'm Mr. Garcia. Mariah's homeroom teacher"	Stands, greets, shakes hand	00:00-00:32	Introduces self Names which course he teaches/ connection to Mariah	Stands Shakes hand
00:20-00:30 <i>Introduction block; add greeting code</i>	Mrs. Johnson shares that her husband is away on business and she will share everything with him when he return. She speaks directly to David. David responds "Perfect"	(Contextualizes his background, connection to Mariah)  Nods, makes eye contact	00:33-03:38		Looking at SE during introduction Looking at progress report during SE review Looking at P ("Art is her favorite subject...")—responds with smiling and laughing Nodding along with SE review Smiling in response to P comment ("Biology is her second favorite subject...") Looking at SE
00:30-3:37	The special educator begins the meeting. Special educator provides the progress report. Mrs. Johnson mentions that Art is Mariah's favorite subject, looks up and smiles. Special educator continues reporting progress.  Ms. Johnson states that Biology is Mariah's second favorite subject and she is glad she is doing well.	Nods, looks at special educator Looks down at the progress report Smiles, looks across from his paper to Mrs. Johnson's paper Nods, looks down at the paper, looks up at the special educator a few times  Smiles, looks across at Mrs. Johnson's paper.	03:38-04:34	Introduces homeroom ("Homeroom is a place where students get announcements and get to community build with their classmates") <b>Orientation to student/parent</b> <i>Initiates with strengths</i> <i>Asset-based comments about Mariah</i> "Mariah is really a joy to have in class. She has really great relationships with all of her classmates. She is really energized... Class discussion... Builds on others... Positive environment in classroom... Sharing her own opinions... Gets other students talking")	Looking at P Smiling Hand gesturing
3:37-4:36 <i>Same time blocks; same codes</i>	<b>Initiates with strengths</b> <b>Asset-based comments about Mariah</b> Explains the purpose of homeroom to parent. States: enjoy having her in class, has great relationships with peers, she is energized and really involved, contributes, but not only contributes and builds on what her classmates have to say which creates a positive atmosphere. She enjoys expressing her opinions, even it at time is means playing devil's advocate and "we always need someone to do that right," "I don't know about you, but I enjoy students that get the rest of the group talking." He states his agreement with the other teachers.  Pauses.	Makes eye contact, (shifts body toward parent), smiles  <i>Hand gestures (opens up conversation)</i>          Looks at special educator and down at paper	04:35-05:11	<b>Orientation to student/parent</b> <i>Begins with opening up conversation to Ms. Johnson (so she can speak first)</i> Describes changes in Mariah's recent behavior (late to a few homeroom classes, relationships different than we would like them to be) <b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child</b> <i>PST asks a question(s) to gather information</i> Asks P "Is there something that is potentially triggering that?"	Looking at P during questions Body turned toward P

Note: See Appendix D

Most time blocks the rater and I chose fell within seconds of each other. When one of us chose larger blocks of time to bookmark, we compared codes by aligning our notes to identify the reason for the difference. For example, we were not aligned during the portion of the video when the parent probed the PST about noticing anything different about Mariah (PI, 4:36-5:12 and Coder, 4:35-5:11). I coded this section "after probing (or further probing) shares Mariah's progress in homeroom," and the rater identified this section "Begins with opening up conversation to Mrs. Johnson (so she can speak first)." At points like this, the rater and I would discuss the discrepancy

and each of our reasoning for coding in a particular way in order to come to an agreement either by selecting one or the other code or developing a new code that better captured what we observed.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. The primary sources of data for this study were simulations conducted at the beginning and end of the course, audio/video recordings of course sessions, student reflections, and course assignments. I was the instructor of the course as well as the researcher conducting this study. In order to protect the integrity of the study, participants filled out consent forms and submitted them to an individual who was not connected to the project. I did not see these forms nor did I conduct data analysis until the course was completed and final grades were submitted.

Dyson and Genishi (2005) emphasize the importance of engaging in “systemic ways of doing research that are carefully detailed, whether (they) are documenting what participants are doing or reflecting on their own research practices” (p. 56). Genishi (year) also highlights that her “eyes...are not neutral” and therefore as a researcher she “look(s) through figurative and literal lenses guided by preferences and theories” (p. 57), which shapes her analysis and distinguishes it from what others would do. As an instructor and researcher engaging in first-person research, I confront the potential challenges that (1) my views as a practitioner and as a researcher may become conflated; (2) my positionality as a Black woman and also as course instructor may negatively impact my interactions with and analyses of PSTs if they engage in marginalizing behavior toward me; and (3) as the instructor I am designing assignments and assigning grades to PSTs who are participants in my study.

To mitigate these challenges, I wrote dual memos immediately after each class to capture my thoughts and reflect on my experiences during each session. I first wrote as a practitioner, answering questions focused on the effectiveness of activities in engaging PSTs with the content, PSTs'

responsiveness/non-responsiveness to the content, questions I wanted to follow up on, and my decision-making around modifying the lesson in any way. Memoing as a practitioner gave me the opportunity to reflect on my responses to PSTs and determine whether they served to extend or stagnate discussion and/or collaboration. I also used these memos to determine instructional next steps and attend to any issues that may have come up. I completed the second memo as a researcher, reviewing my research questions and recording notes about anything that had occurred in class that related to any of my research questions.

My experience teaching at a predominately White institution of higher education makes me hyperaware of my Blackness and my womanhood. There are moments within the classroom where marginalization at the intersections of these identities can mute the privilege my graduate education and position as an instructor grants me. Alternatively, my position as an instructor at a large university privileges me in relation to my students. Because I was both researcher and course instructor, I used these reflections to help me remain cognizant of my roles and experiences and consistently reflect on how I positioned myself and my students throughout the duration of this study.

## Chapter 4

### Simulated IEP Meetings

In special education meetings the domains of power (Collins & Bilge, 2016) operate in mutually influencing ways that can marginalize families. Interpersonally, teachers and the parents are figuring out how to relate to one another in a situation where school personnel wield institutional power, which parents from traditionally marginalized groups do not have access to. In these spaces, messages about who is able and disabled abound, potentially leading to underestimation of the strengths and abilities of students who live at the intersection of being identified as having a (dis)ability and being a student of color (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016). As a result, these students can find themselves being marginalized compared to their White and/or general education peers and have limited access to resources that can support their success.

Simulations are one approach to providing practice-based opportunities for PSTs to enact and reflect on their practice in order to mitigate their uptake of marginalizing practices. In this study, I constructed simulations to foreground issues of racism and ableism and challenge PSTs to take up multidimensional, as opposed to singular, notions of identity of student identified with (dis)abilities; demonstrate awareness of the material and psychological impacts of the social construction of race and ability; and privilege marginalized voices over dominant voices (see Figure 2.2., **Chapter 2**).

This chapter focuses on the questions, *(1) How do PSTs respond to issues of racism and ableism when it is shared by a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability? (2) How do PSTs engage in collaboration and advocacy practices when working with a Black parent of a student identified with a (dis)ability?* To answer these questions, I examine how PSTs' enactments of simulated IEP meetings changed from

their initial to their final simulations. In particular, I analyze whether they were able to (1) recognize a racist and ableist issue presented by a Black parent of a Black student identified with a (dis)ability, (2) make a recommendation that took up issues of power and oppression so as not to further marginalize this student, and (3) engage in collaborative and advocacy practices. I applied Tenets 1-4 of DisCrit (See Figure 2.2., Chapter 2) to analyze PSTs' enactments and reflections on their practice.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first two sections, (1) *Simulation expectations* and (2) *Applying intersectionality and DisCrit to simulation development and analysis*, frames the issue(s) presented in the simulations, my expectations for the PSTs as their instructor, and how I applied intersectionality and DisCrit to support the development of the simulations and analysis of PSTs' enactments. The last three sections, (3) *Recognizing a racist/ ableist incident*, (4) *Making a recommendation that takes up issues of power and oppression*, and (5) *Engaging in collaboration and advocacy practices with an eye towards equity*, focus on PSTs' simulation enactments and their reflections.

### **Simulation Expectations**

The initial simulation incorporated an issue of racism and ableism to foreground the way these forms of oppression work interdependently within students' interpersonal interactions. The scenario presented presents a student, Brian, who attempts to strip another student, Mariah, of her multidimensionality by telling her that he sees Black students, like her, as incapable. Mariah shares this experience with her parents, Mrs. and Mr. Johnson, who raise it with her teachers at the simulated IEP meeting. Below is an excerpt from the simulated parent materials describing the incident,

Mariah explained to her parents that she has been getting to homeroom late because a few weeks ago a White male general education student, Brian, said he saw her walking out of Ms. William's Biology class, which is composed of mostly students of color. He told Mariah he heard that Ms. William's class is "where all the Black kids are" and that he heard it was the

“slow class.” He asked Mariah if she was in the “slow class.” The students with him were mostly White, Mariah explained, and they laughed after he said that to her. She would arrive to homeroom late so that she did not bump into him and his friends in the hallway and could find a seat away from them after all the students were seated. (Appendix A)

PST materials provide a robust description of Mariah in school that highlights her multidimensionality, and they also present the incident above which has both material and psychological impacts on Mariah. Additionally, the Johnsons want to transfer Mariah into all general education classes as a result of this incident and based on Mariah’s first marking period grades. PSTs were expected to draw on their knowledge of Mariah’s multidimensionality, recognize and attend to the impacts of racism/ableism, and elevate the voices of Mariah and her parents in developing a recommendation for moving forward. Their recommendations were to be based on the Johnson’s concerns, reports shared from Mariah’s teachers during the meeting, and their knowledge of Mariah provided in the simulation materials which incorporated background information, her report card, and an excerpt of her IEP. Figure 4.1 outlines my instructional expectations of PSTs in response to different aspects of the incident presented in the initial simulation.

Figure 4.1

*Aspects of the Initial Simulation Incident & PST Expected Responses*

Aspects of the Incident (Initial Simulation)	Expectations
<p>Mariah explained to her parents that she has been getting to homeroom late because a few weeks ago a <b>White male general education student</b>, Brian, said he saw her walking out of Ms. William’s Biology class which is <b>composed of mostly students of color</b>. He told Mariah he heard that Ms. William’s class is “<b>where all the Black kids are</b>” and that he heard it was the “<b>slow class</b>.” He asked Mariah if she was in the “<b>slow class</b>.”</p>	<p><b><i>Privileging voices of the marginalized (Tenet 4)</i></b>—As PSTs listened to Mrs. Johnson, they were expected to acknowledge Mariah’s experience, take Mariah’s perspective into account when suggesting a recommendation about how to respond to the incident, and prevent any further harm to Mariah.</p>
	<p><b><i>Racism &amp; Ableism working interdependently (Tenet 1)</i></b>—In the scenario, Brian equates Mariah’s Blackness to intellectual inferiority. PSTs were expected to acknowledge and indicate to Mrs. Johnson their recognition of the racist and ableist action taken by Brian.</p>
	<p><b><i>Whiteness and ability as property (Tenet 6)</i></b>—Brian contrasts himself, a White student who is in general education to Mariah, a Black student in special education. PSTs were expected to find a method to address assumptions of superiority/inferiority based on social identity in their recommendation.</p>
<p>The students with him were <b>mostly White</b>, Mariah explained, and they laughed after he said that to her. She <b>would arrive to homeroom late</b> so that she did not bump into him and his friends in the hallway and could <b>find a seat away from them after all the students were seated</b>.</p>	<p><b><i>Material and psychological impacts (Tenet 3)</i></b>—The impact of the incident is demonstrated in Mariah’s behavior when she decided to enter homeroom late in order to avoid Brian and his friends and withdraws from participating in class. PSTs were also expected to share initial steps about how to support Mariah after she experienced this ordeal.</p>

During the final simulation, PSTs were expected to discuss how Mariah was doing in homeroom since their last meeting and share their recommendation about whether Mariah’s current class placement and current academic supports were appropriate based on their expertise as a general educator. According to the scenario provided to PSTs, Mariah has continued to avoid Brian

and, during team-building activities, has preferred not to be grouped with Brian or his friends, which the PST has accommodated. Also, the PST has worked with school social workers to engage the class in activities around personal and social identities, stereotypes, and discrimination (PSTs engaged in similar activities on these topics throughout our course).

In addition, Mariah has been transferred into all general education classes. She has been doing well in most of her classes, but she is struggling in global history and mathematics because she has not been taking her testing accommodations of separate location and extended time. Mariah decided not to take her accommodations in those classes, although she takes them in other classes, because she is the only Black student and the only student identified with a (dis)ability in those classes. This leads her to worry that exiting the class to take tests will draw attention to her (dis)ability classification and her race and further stigmatize her. Below is an excerpt from the parent materials that describes what Mariah shared with her parents:

For this upcoming IEP meeting, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson want to discuss Mariah's current schedule and academic supports, particularly how Mariah is doing in Algebra and Global History. They know that she is receiving help in resource room. They asked Mariah about what she may be having difficulty with, and she said that she is having a hard time completing her tests in her Algebra and Global History classes. They notice that she is not having the same problem in English or Biology. Although she is offered additional time to complete tests due to her learning (dis)ability, this requires that she leave the classroom to go to the testing room. She says she doesn't like leaving classes where she is the only Black student and no one else is going to testing room. It makes her uncomfortable. Although Brian is not in any of her classes, she is still bothered by what happened with him earlier in the school year and does not want other students to make fun of her. In her English and Biology classes, there are a number of students from different backgrounds who go to the

testing room, and so she feels comfortable exiting. But in Algebra and Global History, she is the only student who would be going to the testing room, so she is uncomfortable exiting—in particular because she is Black and fears that people will attribute her learning (dis)ability to her race.

As illustrated here, the incident with Brian continues to weigh heavily on Mariah, and she does not want to endure the same treatment as a few months prior.

In the final simulation, issues of race/ability and Mariah’s academics are fused together.

Figure 4.2 outlines my instructional expectations of PSTs in response to different aspects of the incident presented in the final simulation.

**Figure 4.2**

***Aspects of the Final Simulation & PST Expected Responses***

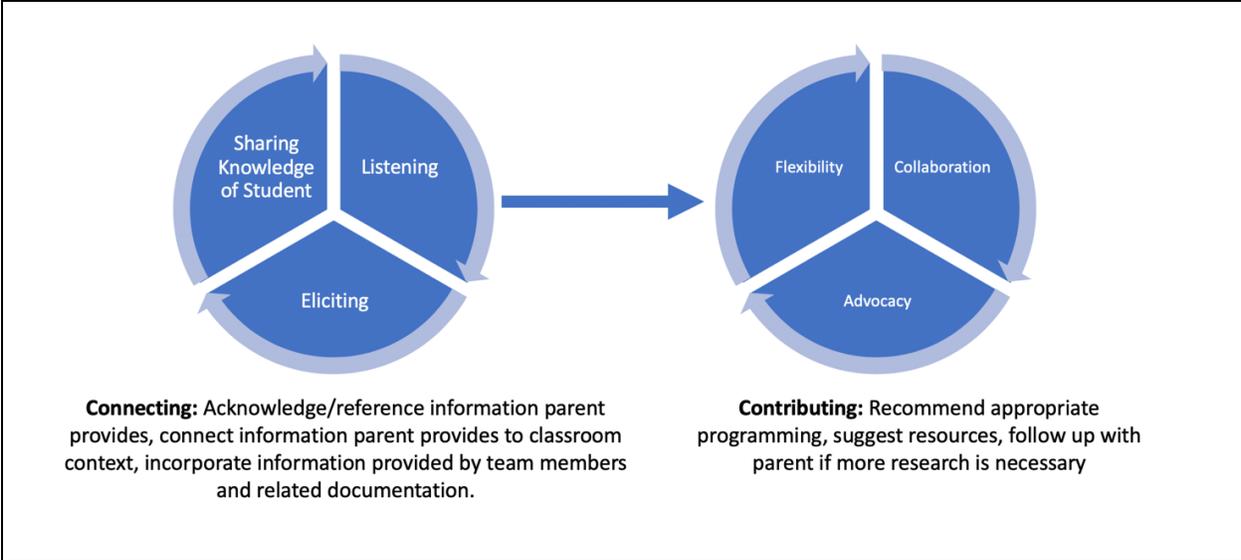
Aspects of the Incident (Final Simulation)	Expectations
<p>She says she doesn’t like leaving classes where she is the <b>only Black student and no one else is going to testing room</b>. It makes her uncomfortable.</p> <p>In her <b>English and Biology classes, there are a number of students from different backgrounds who go to the testing room</b>, and so she feels comfortable exiting. But in <b>Algebra and Global History, she is the only student who would be going to the testing room</b>, so she is uncomfortable exiting—in particular because <b>she is Black and fears that people will attribute her learning (dis)ability to her race</b>.</p>	<p><i>Privilege voices of the marginalized (Tenet 4)</i>—At this point in the course, PSTs have reflected and engaged in discussions about the actions they can take to privilege the voices of marginalized populations. Therefore, they were expected to take up both Mariah’s (being “singled out”) and Mrs. Johnson’s (Mariah’s success in her class) concerns when developing a recommendation.</p> <p><i>Material and psychological impacts (Tenet 3)</i>—Although Brian was not in any of Mariah’s general education classes, Mrs. Johnson was certain that the incident with Brian at the beginning of the school year was having a lasting impact on Mariah. PSTs were expected to consider the incident as they developed their recommendation.</p> <p><i>Multidimensional (Tenet 2) v. Singular notions of identity</i>—PSTs were provided information in their materials that thoroughly detail Mariah’s multidimensionality. They were expected to remain aware of Mariah’s multidimensionality as they engaged with Mrs. Johnson around the issue presented.</p>
<p><b>Although Brian is not in any of her classes</b>, she is still bothered by what happened with him earlier in the school year and does not want other students to make fun of her.</p>	<p><i>Racism &amp; Ableism working interdependently (Tenet 1), Whiteness and ability as property (Tenet 6) &amp; Multidimensional (Tenet 2) v. Singular notions of identity</i>—Underlying this new situation are the tenets present in the previous scenario. PSTs were expected to make</p>

	recommendations that did not perpetuate any of the previous harms Mariah experienced.
	<i>Material and psychological impacts (Tenet 3)</i> —The incident with Brian continues to impact Mariah several months after it occurred. PSTs were expected to not lose sight of this in their discussion with Mrs. Johnson.

In both simulated experiences, PSTs were expected to share knowledge of Mariah, elicit information from Mrs. Johnson, listen to Mrs. Johnson, and connect information gained from Mrs. Johnson and the materials provided to develop a recommendation(s) to support Mariah (Appendix B). Making a recommendation also required PSTs to be flexible in their thinking, collaborate with the members of the IEP team, and advocate for appropriate resources to support Mariah. Figure 4.3 represents how each of these skills relate to one another.

**Figure 4.3**

*Collaborative Practices & PST Orientation*



PSTs were to connect the information they gained through listening to Mrs. Johnson with their knowledge of Mariah, as well as the thoughts, concerns, and questions of other members of the team in order to make a recommendation. In sharing their perspective, PSTs were to demonstrate

flexibility, collaboration, and advocacy. Figure 4.4 outlines the materials PSTs received prior to each simulation to support their engagement in the simulations.

**Figure 4.4**

***Purpose of Simulation Materials***

Simulation Materials	Purpose
<p><b>Context and Goals</b></p>	<p>The Context and Goals section of the materials explained the expectations of PSTs when they become general educators supporting students identified with (dis)abilities in their classrooms, highlighting the importance of their participation in developing the IEP and collaborating with students, parents, and colleagues. It further explains that the IEP is developed to support students academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.</p> <p>It also laid out the description of the simulation (see <b>Chapter 3</b>), the family, and the parent who will be attending the IEP meeting (Mrs. Johnson).</p> <p>PSTs were expected to anticipate that parents want to know how Mariah is doing academically and socially from their perspective. It also explains that the parents' request for the IEP meeting was to discuss Mariah's schedule and academic supports. PSTs also learn that they would be assessed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child;</li> <li>• Demonstrating active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues;</li> <li>• Contributing to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress; and</li> <li>• Advocating for resources that would help students succeed academically and socially.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enactment</b></p>	<p>The simulation materials also described the beginning of the meeting to the PST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You and the special educator greet Mrs. Johnson and introduce yourselves.</li> <li>• The special educator will review information from the last meeting (summary of last meeting, Mariah's current schedule, report card grades, and updated comments from teachers), and then you will have an opportunity to share your knowledge about Mariah with Mrs. Johnson.</li> </ul> <p>When the special educator turns the meeting over to them, PSTs must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to the parent what you have learned about Mariah from community building activities and how she is doing in homeroom.</li> <li>• Based on what you learn from Mariah's parents, your colleagues, Mariah's participation in homeroom, and Mariah's current goals, you will share your perspective on whether Mariah's current class assignments and her current academic supports are appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Background Information</b></p>	<p>The student background information section included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PST's role as Mariah's homeroom teacher,</li> <li>• A description of the homeroom class.</li> <li>• A description of Mariah's academics,</li> <li>• A description of Mariah's social engagement in school,</li> <li>• Activities that students engage in during homeroom,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariah’s interests,</li> <li>• Mariah’s current schedule,</li> <li>• Simplified description of special education programming.</li> </ul> <p>For the <i>final simulation</i> additional information was provided that explained what has taken place in homeroom since the incident with Brian, a detailed description of community building/identity awareness activities, the change in Mariah’s schedule, and a description of different teaching models at the school.</p>
<b>Report Card</b>	PSTs receive Mariah’s grades and short comments from her teachers to give them background on how Mariah is performing in her classes.
<b>Mariah’s IEP Excerpt: IEP Goals (<i>initial simulation</i>)</b>	It is likely that prior to the exceptionalities course, most PSTs were not exposed to an IEP, therefore they were supplied with Mariah’s yearly goals and short-term objectives that align with Mariah’s background information.
<b>Least Restrictive Environment Continuum (<i>final simulation</i>)</b>	During the course, PSTs learned about the least restrictive environment and visual representation of the LRE was included for PSTs reference, given that Mariah was transferred from small classes to general education for her core subjects.
<b>Mariah’s IEP (<i>final simulation</i>)</b>	During the course, PSTs learned about each segment of the IEP and spent time analyzing Mariah’s IEP specifically, therefore they were familiar with Mariah’s IEP prior to the final simulation.
<b>Accommodations &amp; Modifications (<i>Final Simulation</i>)</b>	During the course, PSTs learned about accommodations and modifications listed on students’ IEPs. PSTs also received a list of common accommodations and modifications students identified with (dis)abilities receive on their IEPs (most related to the simulation) to support any recommendation they wanted to make related to Mariah’s academic needs.
<b>Progress Report</b>	During each meeting, the special educator provided progress reports from each of Mariah’s teachers that offered more detail than the report card comments.

PSTs received a level of enactment (LoE) of either novice, advanced beginner, proficient, or expert (see Figure 3.1) as a streamlined method to describe their *discourse* in each simulation, not to categorize them as students. PSTs LoE ratings were based on the strength of their recommendations and the rationales they provided. Table 4.4 identifies focal PSTs' levels of enactment for both the initial and final simulations.

Figure 4.5

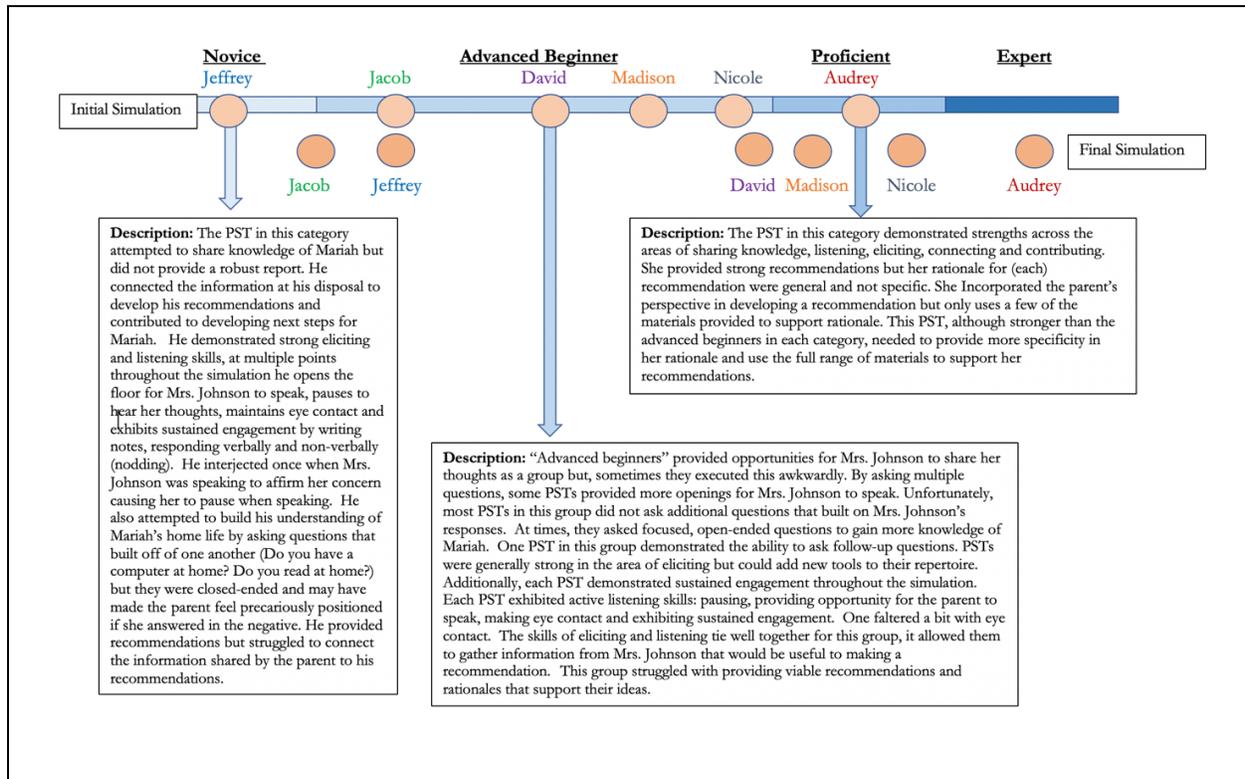
*Focal PSTs' Level of Enactment, Initial & Final Simulation*

Simulation	Novice	Advanced Beginner	Proficient	Expert
<b>Initial</b>	Jeffrey	David; Jacob; Madison; Nicole	Audrey	
<b>Final</b>		Jeffrey	Madison; Nicole	Audrey
	Jacob			
		David		
<i>Note.</i> All PST names are pseudonyms.				

Level(s) of Enactment (LoE) are meant to be fluid descriptors of PSTs' performance in each simulation. For example, advanced beginners may perform more like novices in some skills, making it difficult to draw hard and fast boundaries between novice and advanced beginner recommendations and rationales. Figure 4.6 provides a summative description of both strengths and areas of improvement in sharing knowledge of student, and eliciting, connecting, and contributing to demonstrate the distinctions between the categories.

Figure 4.6

*Spectrum of Levels of Enactment During Initial and Final Simulations*



**Applying Intersectionality & DisCrit to Simulation Development & Analysis**

I designed the simulations for this study to highlight how the structural domain of power interacts with the interpersonal domain of power. As explained by Collins & Bilge (2016) the domains of power function interdependently and in overlapping ways. Although the other domains of power may surface during the interactions between PSTs and the parent, this analysis will focus specifically on interpersonal interactions. I weave DisCrit theory into this analysis by attending to PSTs' ability to recognize the interdependence of racism and ableism (Tenet 1), take up multidimensional notions of identity (Tenet 2), acknowledge and respond to the material and psychological impacts of the social construction of race and ability (Tenet 3), and take up the perspectives of a parent from a historically marginalized group (Tenet 4).

In order for PSTs to take up a DisCrit orientation, they must have opportunities to engage and critically analyze their practice. The simulations and reflections provided these opportunities. In the next section, I discuss (1) whether PSTs recognized the racist/ableist issue presented by a Black parent of a Black student identified with a (dis)ability, (2) if PSTs made recommendations that took up issues of power and oppression as not to further marginalize this student, and (3) whether they engaged in collaborative and advocacy practices.

### **Recognizing a Racist/Ableist Incident**

One aspect of the simulations I designed was to provide opportunities for PSTs to recognize issues of inequity as they impacted Mariah at the intersection of racism and ableism. PSTs were expected to demonstrate their recognition of racism and ableism by either signaling to the parent that they understood the issues of racism and ableism she presented (during simulations) or naming racism and ableism in their reflections. In the final simulation, PSTs were expected to ensure that Mrs. Johnson knew that they recognized the issue of racism and ableism presented in the initial simulation and its connection to her current concerns about Mariah's performance in school.

Below is a discussion that focuses on the way PSTs within the novice, advanced beginner, and proficient levels of enactment attended to the issue of racism and ableism in simulations and reflections.

#### **Novice Level of Enactment**

PSTs were rated as novice LoE if they responded to the issue of racism/ableism in a way that seemed to reinforce the normal/abnormal dichotomy. Additionally, PSTs might only discuss race and ability after the parent raised and then revisited the issue. Their reflections, as highlighted by the PST of focus here, may pivot from reflecting critically on their practice and in their final simulation avoid providing detail related to the activities that respond to the racist/ableist incident.

### ***Initial Simulation***

For example, when Mrs. Johnson shared the incident that occurred between Brian and Mariah, Jeffrey (White man) listens attentively and then responds:

**Jeffrey:** Uh hum, (*looks down at paper*) okay, well, you know it's interesting, (*makes eye contact with parent*) I can understand why she took that approach and it is not... My gut reaction is if I were a kid at that age and something like that happened, that might be how I would approach it, but I am very glad she spoke to you, and I am very glad you are speaking to us about it because to the extent I complimented you on her compassion and empathy—[there] is clearly [something] wrong if a kid would do that to her... um (*looks down at paper*)...

I don't have a fixed answer yet, you know, I just heard it. But my initial inclination given her understandable reluctance to confront that particular person is that I need to meet with him and his parents, perhaps first with the parents and perhaps then with the child because that is simply not acceptable... um... and it's very hurtful and so we need to address that, need to address that quite soon (*looks down at paper*)... um... let's see... In terms of, I had a couple of quick questions, you know, with your (*turns head to special educator*)... (*turns back to Mrs. Johnson*) I, I don't mean, I am not underplaying that at all, you know, I don't see that as a finished answer (*Mrs. Johnson says "okay"*), I see that as just my initial reaction (*Mrs. Johnson nods*). If you wanna come back to that and ask me anything about that I will be more than... if you think that sounds reasonable (*makes hand gesture to open conversation to parent*). If you had any sugges... (*Jeffrey laughs*).

Jeffrey is honest with Mrs. Johnson when stating that he does not have a fully formed response but that his initial inclination is to speak to Brian and his parents. He emphasizes his recognition that Brian's behavior is unacceptable. He expresses empathy by saying that it is hurtful

and that it needs to be addressed “quite soon.” Jeffrey’s response demonstrates that he sees this as an instance of bullying and that what Brian did was hurtful to Mariah, but he does not attend to the fact that Mariah has to negotiate this situation where she is viewed based solely on her marginalized identities. Also, by saying that if the situation happened to him he would respond the same way, seems to ignore that this was a racist and ableist incident that would not happen to him as White, able-bodied man and that Mariah was being bullied because she is Black and in special education.

Jeffrey begins to turn the conversation to the special educator and states that he had a few questions to ask the special educator. He seems to revise this action when he turns back to Mrs. Johnson to assure her that he is not taking the situation lightly. Jeffrey actively takes responsibility in his role to help develop a viable solution and signals that he may need some more time to develop a more thorough response. By turning back to Mrs. Johnson and stating, “I am not underplaying that at all,” he signals that he is acknowledging the information that Mrs. Johnson has provided. He states that they can come back to the topic, and she can ask him any questions. He laughs, but it seems uneasy.

After Jeffrey’s above comment, Mrs. Johnson reiterates that she and her husband do not want their child to be made fun of because she is Black or has a learning (dis)ability. However, even though the parent describes an experience that highlights an instance of racism and ableism working “in tandem to marginalize” her daughter (Annamma, Connor & Ferri, 2016), Jeffrey’s response is superficial because he recommends little beyond his initial idea to speak with Brian’s parents. In seeming exasperation, Jeffrey says, “woooo” later in the conversation, possibly signifying that this is too big a task for him. After this exchange, Jeffrey pivots to an academic recommendation for Mariah. Near the end of the simulation, Mrs. Johnson takes Jeffrey up on his offer to further discuss the incident between Brian and Mariah. Jeffrey responds:

**Jeffrey:** (*Brief pause, looks down*) Okay. That is a very good question. First, I think, right away (*Jeffrey makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) as in tomorrow's homeroom, I am going to have a general discussion with the whole class about, just briefly saying, "it is never all right to make fun of anyone for any reason. Whether they're Black or Chinese, or Asian, fast or slow..."

Jeffrey opens the floor for Mrs. Johnson to share any thoughts or questions with him. In response, he verbally recognizes the issues of race and ability, when he says that it is never all right to make fun of anyone for any reason whether they are "Black, Chinese, Asian, fast or slow." Although he is expressing his feelings that Brian's behavior is unacceptable, his phrasing is awkward and reinforces the same dichotomy that Brian presented between Mariah and himself during the racist/ableist incident. This may signal to Mrs. Johnson that, although Jeffrey is empathetic to the harm that Mariah experienced, he struggles to genuinely understand the material and psychological impact the incident had on her. His comparison of Mariah to himself and his repetition of Brian's phrasing of "slow" demonstrate a superficial understanding of material consequences of racism and ableism.

### ***Simulation Reflection***

When responding to Jeffrey's first round of reflection, I acknowledged that he affirmed the parent's concern as well as Mariah's response. When responding to his second round of reflection, I stated that he should be attentive to both similarities and differences between his and Mariah's experiences and asked, "How would Mariah's experience be different to something you may have experienced? Similar?" The purpose of presenting this question to Jeffrey was to assist him in thinking about the material and psychological consequences of Brian's actions on Mariah. In reflection three, Jeffrey responded:

Mariah is dealing with a learning (dis)ability that makes certain subjects difficult for her, she is African-American, and she is a *woman*. These are all "categories (for lack this moment of a

better term)” that I have not experienced and indeed cannot. I have been a teenager, on the other hand, with my own issues. As a classic “pencil-necked geek” in High School, I was many parents’ dream but a wonderful target for most of the school’s bullies, especially as I was quite physically and socially awkward. *These are not the same issues as Mariah and they do not have the same consequences*, but I do know that when a teenager experiences something untoward, their first instinct is not to run to a teacher or their parent, as this makes them a snitch and a whiner. Unless the culture in Mariah’s school is completely different from the one I grew up in, I think my empathy and understanding of her desire to handle this by herself and not report what happened to me or another teacher are more in agreement with her experience than out of alignment due to the differences in our upbringing and experiences. (Emphasis added)

Here, Jeffrey acknowledges the differences in race, gender, and ability status, but describes Mariah, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student, as a “woman,” which reflects common adultifying discourses surrounding Black children and Black girls in particular (Epstein, Blake & González, 2017). He also acknowledges that he and Mariah do not have the same issues or the same consequences, but he does not provide specifics as to “how” their experiences are different, particularly in light of the situation between Mariah and Brian. Instead, his response focuses on his experience in school and the similarities between those experiences and Mariah's. Jeffrey misses the opportunity to discuss the material and psychological impacts this situation has had on Mariah, which would require him to foreground her marginalized experience over his own.

### ***Final Simulation***

After the special educator opens the final simulation meeting for Jeffrey to make his comments, Jeffrey begins by addressing the issue about Brian, which was the focus of discussion at the previous IEP meeting. He starts to ask Mrs. Johnson if she remembers what happened to

Mariah but quickly corrects this by saying “of course you remember what happened.” He opens up space for Mrs. Johnson to share whether Mariah has discussed what has happened in homeroom since the incident:

**Mrs. Johnson:** Yea, (*hand gestures*) so she has said that she still doesn’t like to be in groups with him, and she has expressed that to you and you like honored that. So, we are really (*with emphasis*) thankful, you know, you’re not, you know, making her sit in groups with him...

**Jeffrey:** ... We’ve tried to keep (*Mrs. Johnson finishes “other than that”*) (*brief pause*) We’ve tried to keep them separate. First of all, it is something we can do and there is no need to kinda force the interaction, so we’re glad to do that.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Other than that, you know, she kinda said you honored that so (*nods*).

**Jeffrey:** Ah... as you know, quick question, (*Mrs. Johnson says “uh huh”*) I saw that she is on the debate team, has she spoken to you about that and I’ll tie that in, (*Mrs. Johnson nods, they smile at each other*) I wonder how she likes that.

Initially Jeffrey pauses to hear Mrs. Johnson’s response. She expresses thanks that he has not forced Mariah to sit with Brian, but, as she does so, he begins to talk and she stops talking. He pauses briefly and then continues to talk. He does not acknowledge that he spoke over Mrs. Johnson and continues to speak.

Jeffrey explains that the teachers made sure that Mariah and Brian would not sit near each other and they are glad to do that. Jeffrey provides no additional information even though there is a thorough discussion about homeroom in the simulation materials (Appendix B). Thus, he misses an opportunity to share additional, relevant knowledge of Mariah. He moves on to ask about Mariah

joining the debate team and ensures that he will tie it into the discussion. Jeffrey makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson, laughs and smiles with her, and there seems to be a moment of connection when discussing Mariah's participation in the debate team. However, his question about the debate team ends the discussion about Brian and Mariah and pivots the discussion towards Mariah's academic performance.

After discussing the most appropriate accommodations for Mariah, Mrs. Johnson segues back to how Mariah's decision not to take her accommodations in certain classes connects to the racist/ableist incident with Brian, a connection that Jeffrey does not verbally acknowledge. Near the end of the simulation, Mrs. Johnson revisits the issue with Brian, specifically bringing up race. She asks for more clarity on the ways that Jeffrey has been dealing with the issue. It is not until Mrs. Johnson probes that Jeffrey provides additional details:

**Jeffrey:** We've brought in both specific, we've tried to have *extra classes* and *extra talks* in the homeroom (*hand gestures*) about learning about diverse students and diverse groups and how we all, you know, both special and individual, and we all have to get along. And we think we're making progress with that. These are kids, you know, there is always one step forward and then some lost ground but we're hopeful that that kind of targeted but not specific education and awareness training has had an impact. (*Turns to the special educator*) Have you seen anything? Um, you might not see it from my homeroom (*my emphasis*).

Jeffrey shares a bit of the information provided in the materials: dedicating homeroom time for discussion about diverse groups. He also states that they have had discussions around everyone being special and individual and that everyone has to get along. He hopes that that specific awareness training has had an impact. Jeffrey seems to avoid engaging the discussion of race.

In the materials PSTs received in preparation for the simulation (Appendix B), there were multiple examples of these homeroom activities. For example:

You also engaged students in a social identities activity, where they filled out a graphic organizer about their various social identities and chose which identities they would like to share with the group. You noticed that during that activity in particular, Mariah was engaged and enjoyed sharing aspects of her Caribbean-American identity. She shared with the class that she often visits Trinidad with her family and is proud of her Caribbean roots.

On another day, you engaged students in an activity around stereotypes and implicit bias, using examples that spanned the intersection of multiple identities and led a class discussion about how our assumptions based on stereotypes can lead to biased actions against others (you included (dis)ability in your discussion). Over the course of these activities Mariah seemed to open up a bit more in homeroom.

PSTs engaged in similar activities around personal and social identities, stereotypes, and discrimination during the course, allowing Jeffrey and his colleagues to speak about these activities from experience. Jeffrey's description of "extra classes and extra talks" does not adequately capture the type of activities described nor does it provide the type of depth presented in the materials.

Additionally, homeroom was described in the materials as a space for team and community building, yet Jeffrey describes the work that he has been doing with his students as "extra," which may signal that he does not see this work as integral to building community in his homeroom. Jeffrey missed the opportunity to highlight what he was learning about Mariah's multiple identities, how the activities helped to support Mariah's reengagement in homeroom, and how these activities specifically responded to the incident that occurred between Mariah and Brian and addressed the material and psychological impacts the incident had on Mariah.

### *Summary of Jeffrey's Development*

Across the simulations, Jeffrey did a number of things to connect with Mrs. Johnson. For example, he expressed empathy when he learned about the incident between Mariah and Brian, emphasized the importance of addressing the issue, provided space for Mrs. Johnson to speak, listened to Mrs. Johnson, and expressed interest in Mariah's extracurricular activities. Although Jeffrey worked to build rapport with the parent, his language and avoidance of taking up issues of racism and ableism that have negatively impacted her child may work against his relationship building with the parent.

In addition, Jeffrey acknowledged that Mariah was harmed at the intersection of race and ability but named this harm in a way that is marginalizing to students identified with (dis)abilities. In his reflections, he named these intersections but did not engage in reflecting on the specific marginalization that Mariah experienced. Gay and Kirkland (2003) discuss particular obstacles to developing PSTs' critical consciousness and self-reflection. They explain, "Rather than reflecting critically on the race related and culturally diverse situations presented, they merely offer descriptions, evaluations, or justifications for actions taken or predicted" (p. 183). In his simulations reflections, Jeffrey provided a justification for his actions instead of reflecting and presenting alternative actions. Jeffrey's pivot away from critical analysis of his own actions is a common maneuver: diversion (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). He "divert[ed] or diffuse[ed] attention away from the targeted topic" (p. 183) of racism and ableism by avoiding the discussion and pivoting the conversation in another direction (i.e., bullying). In his final simulation, even after Mrs. Johnson emphasized the issues of racism/ableism, he did not signal that he recognized this specific issue and instead provided a general explanation of the "extra" homeroom activities outlined in the materials.

## **Advanced Beginner Level of Enactment**

PSTs who were rated within the advanced beginner LoE during the first simulation also recognized the harm done to Mariah but they did not signal to Mrs. Johnson that they understood that this was an issue at the intersection of race and ability. In fact, only one of the PSTs in this category named race explicitly.

A distinguishing feature between PSTs who were rated within the novice and advanced beginner LoEs was in their reflections over the course of the semester. PSTs within the advanced beginner LoE analyzed their practice and explicitly discussed racism and ableism in their reflections in a way that those who were rated as novice LoE did not. Further, in their final simulations, three of the four PSTs within the advanced beginner LoE began by discussing their responses to the incident between Brian and Mariah. For the PST who did not begin this way, their conversation with the parent seemed to naturally move in a different direction. Most PSTs (3) at this LoE provided general descriptions of the activities they worked on in homeroom; and two of the four PSTs provided robust explanations of their rationales for engaging in activities around social identity and discrimination and described Mariah's participation in homeroom in detail. Finally, from the first to the final simulation, two of the PSTs within the advanced beginner LoE showed growth in engaging the parent in discussion about an issue at the intersection of race and ability.

### ***Initial Simulation***

The PSTs who were in the advanced beginner LoE include: Jacob (White man), David (Latinx man), Madison (White woman), and Nicole (White woman). Each acknowledge the harm that Mariah experienced, but they do not articulate that they recognize the incident as both racist and ableist.

**Jacob.** When Mrs. Johnson shares the incident with Jacob, she requests that Mariah be placed in general education for all her classes. Jacob’s response focuses only on the academic aspect of request, and, after that discussion, Mrs. Johnson returns to the incident with Brian:

**Mrs. Johnson:** I wanted to go back to the incident with Brian (*Jacob: with Brian, yea*) and see what could be done about that.

**Jacob:** Yea, um, I imagine that... (*looking away, long sigh*), (*looks down*) This is something that is hitting me (*points to himself, makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) a lot, and I’m so sorry if I’m slow to respond at first, but, um, it seems that Brian needs to understand that what he said has repercussions. Everything that people say ah, it has (*looks down, lifts index card that slips out of hand*), um (*puts hand on lap, makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) has consequences and that he should really, really understand that and it sounds that um (*looks down, sighs, shakes head, pauses for 5 seconds, makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*). You (*hand gesture*) go to school to learn, (*pause*) Mariah is in a school and she is leaning a lot and she is doing incredibly well (*Mrs. Johnson nods*), let’s encourage that. Let’s not discourage by saying *mean things*. For Brian to be saying *mean things* like that, ah, it really doesn’t, ah (*smiles uncomfortably, pauses*)... (Emphasis added)

Jacob is open when says that it is something that is “hitting him also” and he is sorry “that he is slow to respond.” Jacob shows some vulnerability here, which signals his desire to help Mariah but also his lack of experience in dealing with issues of racism and ableism specifically. Jacob’s statement that Brian should not say “mean things,” signals that he recognizes that harm was done. However, he does not name race or ability specifically, nor is he able to express to the parent whether he recognizes that this incident is an example of racism and ableism.

**David.** David approaches the discussion with more confidence than Jacob. In addition to displaying empathy, he names the potential psychological impact the situation may have on Mariah:

**David:** First, (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson, hand gestures*) I'm really sorry that that happened (*Mrs. Johnson nods*) and I wish I could tell Mariah that 'cause she's the one who dealt with it, um, and I would talk to her more in detail about it, you've given us tons of details (*Mrs. Johnson: yea*), um, but obviously our first step moving forward would be how to fix it and how to make her feel safe (*Mrs. Johnson: right*) in this, uh, space...

David demonstrates empathy by affirming Mrs. Johnson's concern and stating that he is sorry that this happened. His immediate response focuses on checking in on Mariah's well-being and wanting to fix the situation so that she can feel safe, both of which demonstrate that he recognizes the psychological impacts of this situation for her. Although David affirms Mrs. Johnson's concern, recognizes that Mariah has been harmed, and speaks directly to the psychological impacts of Brian's action, it remains unclear from his response whether he attributes this psychological harm to racism and ableism or not.

**Madison.** Madison also approaches this situation with confidence. She displays empathy and discusses her approach with Brian. Initially, her response to Mrs. Johnson is superficial, but when Mrs. Johnson reiterates the intersection of race and ability and returns to the conversation later during the meeting, Madison responds:

**Madison:** I am so sorry to hear that (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson; Mrs. Johnson: um hmm*). That absolutely breaks my heart, and I wish I had known that (*Mrs. Johnson: um hmm*) because I don't want to just be reporting kids as late (*hand gestures, Mrs. Johnson nods*), and I really wanna see what we can do to support her so that, um, she doesn't feel like she has to come in late and her classmates aren't there to also support her (*Mrs. Johnson: um hmm, nods*) and, like, I want there to be a community in our homeroom (*Mrs. Johnson: yea, nods*)...

Madison expresses empathy through her responses, and she states her desire to support Mariah to be a fully participating member of her classroom community. This signals that she recognizes that Mariah was harmed. She emphasizes that she does not want to report Mariah late, nor does she want Mariah to feel like she has to be late to homeroom. By naming this, she also seems to notice that the incident is having material impacts on Mariah's attendance. She makes a connection between Mariah's lateness and the quality of the classroom community. Although Madison names that she wants her homeroom to be a community, it is unclear whether this is an indication that she recognizes the negative impact the racist/ableist incident has had on Mariah's social wellbeing.

When Mrs. Johnson reiterates the intersection of race and ability, Madison begins her response:

**Madison:** Yea, I also think too, um, that the issue of racism here is really, really blatant...

Madison affirms Mrs. Johnson's concern, demonstrating that she recognizes that this is an issue of race. In addition to only identifying racism after the parent reiterates that point, Madison does not directly state that she notices the intersection of race and ability status even though the parent names both explicitly.

**Nicole.** In contrast to the other PSTs, Nicole does not initially share an empathetic response, but instead begins with proposed solution. It is unclear whether she planned to add anything to her initial statement because Mrs. Johnson asked her a question before her response was complete:

**Nicole:** Well, I will definitely talk to her about this, now, and...

**Mrs. Johnson:** Well, what are you thinking? You know, your approach I mean, you know?

*(hand gestures)*

**Nicole:** ... Then see how much she gives me and really just let her know that I'm there and anything she tells me, I'm not going to *judge her* or, like, tell other teachers. This is just between me and, uh, her (*looks down at sheet*).

Nicole immediately responds to Mrs. Johnson that she will talk to Mariah. She goes on to say that she wants to explain to Mariah that she would not judge her, but it is unclear why she assumes that Mariah may feel judged. When Nicole states, "I'm not going to... tell other teachers," she recognizes the psychological impact this incident has had on Mariah, recalling that Mariah did not share her feelings with anyone in school. In her recommendation Nicole states, "But I would want to work with them, people who know him better... and, like, change his ideas about, you know, help him see that this not how it is." Although Nicole notices the harm caused to Mariah and can express that Brian's ideas about Mariah are problematic, race remains unspoken. In her final statement, she sidesteps discussing race and/or ability directly.

### ***Simulation Reflections***

**Jacob.** In his second reflection, Jacob names that he notices the "undertones" of racism and ableism in Mrs. Johnson's description of the incident. He also notices that his decision to focus on Mariah's academic placement first means he did not meaningfully take up the racist/ableist incident, and he failed to realize in-the-moment that the reason for Mrs. Johnson's visit was "two-fold." I pressed Jacob to think about how he might express to the parent that he recognizes the issues she presents during the meeting. Jacob responds:

**Jacob (reflection 3):** My approach would change *slightly*. I hope to be able to provide Mrs. Johnson with assurance that her and her husband's desire to put their daughter into general education classes does not go unheard, but also that that sort of behavior and language does not belong in school. *If I had notified her from the get-go that I intended to address the hallway interaction* as well as the potential of transitioning Mariah into general education classes, *I could*

*have kept the interaction from being viewed as an afterthought.* While I did appear to be visually upset upon hearing about the hallway altercation between Mariah and Brian & co., *I ought to have called it what it was: racist and ableist.* (Emphasis added)

Although he is willing to change his approach, he does not seem to recognize that these two “slight” changes could have altered the trajectory of the meeting and how the parent perceived his response to the incident. He names that his initial approach seemed to position the incident as an “afterthought,” but he doesn’t seem to recognize the weighty impact (on the parent) of subordinating this issue within the discussion. If Jacob privileged this issue initially, Mrs. Johnson would not have had to return to it later in the meeting.

I pressed Jacob to specifically explain what Brian said to Mariah and why it was problematic. He explained that Brian “*demeaned and denigrated* a classmate... used racist and ableist language... The group laughed as though being Black or receiving extra support in special education classes is *risible*” (emphasis added). This time, Jacob directly named racism and ableism. His use of the words “demeaned” and “denigrated” to describe Brian's racist/ableist language signal his recognition of the negative impact this incident had on Mariah. Where Jacob struggles in his reflection is with tying the weightiness of the racist/ableist incident with the urgency of the parent’s concern, thereby missing the negative impact that this interaction could have on his relationship with the parent.

**David.** In his initial reflection, David immediately notes race as the issue and connects this to his desire for Mariah to feel safe in school. However, it's not until I probed his response that he realizes that he did not verbally acknowledge racism during the meeting with Mrs. Johnson. He characterizes his response as being “internal” and not outwardly stated. Given this, I asked how he may have responded differently to Mrs. Johnson’s explanation. David responds:

**David (reflection 2):** I think first and foremost I would have made it very clear how that sort of *blatant discrimination* was not tolerable at our school. How invested I was—and the

school was—in making this a safe place for all students. Making it clear that we could get others involved to make sure this did not happen. In some ways, if I am being totally honest, as a *person of color* I was so unfazed that maybe I did not respond the way I should have. This just seems so commonplace in schools. Yet, *this is not about me*, it is about Mariah and I should make it clear that this was not ok. (Emphasis added)

David states that he would be decidedly more transparent about naming that Brian's behavior was an act of discrimination. He engages his own experience as a person of color and acknowledges that he may have been desensitized when hearing about the incident because it is "so commonplace in schools." He also notes that despite his experience, Mariah's experience should take precedence in determining his response. Here, David recognizes the importance of privileging Mariah's experience as a Black girl identified with a learning (dis)ability and backgrounding his own experiences.

Next, I pressed him to connect issues of race and ability. David is able to name that Brian's statement focused on Mariah's (dis)ability as well and that not acknowledging this "might make it seem that I am not as concerned about this aspect of the situation." David names the importance of seeing the interdependence of race and ability in the situation and the danger of backgrounding one to the other.

**Madison.** In contrast to David and Jacob, Madison named race directly during the simulation and tied it to why she specifically chose to approach Brian. In response to her first reflection, I noted that she is clear with the parent that there is an issue of race present. Madison also mentions in her first reflection that she notices Mariah was bullied because she was in special education classes. I pointed out that there is an intersection of both race and ability.

In her second reflection, Madison responds:

I think this kind of situation can only be handled well when it's properly named. Also, as a white teacher, it's important that I recognize that I am a part of the dominant group who seeks to benefit from the oppression of people of color.

She is able to name that as a White teacher she receives material benefits because of her Whiteness. She also sees it as her responsibility to take up these issues in her school.

However, her response focuses on issues of race without taking up ability. Therefore, she partially took up the interdependence of both race and ability in her reflection. For instance, she names her race but not her able-bodiedness when she discusses privilege. At the same time, she is able to recognize that Mariah was also bullied because she was in special education. Madison also emphasizes the importance of naming issues in order address them effectively in both her second and third reflections. In her third, and final reflection, she explains that she wants to be more explicit and name the intersection of race and ability in order to make a pointed recommendation.

**Nicole.** When initially probed to name the “specific issues that Mrs. Johnson shares,” in reflection two, Nicole names Brian’s race and that he mocked Mariah because she was Black and in the “slow class.” When asked to explain the incident that Mrs. Johnson presented, Nicole provides a direct summary of the incident rather than naming racism, ableism, and/or discrimination as her colleagues did. To better understand whether she saw the intersection of racism/ableism, I asked Nicole to apply the domains of power to analyzing the situation,

**Nicole (reflection 3):** To use an intersection(al) frame, I would consider the interaction between Brian and Mariah through the lens of the interpersonal domain of power. There are several identity factors at play when Brian and Mariah come together, including race, gender, and (dis)ability. Brian is a White male; Mariah is a Black female. Brian is not a student identified with a (dis)ability; Mariah is identified with a (dis)ability. Because of Brian’s

identity, he is advantaged in their social interaction. In the general society, able-bodied White males have more power than disabled females of color. Brian's race, gender, and ability status work together to give him power while Mariah's race, gender, and ability status work together to place her at a disadvantage in their relations with one another—in each category, she is in the disadvantaged group. These power dynamics impact the way that Brian views and treats Mariah and the way that Mariah may feel (e.g. inferior) when interacting with Brian.

In her reflection, Nicole focuses on the interpersonal domain of power, and she is able to identify the social identities of each of the students and how they are either advantaged or disadvantaged in society and in schools because of these identities. By doing this, Nicole highlights how Mariah and Brian's intersecting identities work together to either oppress or privilege each student in school and society. She takes up the way power and oppression manifest at the intersection of students' multiple identities. Although she does not talk about the structural domain of power directly, she connects it to the interpersonal domain of power when she explains that in society "able-bodied White males have more power than disabled females of color." Additionally, when she takes up how Mariah felt, she is beginning to explore the psychological impacts of the incident on Mariah. She is demonstrating a preliminary understanding of the parallel between power dynamics in society and schools.

### ***Final Simulations***

**Jacob.** During the final simulation, Jacob takes the initiative to discuss Mariah and Brian's relationship, signaling that he sees this update as a priority to share with Mrs. Johnson. He begins:

**Jacob:** *(makes eye contact with Ms. Johnson)*...We talked in January about the incident that occurred with Brian and his friends *(Mrs. Johnson: yes)*. And ah, I can actually report that since then I've taken an active role in involving the school social workers *(Mrs. Johnson: uh huh)* and

talking about our social identities (*smiles*) (*Mrs. Johnson: mmm hmm*) and Mariah takes her leadership role in those activities, (*Mrs. Johnson nods: okay*). She's an advocate, she's a leader and that's, and she's actually showed a marked difference before and after those events have taken place (*Mrs. Johnson: okay*). I was curious on how Mariah's been (*hand gestures*) interactions with you and Mariah has been since then, has she spoken about those, those moves we've made?

While Jacob's opening does signal an awareness of social identities, his explanations of the homeroom activities are general, (e.g., "talking about our social identities"). He provides the parent with no information about what the activities entailed or how the social workers participated in supporting students. Although he discusses these activities as a response to the incident between Brian and Mariah, it is unclear how he thinks they respond to the racism and ableism. Jacob attempts to acknowledge different aspects of Mariah's identities by describing her as an "advocate" and "leader," but he does not discuss in what ways she enacts these roles.

Jacob's question to Mrs. Johnson could be interpreted in at least two ways. Jacob could be questioning whether Mariah and Mrs. Johnson have a good relationship and can communicate with one another; or he could be asking if Mariah has shared anything with Mrs. Johnson about homeroom. When Mrs. Johnson responds, "Our interactions are always good," it signals that she may have interpreted his question as a question about her personal relationship with Mariah. Mrs. Johnson shares that Mariah appreciates what is happening in homeroom but that the incident with Brian still impacts her IEP, participation in class, and testing. After Mrs. Johnson responds, Jacob pivots to the report card to discuss Mariah's accommodations, which ends this discussion.

**David.** When the special educator opens the meeting for David to speak, he makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson and shares the action steps that he has taken in homeroom to respond to the incident between Mariah and Brian:

**David:** *(Makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson)* We've talked before about homeroom *(Mrs. Johnson: mmm hmm)*... One of the most important things for us moving forward after the situation that happened during last semester... was making sure Mariah felt safe and felt comfortable in the classroom once again. And so we took some very legitimate steps to make sure that happened, and a lot of that included community building. We did about three different activities making sure she felt included, not specifically targeted in any way, but the whole community that *(hand gestures)* discrimination as a whole was not acceptable in our classroom... I just wanted to acknowledge that and let you that we took legitimate steps to make sure that doesn't happen to anybody else and that Mariah feels safe.

Here, David speaks very generally about community building. He states that they engaged in three activities but does not describe the activities or how they connect to the incident between Brian and Mariah. Although his descriptions are general, David clearly indicates that he sees the incident between Brian and Mariah as an act of discrimination. In his update, David, states the connection he sees between the activities and Brian's discriminatory act. He also seems to see the activities as a response to the psychological impacts the incident had on Mariah when he emphasizes that he wants to ensure that "Mariah feels safe," echoing a similar statement he made during his initial simulation.

**Madison.** The discussion about what has transpired in homeroom takes place near the end of Madison's simulation. Although Madison did not bring this up herself, one possible reason is that it did not flow with the direction of the conversation at the beginning of the meeting. Madison explains:

**Madison:** ... In homeroom I've actually started to do *(hand gesture)* a couple of activities about identity, race, social class *(looks at Mrs. Johnson)*, (dis)ability, um so that students have a better understanding for themselves of what those things are *(looks at Ms. Smith, then back at Mrs. Johnson)*. So students like Brian who maybe didn't have that background knowledge can

start to gain that a little bit (*Mrs. Johnson: yea*). And Mariah has also told me that she didn't want to be in groups with Brian (*Mrs. Johnson: okay*) so of course I have accommodated that, that they are never in a group together, which I think is for the best anyway. I've also brought in the school social workers who have helped me with a couple of like activities that we've done in homeroom around identity (*Mrs. Johnson nods*) and these kinds of things. Mariah has participated in those so well, you can tell she really enjoys them and that she likes talking about her identity, and I can really see a pride come from her (*Mrs. Johnson: okay*) so it seems like it is really benefiting her confidence (*Mrs. Johnson nods, smiles*)...

Madison provides a robust description of her rationale for the activities she has done in class to support students' learning and Mariah's participation. Although Madison does not describe the activities in detail, her response signals that social identity was salient to the issue that transpired between Brian and Mariah because she names multiple social identities that they discussed in class. She specifically names race and (dis)ability. She also mentions that Brian may not have knowledge around social identity and signals that she thinks these activities benefit him as well as the entire class. A short time later, Madison also states that she has spoken to Brian and told him that his actions were not acceptable to their homeroom culture.

When making an academic recommendation later in the meeting, Madison revoices Mrs. Johnson's concern and agrees that there was an intersection of "the disability and the race," and she acknowledges that Mariah is the only one who has to walk out of the classroom to take her exams. Madison directly states that she sees the same "intersections" that Mrs. Johnson is noticing, affirming what Mrs. Johnson has shared and signaling that Madison shares the same concern. She explicitly recognizes that race and ability intersect in this issue because Mariah's decision not to take her accommodations is connected to her race *and* ability status. By pointing to the exact issue that is bothering Mariah and expressing to the parent that she shares the same concern (and providing

multiple recommendations to address the issue), she indicates that she recognizes the impact on both Mariah's grades (material) and social engagement (psychological).

**Nicole.** Nicole shares her observations of Mariah in homeroom:

**Nicole:** ... *(makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson)* As always, she is very kind *(Mrs. Johnson: mmm hmmm)*, personable, and energetic. *(Looks at notes)* She has positive relationships with her peers, and *(looks up at Mrs. Johnson)* she is engaging in more homeroom than she was in January right after the Brian incident *(Mrs. Johnson nods)*, so I am happy about that. *(Looks at notes)* She is also on time to all her classes, so that issue has resolved *(glances at Mrs. Johnson)* itself as well. She does not speak with Brian and his friends, and *(looks at Mrs. Johnson)* I have honored her request not to be paired in groups with them when we do different team building activities *(Mrs. Johnson: um hum)*, so that's going well and she's been participating more as we do more team building activities *(look at Mrs. Johnson; Mrs. Johnson: um hum)*. So, it seems like she is liking those and they're working for her because it is something we agreed on to help resolve this issue. *(Looks at notes)* We do different activities around identities, different social, personal identities *(Looks at Mrs. Johnson)*. Students will fill out a graphic organizer about their identities and they share them within a small group, we rotate around. *(Looks at notes)* So we've done a couple different activities like that. We have done specific activities about stereotypes and discrimination *(Mrs. Johnson: okay)* and implicit bias so we're really trying to talk about these things in the classroom *(Look at Mrs. Johnson)* so we don't have issues not only between Brian and Mariah but between the students as a whole in our community. Like raising awareness of these things that are real and happening...

Nicole names specific activities that they engaged in as a class. She provided a list of specific activities and an example of what one of these activities looked like. Nicole uses a majority of the information provided in the materials to give the parent a holistic picture of Mariah's progress in

homeroom. She also gives a rationale for why these activities are valuable for students, explaining that they raise students' awareness, specifically around discrimination, stereotypes, and implicit bias. Although this rationale was not listed in the materials, offering it demonstrates that Nicole may have a positive orientation toward these types of activities. By explaining that “[stereotypes, discrimination, implicit bias] are real and happening” and connecting them to the incident between Brian and Mariah and the school community, Nicole emphasizes her awareness of the material and psychological impacts stereotypes, discrimination, and implicit bias can have on children.

### ***Summary of Jacob's, David's, Madison's and Nicole's Development***

In their first simulations, the PSTs who were rated in advanced beginners LoE category demonstrated varying levels of comfort with verbally expressing the core issue of racism and ableism. Overall, their initial reluctance raised the question of whether PSTs were able to see how race and ability work interdependently in society and schools and highlights the need for more opportunities to develop language to discuss how inequity manifests. PSTs' reflections demonstrated that they were developing their ability to see an issue, like the incident between Mariah and Brian, in more complex ways. When probed, each PST discussed how racism and ableism intersected in this situation and critically analyzed their responses to Mrs. Johnson.

In their final simulations, advanced beginners ranged in their ability to provide robust descriptions of how they attended to the racist/ableist issue. Jacob and David discussed the activities used in generalities, therefore it may have been difficult for the parent to gauge if the activities were directly related to the racist/ableist incident. Neither PST discussed Mariah's improved homeroom participation. Jacob's awkward and ambiguous phrasing of his question to Mrs. Johnson was taken up by Mrs. Johnson as a criticism of her relationship with Mariah. By contrast, David explicitly named his recognition of the Brian's act of discrimination toward Mariah. Although Jacob was able to reflect on his statements in the first simulation, as well as name the issues presented by the parent,

he continued to need support in this area. David also continued to need support with being descriptive in his report to the parent.

Similar to Jacob and David, Madison provided a general description of the activities in class. However, she named race and ability specifically, named her rationale for engaging in the activities with students clearly, and described Mariah's participation in detail. Nicole also described Mariah's participation in detail, gave a solid rationale for the homeroom activities, and provided the most detail related to them. Madison and Nicole both showed improvement in providing robust explanations to the parent, areas that each of the advanced beginners reflected on throughout the course.

### **Proficient Levels of Enactment**

Similar to the PSTs who were rated in the advanced beginner LoE category, the PST who were rated within the proficient LoE, Audrey (White woman), awkwardly addressed race in her initial simulation and initially failed to make the connection between race and ability. However, she provided clear rationales for her recommendations, and, in her reflections, she recognized that her response to the issue of race and ability could be improved. In her final simulation, she provided a descriptive response of her work in homeroom.

During the initial simulation, when Mrs. Johnson shares the incident that took place between Mariah and Brian and explains that she would like Mariah to be placed in all general education classes, Audrey focuses on the incident first. She begins with an apology:

**Audrey:** (*looking down across table*) I am very, very sorry that happened to her and that Brian, um, thought (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) that that behavior was okay and that he could talk to any student that way, um, and to make those kinds of comments. (*looks down at sheet*) At a minimum, I will pull Brian off to the side (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) and talk to him about that and discuss how (*looking down across the table*) those words and actions (*makes*

*eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) hurt Mariah and, um, in general it isn't acceptable to talk about other students that way, (*looks at sheets*) especially others that, you know, (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) are a different color than them. So, we definitely need to address that so I apologize for that, um...[trails off]

Audrey first demonstrates empathy by apologizing for what happened to Mariah. As she begins that statement she is looking down at the table and then looks up at Mrs. Johnson when she says "...treat any student that way..." and states that it is unacceptable to talk about students who are "a different color" than them in the way he did. Here Audrey points out that what occurred was a racialized incident, although it is awkwardly stated. As her instructor, I wondered if she hesitated to use the word "race" because it seemed controversial to her. She looks down at the table often, as if she is gathering her thoughts and/or this is a difficult conversation for her. At the same time, Audrey's rationale for pulling Brian aside centers on how the incident impacted Mariah.

Here, Audrey's performance falls somewhere in between not naming race at all (Jacob, Nicole, David) and naming it explicitly (Madison). She engages with Mrs. Johnson in a conversation about the incident with Brian and does not shy away from tackling the race and ability issue first, even though it appears to make her uncomfortable. It is unclear whether she is able to identify how racism and ableism are intertwined with one another in this incident. From her response, it is clear that she notices how Brian's remarks were racist, but it is unclear whether she notices that his remarks were also ableist.

### ***Simulation Reflections***

Audrey reflects on the how racism and ableism were working in interdependent ways in the incident presented by Mrs. Johnson. In her initial reflection, instead of naming race/racism or ability/ableism when explaining Mrs. Johnson's concern, Audrey uses the phrase "mean statements" to describe Brian's comments (similar to Jacob). She also uses the words "stereotype" and "less

than" which are typically coded to imply racial and other forms of discrimination, but Audrey does not explicitly state the type(s) of discrimination that occurred. She has to be probed further to name the type(s) of discrimination explicitly, but, once she does so, she discusses how she might express to Mrs. Johnson that she clearly sees the issues at hand:

**Audrey (reflection 2):** As teachers, we need to recognize that race is an issue and the phrasing was awkward and incomplete. But it also acknowledged Mrs. J[ohnson] sharing that Brian made the comment not just about slow kids but students of color too. It may [have] needed [to] be more explicit about Brian's unconscious white supremacy because the phrasing did not reflect the power Brian has compared to Mariah and other students of color or those labeled with a disability.

When probed about her phrasing, Audrey identifies that it was "awkward and incomplete." In her reflection she names both race and ability, although this did not come through in her statement during the simulation. She mentions that she may have needed to be more explicit about white supremacy/power during the simulation.

In response to her second reflection, I asked Audrey to listen to the portion of Mrs. Johnson's explanation again. I explain that Mrs. Johnson brought up "two intersecting/interrelated issues concerning the incident between Mariah and Brian." I ask her to name these two issues more explicitly. She responds:

**Audrey (reflection 3):** The two related issues are Brian making an ugly comment saying that the biology class *was all black kids and isn't that the slow class*. First, it is a *racist comment assuming that all black kids need a special class where they go slower than the other classes*, i.e. classes for *white kids*. The second is that *special education students are slow and have nothing to contribute*. Brian's *racist/ableist comment* may also demonstrate a larger cultural problem at the school of segregating students of color and those diagnosed with a disability. (Emphasis added)

Here, Audrey names racism and ableism and explicitly describes how these two issues intersect in Mariah's situation. She also explains why what Brian said to Mariah is both racist and ableist.

Audrey also demonstrates her willingness to revise her approach and think about how to more clearly communicate to Mrs. Johnson that she sees the intersecting issues. She names the overlapping issues of race and ability status, states that addressing the situation is a priority, and emphasizes the importance of Mariah's safety and wellbeing. Audrey reflects on recognizing the issues of racism and ableism in parallel to developing a recommendation and uses her reflections on the former to inform the latter.

Finally, Audrey names the interdependent ways that racism and ableism exist in schools when she notes that race and ability are often seen as synonymous in schools. This highlights the impacts of how the structural (special education identification) and cultural domains (students of color seen as academically inferior) of power manifest in schools. She raises issues that directly impact the work of teaching—for example, she names the need to think deliberately about bias when analyzing why Mariah is placed in separate (small) classes and whether Brian's behavior is a symptom of a larger cultural problem in the school related to racism and ableism. Her comments demonstrate an awareness of “the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or (dis)abled” (Annamma et al., 2016, p. 11).

### ***Final Simulation***

In her final simulation, Audrey provides a thorough explanation of what has transpired in homeroom since the last simulated IEP meeting. She updates Mrs. Johnson on Mariah's engagement in class, on separating Mariah and Brian, and on working with the administration and the school social worker to engage her homeroom class in activities that tackle social identity:

**Audrey:** First of all, as always (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson, they both smile*) Mariah, I really enjoy having her in my class. (*Picks up sheets*) It seems like for the most part, in our last

meeting we were talking about, um, the (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) comment that Brian made... Mariah asked that she not be teamed up with Brian when we did those group activities, um, fair enough, and I understood why (*hand gestures*) we did not. (*Looks down*) But that seemed to help her do okay in homeroom, she is still a little bit quiet, (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) she's not talking to Brian, um, but seems to be doing okay with that... We worked actually with the social worker because I went to administration and said, without naming names (*Mrs. Johnson: mmm hmm, nods*), what happened and this is something that we would like to work on in homeroom and the social worker and administration were very supportive. (*looks down*) And the social worker came a couple times to view the class (*looks at Ms. Smith then Mrs. Johnson*) and also help us provide some activities. One of the highlights (*smiles*) of it is that Mariah is very proud of her Caribbean-American heritage. She really opened up during all of these activities especially during that time and shared with the class that she traveled to Trinidad on several occasions (*Mr. Johnson and Audrey smile*)...

Audrey begins with an asset-based comment when she says that she enjoys having Mariah in class. She does not provide any concrete examples in the beginning of her report but mentions at the end that she was learning about Mariah's Caribbean heritage. Early in her statement, Audrey mentions "the comment that Brian made," this indicates that she is responding to the negative impacts that the comment had on Mariah. She follows up with explaining that she kept Mariah and Brian separated, as per Mariah's request. She shares the actions that she has taken in homeroom to support Mariah by helping to develop her students' understanding of social identities. She also mentions that she has followed Mariah's wish not to be partnered with Brian, and, although she and Brian are not interacting, Mariah is attending homeroom on time and interacting with other students. Audrey follows the materials closely, although she does not name all the activities

specifically. Throughout, Audrey's explanation is very detailed, and she speaks directly to Mrs. Johnson.

### ***Summary of Audrey's Development***

At first, Audrey's recognition of the race and ability issue presented by Mrs. Johnson is similar to her colleagues who were rated within the advanced beginner LoE. For example, she named race awkwardly and did not make a connection to ability. Where Audrey distinguishes herself is in providing clear rationales for her recommendations that take up—although imperfectly—these interrelated issues. Further, when probed to explicitly name the types of discrimination Mariah experienced, Audrey does so and recognizes that her enactment was both awkward and incomplete. In her reflections, she preliminarily discusses white supremacy and power and works to revise her approach to these issues. In her final simulation, Audrey provides a detailed descriptive response to Mrs. Johnson, particularly around how she partnered with administration and social workers, how she attended to Mariah's request to not work with Brian, and what she has learned about Mariah.

### **Making Recommendations that That Take up Issues of Power and Oppression**

Another key aspect of the simulations was to provide opportunities for PSTs to take up issues of power and oppression when making recommendations in response to the racist and ableist issue as well as when considering Mariah's academic placement. PSTs were expected to attend to power and oppression in their recommendations by making suggestions that did not further marginalize Mariah, either in relation to her race and ability status or in their discourse around her academics. In their reflections, I was looking to see how they discussed improving their recommendations and rationales related to the race and ability issue or Mariah's academics. After engaging in three reflections over the course of the semester, PSTs were expected to be cognizant of power and oppression and disrupt marginalization in their recommendations and rationales during the final simulation.

By the final simulation, Jeffrey, the PST who was rated within the novice LoE refrained from using language that promotes the normal/abnormal dichotomy, collaborated with the members of the team, and demonstrated flexibility when his recommendation did not fully attend to Mariah's needs. PSTs who was rated within the advanced beginner LoE each signaled to Mrs. Johnson that they recognized the psychological and material impacts the incident with Brian had on Mariah. They ranged in their ability to demonstrate flexibility and collaboration when developing a recommendation in response to Mariah's decision not to take her accommodations in some classes. Two PSTs who rated within the advanced beginner LoE struggled to align their recommendations with the information provided, while the other two were able to collaborate with the team to generate recommendations that fit Mariah's needs. During the final simulation, Audrey, the PST who rated within the proficient LoE, immediately took up both aspects of Mrs. Johnson's concern to develop a recommendation that fit Mariah's needs.

Below I discuss the ways PSTs who were rated at the different LoEs attended to issues of power and oppression in their recommendations during their initial simulations, reflections, and final simulations.

### **Novice Levels of Enactment**

In his initial simulation, Jeffrey uses language that serves to perpetuate the normal/abnormal dichotomy. Further, Mrs. Johnson has to return to discussing the incident between Brian and Mariah near the end of the simulation because Jeffrey did not fully address it. Although he expresses his feelings that Brian's behavior was unacceptable, Jeffrey's use of "fast or slow" reinforces the same dichotomy that Brian employed during the racist and ableist incident. He recommends speaking to Brian and his family and making a general announcement in homeroom, but his recommendations do not incorporate Mariah's perspective into helping him think about next. Jeffrey expresses his trepidation about calling the incident out and drawing attention to Mariah and Brian specifically. He

attempts to take up the material and psychological impact this situation had on Mariah when he suggests speaking to the class more generally, but his recommendation does not consider that students could connect this to the incident between Mariah and Brian since that happened in public.

Jeffrey makes a similar move when suggesting an academic recommendation for Mariah:

**Jeffrey:** Okay. So my recommendation would be (*looks at Ms. Smith*) and this may be, and I don't want to preempt because you are closer in these subjects, perhaps we can accelerate, not accelerate her, but perhaps we can move her into the normal classes for the ones where she is clearly comfortable...

Although Jeffrey corrects his statement of “acceleration,” his use of the word “normal” could be taken by the parent as saying that the reason Mariah is in smaller classes is that she is “abnormal.” In fact, the reason Mrs. Johnson wants Mariah to be placed in general education is because others make assumptions about Mariah’s intelligence and do not see her as “normal.” When Jeffrey uses the words “acceleration” and “normal,” Mrs. Johnson subtly looks at the special educator and then down to the table. However, as Jeffrey is turned toward the special educator, he misses this non-verbal cue.

Mrs. Johnson is speaking on behalf of Mariah to share a marginalizing experience her daughter endured and push back against others’ desire to ignore her daughter’s marginalizing experiences. Annamma, Ferri, & Connor (2013) explain that “attending to counter-narratives encourages us to learn how students respond to injustice, not through passive acceptance, but through tactics such as strategic maneuvering” (p. 13). In this case, Mariah made a decision to avoid Brian by arriving to homeroom late, in this way engaging in “strategic maneuvering” to protect her own well-being. Jeffrey is attentive as Mrs. Johnson shares her daughter’s experience, and he wants to ensure that she knows that he believes it is unacceptable to harm children because they are Black or in special education. But he does not specifically attend to the strategic maneuvering Mariah has

to do or discuss his role in supporting her in light of the material and psychological effects of the incident that Mrs. Johnson describes.

### ***Simulation Reflections***

In his first simulation reflection, Jeffrey describes the second part of his recommendation to address the racist and ableist issue presented by Mrs. Johnson:

**Jeffrey:** I offered to talk to the entire homeroom about how unacceptable any mockery of anyone for things they cannot change about themselves is. I also suggested that I will make sure that Brian and Mariah do not interact and that I will do everything I can to expedite the meeting with Brian's parents and then talk with Brian. Further action and suggestions will follow those meetings... *I think my proposed course of action, especially with reference to the whole class, was sound...* As regards dealing with Brian, I think my suggestions were sound but it is possible the school has a defined procedure for how to deal with incidents of bullying and I did not even think of that possibility during the simulation. (Emphasis added)

Jeffrey shares that he thinks he made a sound recommendation in response to issue with Brian and Mariah, but he does not explain why he believes his proposed action is a sound choice. In this reflection, his focus continues to be on responding to Brian. Throughout, Jeffrey superficially takes up race and ability in that he states that Mariah is Black and identified with a learning (dis)ability, but he does not use this knowledge to inform his decision-making. Therefore, for the most part, Mariah's well-being and perspective are left out of Jeffrey's next steps. Jeffrey is either unable or unwilling to acknowledge the material and psychological impacts this experience had on Mariah in any substantive way.

When reviewing his academic recommendation, Jeffrey focuses on his roles as a homeroom teacher in the simulation. He notes that he was "deferential to Ms. Smith at all times" because "she should be taking the lead in these discussions." He further explains that she was unresponsive to his

promptings, and in response “I tried to come up with reasonable suggestions on my own without obligating us to any specific course.” In response to his comments, I explained the meeting structure, the purpose of the simulation, and the knowledge he can use to contribute to the meeting. By focusing on his role as a homeroom teacher, he does not take up how he could use the knowledge he has been building throughout the program, so I provided examples: “(i.e. your knowledge of the pace, structure, and rigor of the general education classes you have taught) and apply it to thinking about how to support and recommend services for a student identified with a (dis)ability.”

Additionally, Jeffrey's desire to let the special educator take the lead seemed to ignore the description provided in the preparation materials that “... meetings are more than 15 minutes... each team member would also weigh in... the simulation was to provide you an opportunity to access the knowledge you are building...” Instead, his focus seems to be on how the simulation was structured without deeper reflection on his role as a member of the team. In response, I explained some of the constraints that exist in schools around IEP meetings and asked Jeffrey to reflect on how he sees his role as a member of the IEP team. He wrote:

**Jeffrey:** I see myself as an active participant and an advocate for Mariah, but with the noted limitations... From the simulation materials, it does not sound like homeroom has changed that much since my time in one. I did comment and ask about that behavior I could observe (e.g., her changed interactions with her friends in homeroom) and that led to useful information being elicited. I generally do not see my role in any meeting as passive. If I am there/invited, there must be a reason and I like to contribute and make the time useful to all. There are just limits to that participation and what I can usefully contribute.

Although I presented an alternative as to how he could have approached the simulation as a homeroom teacher (i.e., “if as a general educator you needed more information about Mariah and

her academic progress, the IEP meeting would be an appropriate time to raise those questions”), he does not take this up in his response. By focusing on the structure of the simulation and not his practice, he avoids discussing what he could have shared from his developing knowledge base to help him suggest an academic recommendation or what additional information he needed to determine whether general education was the best fit for Mariah.

### ***Final Simulation***

During the final simulation, after Mrs. Johnson shared why Mariah has not been taking her accommodations in two of her classes, Jeffrey asks if it is possible to switch around Mariah’s classes but then states that it is perhaps not the best option. He asks if there is another section of the class where there would be other students taking the extra time so that Mariah would not feel so singled out, providing a rationale that acknowledges but does not fully attend to Mrs. Johnson’s concerns. This first recommendation may suggest that Mariah does not belong in her current classes because she needs accommodations, although there is no indication that she's unable to do the work in those class, only that she is not completing her exams. Additionally, this recommendation does not attend to the race issue Mrs. Johnson presented, namely that Mariah is the only Black student in the class and this is the reason she does not want to take her accommodations. Although Jeffrey posed his question about changing Mariah's schedule to the special educator, Mrs. Johnson states that she does not want Mariah to switch classes because of the large shift they have already made.

Jeffrey pauses to hear Mrs. Johnson’s perspective and takes it up immediately when he begins formulating a new option:

**Jeffrey:** A second thought is, is there any way, and again I need to defer to you on this (*looks over at the special educator and make hand gesture*), is there any way that she can be in her class, take the test and then kind of after (*glances at Mrs. Johnson*) the class ends go to the resource room and continue the test then, is that (*glances at Mrs. Johnson*) at all feasible?

Jeffrey's new recommendation attends to Mrs. Johnson's concern about Mariah being singled out and provides a rationale. Further, instead of signaling that Mariah does not belong in her current class, this suggestion attends directly to the comment the teacher made in the progress report that Mariah needed to take her accommodations so that she can complete her exams.

After making this suggestion, Jeffrey turns to Mrs. Johnson and asks, "Do you think that would address the primary concern?" He explains that Mariah wouldn't be singled out because she would be going to another class like the other students. He revoices Mrs. Johnson and Mariah's concern. He then explains how he thinks the solutions would work and how they attend to Mariah's concern about being singled out. In this instance, Jeffrey connects the reports provided by the special educator with Mrs. Johnson's concerns to develop this solution. He attends to both the material and psychological impacts that Mariah is experiencing, although he still avoids naming race and ability directly.

### ***Summary of Jeffrey's Response to Power and Oppression***

During his initial reflection, Jeffrey used language that perpetuated the normal/abnormal dichotomy in both his response to the race and ability issue and his academic recommendation. When asked to reflect on his recommendation, he stated that he made a "sound choice" although he did not account for Mariah's perspective. When reflecting on his academic recommendation, he focused on the structure of the simulation instead of critically reflecting on his practice.

Jeffrey's performance developed from novice to an advanced beginner LoE across the semester. In his initial simulation, he struggled to privilege the voice of the marginalized student, Mariah, instead focusing solely on Brian when making his recommendation. By the final simulation, Jeffrey was able to provide multiple suggestions until he attended to both Mariah and Mrs. Johnson's concerns. In particular, he demonstrated flexibility in the final simulation when his first recommendation did not fully attend to Mrs. Johnson's concern. He worked to collaborate with the

parent and special educator to develop a feasible solution that took up Mariah's concern of being singled out and Mrs. Johnson's concern that Mariah was not taking her accommodations. Finally, Jeffrey continued to struggle with explicitly naming race/racism and ability/ableism, but he avoided using ableist language in his final simulation which demonstrates growth.

### ***Advanced Beginner Level of Enactment***

**Jacob.** When Mrs. Johnson shares the incident that occurred between Brian and Mariah during Jacob's initial simulation, she couples it with her request that Mariah be placed in general education for all her classes. Jacob responds by taking up the academic request and, after that discussion, Mrs. Johnson returns to the incident with Brian. Jacob responds further:

**Jacob:** ... For Brian to be saying mean things like that, ah, it really doesn't, ah (*smiles uncomfortably, pauses*). I'll sit with Brian and talk to him, I don't know, I don't know, uh if Mariah would want to sit as well and maybe we can the three of us talk. We could maybe build on some restorative practices so that Brian can build on his relationship with Mariah and maybe understand. Straighten out those misunderstandings, ah and ah, I hope that we can build on, you know, some of the things... her ability to connect with people, maybe she can show Brian what it's like to actually connect, make a connection and to better understand people 'cause she is one of the exemplars of that (*Mrs. Johnson nods, says "mmm"*). She's of the great, she's one of the, one of the best people to easily make connections with people no matter who it is, she sits with a big group at lunch, she sits with a big group and holds court at homeroom. So, I'd really like to really show Brian how to do that so....

Jacob seems to struggle to think of a viable solution to the issue and, moreover, he seems to be caught off guard. After Mrs. Johnson shares her concerns, he takes up the academic request first, although Mrs. Johnson shared this request second. Additionally, Mrs. Johnson must take the

initiative to return to the issue of Brian's behavior toward Mariah later in the simulation so that it can be addressed at all.

Jacob continues by saying that they can possibly build on some restorative practices, but he does not explain what this means. He also presents a solution that requires Mariah to be an exemplar for Brian. His recommendation rests almost entirely on Mariah taking responsibility for showing Brian how to treat others with respect, which unnecessarily places the burden on her to support the social development of the White student who marginalized her. Jacob recognizes that there was harm done, but he does not name race or ability specifically. His response instead focuses on Brian and Mariah as individuals without acknowledging the burden that may be placed on Mariah if he takes this course of action. If Jacob were to follow through on this recommendation, he would be taking the chance of further exacerbating the material (i.e., added work) and psychological (i.e., engagement with the person who harmed her despite her expressed wishes to the contrary) impacts of the incident on Mariah.

When providing an academic recommendation, Jacob begins by suggesting that he could talk to Mariah's classroom teachers, then awkwardly transitions to making general statements about Mariah's areas of need and alludes to her being unwanted in general education classes:

**Jacob:** As far as transitioning her (*looks at Mrs. Johnson*) into more general ed classes, that is something I will certainly be able to broach with her other classroom teachers and issue that maybe we can look at. Some of her grades (*looks down at sheet*), um, you know, she she is on or above average in many different capacities, whether it is staying on task writing a great essay or, uh, work on those simple arithmetic problems, uh, she is a wiz at mental math (smiles) the addition subtraction problems. However, it seems like she may be falling behind some of her peers in other capacities (*Mrs. Johnson: okay, low voice*) and I'm just warning you that maybe, uh, some of her general ed teachers might not be so quick to welcome her in

(*looks down*). Just, you know, ah, (looks at Mrs. Johnson) we wouldn't want to see her falling further behind...

Initially, Jacob pivots to talking about general education placement and said that it is something he would like to broach with Mariah's other teachers. This is a reasonable suggestion, especially if Jacob needs additional information to support his recommendation; but he does not provide any reason why he needs to talk to Mariah's other teachers or the type of information that would be helpful to support his recommendation. By stating that Mariah is "above average in many different capacities," it seems that Jacob is trying to take an asset-based stance, but his delivery is awkward and it is unclear from this statement who Mariah is being compared to and what "capacities" he believes she possesses. Jacob mentions strengths but does not state how these strengths might help Mariah if she is transferred to general education. He makes one statement related to her strengths and provides no evidence to support this statement. It seems almost as if he mentions her strengths as a way to compliment her before delving into her weaknesses.

Jacob use of phrases like "above average in many different capacities" and "falling behind her peers in other capacities" raises questions like who is considered average? And, to what group is Mariah being compared? Although Jacob does not directly name race, it is important to consider the context here: Mariah is a Black special education student, and the discussion centers on placing her in all general education classes. One can easily infer that Mariah is being compared to general education students, who, in her case, are majority White and able-bodied. In this case, the "average" she is being compared to is a group that does not typically include her.

Jacob also "warns" Mrs. Johnson of Mariah potentially not being accepted by general education teachers, hinting that being in special education would "protect" Mariah from teachers who would not want a student with a learning (dis)ability in their classroom. He uses these presumed unwelcoming general educators to justify his perspective when he says to Mrs. Johnson

that they do not want Mariah “falling further behind.” However, instead of offering solutions to circumvent this challenge, he indirectly implies that Mariah should remain in special education for her own good. Although he couches his perspective in some apparently asset-based comments, his fundamental argument is that Mariah should not be placed in general education if it is going to be an inconvenience for general educators to teach her.

**David.** Unlike Jacob, David approaches addressing the racialized aspect of the issue with confidence. However, similar to Jeffrey, David recommends talking to Brian and making an announcement in homeroom about the needs and norms in their community and respecting everybody’s background and everybody’s academics. He also recommends talking to the administration:

**David:** ... (*Looks down at paper*) So, what I think makes the most sense and I don’t know (*looks at Ms. Smith*), you can always give your opinion, Ms. Smith, obviously. (*Looks down at paper*) The most important thing is to talk to Brian (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson, hand gesture*) and in the case with something so serious is to bring in the administration and speak to them about it. And then, more generally, in order not to single Mariah out about the situation is make more of an announcement about the needs and norms in our community and making sure that we are abiding by them and reviewing those norms, which include, respecting everybody’s background, respecting everybody’s academics and so on and so forth. What do you think about that?

**Mrs. Johnson:** ... One thing that I am also thinking about is they have to see each other in the hallway, if it goes to administration, which don’t get me wrong, I understand you are trying to take action because I’m a (unclear) parent. I am also thinking about, I don’t want this to escalate so I am just going to put that forth, I mean, I don’t...

**David:** Yea, especially if they are in gen ed classes because that is your goal for her...

After the portion of the conversation highlighted above, David asks the special educator if she has any thoughts instead of providing Mrs. Johnson with a revised plan based on her most recent concerns about the situation between Brian and Mariah “escalating.” David affirms that he will do all the things he outlined, but he does not revise his plan or go into detail about the focus of his discussion with the administration. This recommendation, if not carefully executed, has the potential to worsen the psychological impacts Mariah has already experienced because she could become the target of Brian’s escalated behavior.

David acknowledges that there was harm done, but, similar to Jacob and Jeffrey, he does not name race or ability. He gets a bit closer than Jacob by naming that he wants Mariah to feel safe in the classroom. He also begins by focusing on Mariah and her needs before pivoting to focusing on Brian. But his eventual recommendation primarily focuses on responding to Brian, without fully considering the negative impacts on Mariah even after Mrs. Johnson voices her concern. Further, David does not share his reasoning for talking to Brian or talking to the administration.

Similar to Jacob, David awkwardly expresses his trepidation about placing Mariah in all general education classes. Both Jacob and David pull from Mariah’s progress report but seem to rely heavily on Mariah’s grades (instead of the other information they contain) to support their recommendations. Unlike Jacob, David also pulls from the background information in the PST materials to discuss Mariah’s areas of need. David states:

**David:** So, I think, unfortunately (*looks up*), (*eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) the way things are set up right now, um, in order to get into college, colleges are incredibly competitive as you know (*Mrs. Johnson: mmm hum, nods*). For whatever reason they want 4.0, something really crazy, and all of our students have the ability to do so and have the capacity to get there, unfortunately, not everybody is going to be there yet, right? And so currently, in the classes

in which Mariah is in the small groups, Mariah has a B, B-, and a C- right are strong...but not very strong, could improve grades in these particular classes. I am somewhat timid in moving her into the gen ed courses right now (*Mrs. Johnson: Okay. Folds arms on table*). I think one thing (*places hand on chest*) that would be a compromise that you and I could come to (*Mrs. Johnson nods*) is along the lines of general education classes with resource (room)...

Here, David expresses respect for Mrs. Johnson's desire for Mariah to take all general education classes, but he also expresses his trepidation. By using the word "timid," David signals that he may not think that Mariah can handle general education classes. His use of the words/phrases "unfortunately," "colleges are incredibly competitive, they want a 4.0 or something really crazy," and "although all our students are capable to do so and have the capacity to get there, unfortunately not everyone is going to be there yet" negates the existence of various types of colleges and criteria used for college admittance. He indirectly states that, although Mariah is not a member of the "college-ready" group, she could eventually get there. These rigid ideas of who belongs in college and what attributes are considered "college-ready" is steeped in White, ableist norms. After signaling that Mariah is not in the college-ready group, David lists her grades and then states his nervousness about moving her into general education. At this point, David seems to be making a connection between college-readiness and general education, especially because, as noted in the PST materials, Mariah is not in general education classes for her core subjects (English, mathematics, science, and history).

By primarily focusing on her grades and not incorporating teachers comments and background information, David moves from looking at Mariah holistically to singularly. Additionally, his use of "our students" and "everyone" serve to generalize who he is speaking about, even though the context of the entire meeting is focused on Mariah. Although David provides a reasonable rationale for his "timid(ity)," his statements may signal to the parent that Mariah is not

capable. He acknowledges Mrs. Johnson's statement about Mariah's improvement, but it seems as if he is hedging in order to present an asset-based frame of Mariah.

**Madison.** Madison's recommendation in response to the racist and ableist issue focuses primarily on Brian:

**Madison:** ... So, I will definitely do some digging into this situation and find out... I am definitely going to talk to Brian and see, like *(tone gets higher)* "Hey, what do you remember about this? Why did you ask that?" Ask, find out some probing question from him to see if he had an intent or what the meaning behind the conversation was *(Mrs. Johnson: um hmm, nods)* and then I want to work with Mariah to figure out how we can move forward so that we can have a community, um, but *that she can come on time, right? I don't want her to come late* because she doesn't feel welcome, I want her to feel welcome, but also *I want her to be there on time* so that she gets the entire homeroom session *(Mrs. Johnson: Right)*. Um, does that sound like something that would work? *(Emphasis added)*

Madison's recommended course of action is to speak to Brian, specifically asking him if he remembers the incident and why he asked Mariah the question he did. Madison's rationale is that she first wants to find out the intent behind Brian's words, but it is unclear what she might do with that information. Thus, although Madison provides a rationale, her recommendation is not specific.

Madison also discusses Mariah getting to class on time. She does this first just after Mrs. Johnson shares the incident with her (prior to the excerpt above) and then three more times near the end of her statement. She connects this to wanting Mariah to be a part of the community and says that she wants Mariah to get what is provided during homeroom. She does not seem to connect the cause (Brian's actions) with the material and psychological impacts the event is having on Mariah. Mariah is arriving to class late because she is using the resources she has to maneuver around being harmed again. Madison seems to miss these larger implications and focuses instead on attendance in

her recommendation. Madison makes the implicit connection that Mariah getting to homeroom on time equates to her feeling welcome there, but she doesn't address the question this raises about why Mariah might feel *unwelcome* in the first place. It is unclear why timeliness seems to be a bigger concern for Madison in this case.

Madison does discuss her perspective about transitioning Mariah into all general education classes without using generalizations or deficit-based perspectives. Madison recommends general education English because Mariah has shown leadership and improvement, and she believes Mariah is ready to take a next step and move into a new class. Madison also recommends Global History because Mariah has shown improvement and that demonstrates to her that Mariah is on the right path. Although she provides rationales for her recommendations, they lack substance because she does not look across teacher comments on the progress reports, Mariah's background information, and her IEP.

For example, in the area of English, Mariah's progress report states:

steady improvement; writing skills need improvement; Mariah is actively engaged in class and often takes a leadership role in group activities; Mariah's writing is improving, she continues to need support in spelling and writing with more detail. Mariah is able to use context to define unknown vocabulary.

Madison bases her rationale on Mariah's leadership ability, but this does not take into account differences in class size between special and general education placements or that Mariah's IEP goals state that, although her writing is improving, she continues to need support in this area. Even though Mariah has an 83 in her small class, there is the potential that her grades may dip in general education because she will no longer have as much specialized support. To strengthen her rationale to place Mariah in general education for English, Madison would need to incorporate these areas in her thinking as well.

In addition, Madison tells Mrs. Johnson that Mariah's scores on some tests in Global History weren't "super awesome" but her essay writing is improving really well, so it seems to her that they can push Mariah a bit more and focus on some of her writing strengths. Essentially, Madison is suggesting to place Mariah in two writing-intensive classes with less one-on-one support, even though the progress report and her goals suggest she continues to need that support. Further, Mariah's performance on Global History tests (her grade in this class is 78) may suggest that she needs more support with the content. As with her English placement, there is a potential for Mariah's grade to drop further in Global History without more intensive support.

**Nicole.** Nicole's response during the initial simulation varies from her colleagues in that Mrs. Johnson does not mention that Brian is also in Mariah's homeroom—which she was supposed to do when describing the incident—so the conversation moves in a slightly different direction. Nicole initially discusses supporting Mariah and then says:

**Nicole:** I don't know Brian, so I would want to talk with his teachers, his homeroom teachers, the people that know him and see him and are working more closely with him. So, I can tell them what happened and they are with him all the time and know how to handle the situation but I would want to be there as they decide how they're going to handle it because I know what happened first hand it is my student who's affected by it. But I would want to work with them, people who know him better and are able and have relationships where they can talk to him try to have some sort of conversation and, like, change his ideas about, you know, help him see that this is not how it is.

Nicole mentions that she does not know Brian but still takes ownership of the situation by stating that she wants to be a part of the discussion and help determine what the next steps will be with Brian.

Prior to providing an academic recommendation, Nicole brings up her concern about Mariah's transition to all general education classes by expressing her lack of knowledge about how general education and special education may or may not parallel each other. Nicole refers to Mariah's progress report to support her rationale that Mariah may be ready for general education in her Biology class. She shares asset-based comments around Mariah but explains that she would need to know more about how grading translates from special to general education before making a clear recommendation for Mariah to be transferred for all of her classes. Thus, she speaks to Mariah's current strengths and her potential but expresses that she would need a deeper understanding of special education to recommend Mariah's transition given her areas of need.

Additionally, she is clear that she does not believe that Mariah is unable to take general education classes. Instead, she insists that she wants to ensure Mariah's success. Nicole also brings Mariah's voice into the dialogue by suggesting that they ask Mariah how comfortable she would feel to be transferred into general education and which classes she thinks would be best. Nicole pulls from the progress report to demonstrate that currently Mariah is doing well with the material in her small class, particularly in the courses where she is earning Bs. Nicole brings up that she is unsure how Mariah's grades would translate and she wants to avoid Mariah struggling in all new classes. Here, Nicole acknowledges that there would be a real shift for Mariah between being in special education classes and transferring to general education, which is something she is taking into consideration while responding.

### ***Simulation Reflections***

**Jacob.** During the simulation, Jacob suggested using restorative practices to respond to the incident between Brian and Mariah. For his second reflection, I asked him to consider the affordances and constraints of his suggestion and the potential that Mariah will be burdened with showing Brian how to treat others (material and psychological impacts). He responds:

**Jacob (reflection 2):** ... I might be rushing Mariah into a situation which she is not comfortable addressing and situating her next to someone who left her traumatized... I understand that this sort of interaction would force Mariah to shoulder (so to speak) an undue amount of labor... In a revised plan, each participant would begin in separate conferences in which Mariah received emotional support to prepare for facing Brian and in which Brian and his coterie received sensitivity training. The end goal, when each interlocuter is ready, would be a round table discussion. In this scenario, the lion's share of the work would fall on my shoulders. If too laborious, I would employ a team featuring a social worker, counselor, and administrator...

Here, Jacob reflects on the ways that Mariah may be impacted by his recommendation and the potential of the situation to escalate. He names that his solution also placed an unfair burden on Mariah, and he develops a revised plan that places the "lion's share" of the work on his shoulders. In his revised plan, he considers lifting the burden of carrying the discussion from Mariah and engaging a team to help him strategically engage in the discussion. However, Jacob assumes that Mariah wants emotional support from the school and that she will eventually want to engage with Brian, but he does not suggest speaking directly with Mariah to assess her needs. In modifying his approach to the racist and ableist incident, Jacob takes the material and psychological impacts of the incident on Mariah into consideration, which is a marked contrast from his initial recommendation.

For the third reflection, I also asked Jacob to reflect on the following statements he made during the simulation: "she might be falling behind some of her peers in other capacities," "some of her general education teachers may not be so quick to welcome her in," and "we wouldn't want to see her falling further behind." Specifically, I asked, "How might Mrs. Johnson (have) interpreted each of these phrases?" Jacob responds:

**Jacob (reflection 3):** I talk about the “other capacities” in which Mariah might not be performing as well... By saying that certain teachers “might not be quick to welcome her in,” I severely messed up. While the intent wasn’t to demean Mariah or make her feel like an outcast, the word choice “not... welcome her” could have been really bad. As I closed my last reflection with the desire to “practice,” one thing I ought to work to develop is my phrasing in situations like this. If I continue to carelessly speak, or so foolishly bandy about negative phrases, I am liable to really upset a parent. This is their *kid* I’m talking about... I ought to’ve noted the upward trend and highlighted her positive attributes as indicators of growth and potential. This is not to say that I would be ignoring the reality of Mariah’s deficits, but instead casting them in cautiously optimistic terms, and noting that integration into mainstream classes would require a number of supports.

Jacob demonstrates an awareness that his language positioned Mariah as unwelcome and explains that he needs to work on his phrasing. But it is unclear whether he understands that his words perpetuated a perspective of students identified with (dis)abilities as unteachable (singular notion of identity). Although he indicates that he should have highlighted her “positive attributes,” he does not make a connection between these attributes and how they could contribute to her participation in general education. Thus, Jacob seems to continue to struggle with seeing Mariah’s multidimensionality. Finally, Jacob’s language of “deficits” in this reflection raises the question of whether he primarily associates deficits with students identified with (dis)abilities as opposed to general education students.

**David.** In David’s first reflection on his initial simulation, he states that he had difficulty providing a resolution that was satisfactory to Mrs. Johnson. David’s initial recommendation incorporated speaking to Mariah, but Mrs. Johnson feared that Mariah would be singled out if he talked to her separately. David seems to view Mrs. Johnson’s concerns about her daughter’s safety as

a hinderance to making an appropriate recommendation because it pushes back against what he sees as the only viable option (i.e., involving the administration). Although David lays out the recommendation that he made to Mrs. Johnson, nowhere in his response does he engage other possible solutions that may have attended to Mrs. Johnson's need to emphasize Mariah's safety and the harm the incident has caused. He mentions that during the simulation he felt that involving the administration was the only alternative, but he does not explain if there were any different solutions that he may have offered or how he intended to involve the administration and simultaneously take up Mrs. Johnson's concern.

To support David in taking up the psychological impacts of his recommendation on Mariah, I explained that there are conflicts between viewpoints during IEP meetings, and asked:

Now that you have some time to reflect, taking into account Mrs. Jackson's concerns (such as, not wanting Mariah to be singled out, wanting community building around this issue, etc.) and possible courses of action, is there something different or modified that you would suggest? If so, what would it be?

David responds:

**David (reflection 2):** First and foremost, I think that we need to address this at a schoolwide level. Based on the type of comment that occurred, some other students might have the same thoughts and feel free to share them. In this regard, we need to address this issue from the top. Namely, administrators need to hear her account of the situation, and take matters into their own hands. One thing I believe needs to happen is a private conversation with Brian. But as I mentioned previously, he is not the only problem. Potentially, even a public apology might be necessary to remedy the situation. Otherwise, I might think that developing an emergency plan to ensure she is no longer harassed is

important. But this is challenging in the sense that her mom does not want her to be singled out in any way.

David does not budge from his initial recommendation of involving school administration and specifies that both Mariah and Brian should speak with the administration. He adds that a public apology may be necessary. He mentions developing an emergency plan to ensure that Mariah is no longer harassed, but, when compared to his discussion of involving the administration, there is no specificity as to how this might be done. The plan to make sure Mariah is no longer harassed seems like an afterthought, and it is unclear whether his use of “otherwise” means replacing the public apology with this solution or something else. He reiterated that executing this solution would be challenging because Mrs. Johnson does not want Mariah to be singled out. Although David is able to repeatedly name Mrs. Johnson’s concern, his solution remains the same, and he is unable to think of ways to leverage the administration while attending to Mrs. Johnson’s desires.

When reflecting on his academic recommendation, David recognizes that his comments would have been off-putting to the parent. In response, I asked him to reflect on the following questions: “What might you have done differently? How might you have expressed the concerns you mentioned above to Mrs. Johnson?” David explains:

**David (reflection 2):** I think I would have simply stuck to speaking about Mariah and her performance in these courses. More specifically, emphasizing how the courses she had not performed well in were small classes and were her least favorite subjects. Additionally, unfortunately, colleges definitely view this particular set of classes as a central aspect of one’s transcript. Instead of focusing on how these would be a knock on her, I could focus on discussing how keeping her in these courses could actually help her ensure that she shows her best self in these core subjects. I am not sure, but I believe it would be a good alternative.

David provides a clear rationale for his concerns and explains how Mariah's success in small classes can work to her advantage when she is applying to college. David explains that he should have focused on Mariah's small classes working to her advantage instead of focusing on how Mariah's grades prevent her from having a 4.0 GPA. However, it remains unclear whether he realizes that that he perpetuated a deficit perspective of students with learning (dis)abilities or whether his perspective regarding Mariah's academic ability has changed.

To attend to this, I probed him further about how Mariah might be experiencing the classroom context after the incident, but David seems to lack flexibility in dealing with this delicate situation. His only solution continues to involve including the administration, but he does not consider how the administration could be leveraged to engage in a schoolwide initiative around disrupting discrimination. This would attend to Mrs. Johnson's desire to prevent situations like what happened to Mariah in the future without specifically singling Mariah out. He mentions that the only way to make the classroom space safer for her "needs to be structural," but he doesn't consider how he might express to Mariah what he is noticing or that he is a resource to her. David struggles throughout the reflections with reconciling his perspective on the appropriate course of action, Mariah's needs, and Mrs. Johnson's concerns. David clearly names the conflict, but he privileges his perspective over the potential negative impacts his suggested course of action could have on Mariah.

**Madison.** In contrast to David and Jacob, Madison named race explicitly during her initial simulation and tied it to why she specifically chose to approach Brian. Madison's initial recommendation began with Brian. She told Mrs. Johnson that she wanted to ask Brian some probing questions to better understand his intent. I asked, "It seems here that you want to approach Brian first, is that accurate? If so, what is your rationale for speaking to Brian first?" She responds:

**Madison (reflection 2):** That was what I was thinking during this simulation, however, I have now changed my mind. I would want to talk to Mariah first, to make sure that I

understood her experience by hearing it from her. As a white teacher, it's important that I center the voice of the most marginalized student so that I can take actions that Mariah feels like will meaningfully support her.

Madison decides to change her approach from the first simulation, emphasizing that she is a White teacher with the responsibility of privileging Mariah's experience. This reveals that Madison is conscious of the power dynamics between her and Mariah, particularly regarding race. Additionally, she privileges Mariah's input in determining her next steps. By modifying her approach, Madison is considering her responsibility to the student who has been marginalized.

I also asked Madison to explain her rationale for transferring Mariah to general education in English and Global History. Madison explains:

**Madison (reflection 2):** An advantage of transitioning Mariah in these classes is that she may be able to show even more growth in a general education class. However, we also run the risk of overwhelming Mariah with material and/or a pace that is faster than what she is used to. This overwhelm may cause her to actually regress, if she becomes frustrated by not doing well in general education classes. English and Global History are both writing heavy classes, and since that is one of her strengths, it may be a good way to build on her strengths as we transition her. If we utilize her strengths, she is more likely to be and feel successful, which will help build her confidence for transitioning in other classes.

**Ebony (response to reflection 2):** Although Mariah enjoys writing, it is an area where she needs support—particularly in spelling and providing detail.

**Madison (reflection 3):** I think that because we know WHAT specific things in writing Mariah struggles with, it helps us to help her more effectively.

Madison demonstrates that she has an asset-based view of Mariah and wants to capitalize on Mariah's strengths. She names both affordances and constraints of transferring Mariah into general education, namely that Mariah could either demonstrate additional growth or become overwhelmed by two writing intensive courses. Madison further explains that because teachers are aware of Mariah's specific areas of need, they would be able to help her more effectively. Madison both names the potential constraints of placing Mariah in general education for these particular classes and provides an explanation in response to those constraints.

**Nicole.** Since it wasn't made clear to Nicole during the simulation that Brian was in her homeroom, I asked her to consider this in her reflection. She maintained a similar response to Brian as she did in the simulation, which would be to talk to Brian's teachers to learn more about him and work with them to figure out the best way to approach Brian. The difference between her response in her reflection and the simulation, is that she takes on the responsibility to talk to Brian independently in her reflection. I then asked her to think about her homeroom community. She responds

**Nicole (reflection 3):** If other students identified with disabilities or other students of color learn about Brian's words, they may feel targeted and hurt. Like Mariah, they may begin to pull away from social interactions. To attend to the possible effects of the incident, I could meet with each student individually to check in about classes and their year-to-date. (I imagine doing this regularly as a homeroom teacher, so it would not be unusual for the students.) During this meeting, I would mention any observations I had that might be a ripple effect of Brian's actions (without mentioning Brian or the incident unless the student did). Furthermore, I would end each meeting by making clear that students could talk to me about anything at any time. I could also use team-building activities to bring the homeroom together and to help strengthen the community. These might include games, getting-to-

know-you activities, or problem-solving scenarios that students work through together. With any strategy, my goal would be to build trust between the students and to build trust between me and the students to make everyone feel safe in the space.

The activities that Nicole suggests, although related to team building, do not directly address marginalization and discrimination. Although Nicole is able to name the power dynamics between Brian and Mariah and the potential social impacts on Mariah, she does not attend to these with specificity when suggesting activities to engage the homeroom class. Nicole presents generic community building activities that do not directly take up issues of social identity and power, therefore leaving these learning opportunities to happenstance. Nicole is also willing to think about how she might approach Mariah and Brian independently and work with colleagues to address the incident by taking into account the social implications her approach would have on Mariah and Brian. She articulates the impacts of the interaction on Mariah and other students who may be impacted by the incident but her specific recommendations about addressing issues of discrimination directly falls short.

When providing an academic recommendation, Nicole recommends that Mariah be placed in general education for Biology and provides Mrs. Johnson with a rationale. I asked her to do the same for Mariah's other class. Nicole responded:

**Nicole (reflection 2):** ... The information about Mariah's interests was from the materials we received about the enactment, and the information about grades and teacher comments was from Mariah's report card. If I were to use this same method to explain my hesitancy to place Mariah in general education for her other subjects, I would mention that her grades are not as high in the other content areas and that the teachers' comments in these classes mention the need for improvement. By using this information, I could have better explained

the importance of Mariah staying in the special ed(ucation) classes for these subjects to receive the support she needs to improve her skills.

During the simulation, Nicole provided a clear rationale for why general education Biology may be a good fit for Mariah discussing Mariah's interests, her grades, and the teacher's comments. Nicole recognizes the importance of providing a clear rationale, especially to explain her hesitancy in transferring Mariah into general education for all her classes. This response demonstrates that Nicole is able to recognize Mariah's strengths and area of improvement by attending to the information provided to her without positioning Mariah through deficit perspectives.

### ***Final Simulations***

**Jacob.** After Mrs. Johnson explains to Jacob that Mariah continues to be impacted by the incident that happened with Brian, particularly with respect to her academics, Jacob refers to Mariah's progress report noting that, "She seems to refuse some of the testing accommodations." He inquires, "Do you see any connection between her feeling, um her, since Brian said and his friends said what they did and her refusing these accommodations?" In response, Mrs. Johnson explains that Mariah is the only Black student in her Algebra and her Global History classes, and she is the only student who has to leave the class to take her testing accommodations. Mrs. Johnson says that she feels "singled out" and has therefore been rushing through the tests. Jacob makes the following recommendation:

**Jacob:** ... We have alternative assessment accommodations, modified tests, so that, while she is still in the same room (*Mrs. Johnson: okay*) she is taking a slightly modified test. Whether it is different questions, shorter exam, um, I do know that, ah, she is quite proud of her Caribbean Heritage perhaps in Q4 (quarter 4) in global history she can work on some, ah, Caribbean history (*Mrs. Johnson: uh hum*) papers, some things like that. We can speak to her funds of knowledge and not make her feel singled out.

Jacob's questions reveal that he acknowledges the possible psychological and material impacts the incident with Brian may have had on Mariah. They also acknowledge that the incident may be connected to Mariah's race and ability status.

However, his discussion of Mariah's Caribbean heritage seems a bit displaced here, particularly because there is no indication that Mariah has not had opportunities to connect with the class material. Mrs. Johnson asks Jacob to explain what funds of knowledge are and what modified tests are. Although Jacob explains what modified tests are, his rationale for why they would be appropriate is not connected to the underlying issue. His rationale assumes Mariah is unable to master the material without exploring the possibility that Mariah may know the material but does not have enough time to demonstrate her understanding. This may signal that there has not been a change in Jacob's deficit perspectives about Mariah's capabilities.

Mrs. Johnson wonders if modified tests would support Mariah in preparing for college. Jacob does not provide any specific of information in response to Mrs. Johnson's concern with respect to ensuring that Mariah would graduate if she were assessed using modified tests. When asked by Mrs. Johnson whether he thinks Mariah should remain in general education, he recommends that she should.

**David.** When presented with the same issue, David initially recommends that Mariah begin her exams in class and stay after school to complete them. Mrs. Johnson rules this recommendation out because Mariah has to watch her brother after school. David responds by providing a different recommendation:

**David:** ...*(makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson)* if that is not something that cannot be done *(hand gestures)*, I think another place that can be done is resource room, if that's okay *(looks over at special educator, special educator nods and affirms)*.

David recommends that Mariah complete her exams in resource room instead of staying after school. Following this statement, David reiterates that he sees both the social and academic impacts the issue with Brian is having on Mariah as a rationale for this recommendation. Then, David makes a recommendation for Mariah's academic placement:

**David:** (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*)... I think that the concern for me then is maybe it would be in... Mariah's best interest to potentially move her back into small classes... I am pretty concerned that in Algebra and Global History... and according to what the teachers have said it is directly related to her learning disability, and I want to make sure she is getting the support she needs in small classrooms in terms of those two classes but still letting her know that we have faith in her, and we believe that she can be successful by allowing her to stay in English in the general ed classrooms, what do you think about that?

Although, David's rationale is clear, detailed, and specific, he overlooks very important information from the parent and in the progress report. Specifically, Mariah's teachers recommended that Mariah take advantage of her accommodations because her tests were incomplete; since Mariah has not been taking advantage of her accommodations, her level of mastery of the material remains unclear, bringing into question whether she actually needs to return to small classes in those subjects.

Mrs. Johnson then expresses her confusion between David's initial recommendation that Mariah should complete her tests in resource room and his suggestion that Mariah be taken out of general education completely for Global History and Algebra. He then suggests giving her one more quarter (marking period) to see if the accommodations work, saying that if that is not the case they can think of transferring her back into special education. David backtracks on his recommendation to remove Mariah from general education right away, but he has already signaled to the parent that Mariah is not going to succeed in these two classes. Even though Mariah has not yet had the

opportunity to see if the new structure for the accommodations will improve her grades, David signals that he is anticipating her failure.

**Madison.** Madison also shares her concern about Mariah's grades in Algebra and Global History. Madison suggests that Mariah go straight to resource room to take her exams. Mrs. Johnson's responds that other students would notice that Mariah is never in class on test days. Madison takes up Mrs. Johnson's suggestion and realizes that her suggestion does not attend fully to Mrs. Johnson's concern. She then provides another recommendation:

**Madison:** The other thing we could do with that in mind (*Mrs. Johnson: yea*) is could we (*makes eye contact with Mrs. Johnson*) have her start her tests in the class, and then her additional testing time could come the next day in class or during a special period, during resource time? (*hand gestures*) Is there some other time during her schedule that we could have her finish the test? ... I think we can try to do it in the resource room time (*Ms. Smith nods*) and then we could see if that's enough time and move from there.

Madison's suggestion of having Mariah finish her test in the resource now responds to both Mariah's concern of being singled out and Mrs. Johnson's concern of Mariah not receiving her accommodations. Madison explained that she will be interested to see how Mariah's scores change based on the changing the delivery of Mariah's accommodations, after which they can decide on next steps. Madison more explicitly states her rationale here and is able to recognize a pattern in Mariah's performance that may reflect not taking her accommodations rather than capability.

**Nicole.** Nicole tells Mrs. Johnson that she has also noticed that Global History and Algebra are where Mariah had "significant dips" compared to her other classes. She explains that the switch to general education hasn't had a large (negative) impact on Mariah's grades. Nicole indirectly makes a recommendation for Mariah to stay in general education with the rationale that Mariah's grades have stayed consistent and she is doing well in most of her classes. After Mrs. Johnson informs

Nicole that Mariah has not been taking her testing accommodations because she does not want to be singled out, Nicole expresses her understanding. Although Nicole came into the meeting expecting to discuss Mariah's needs in the areas of math and reading, she incorporates the newly acquired information into her thought process instead of only focusing on the materials she had that only provided her with part of the picture.

Nicole notices that Mariah has a free period and recommends that she take tests during her free period so she will not have to leave class. Nicole is solely focused on Mariah not leaving the class without considering what Mariah would be doing during the period her peers are taking the test. Nicole also does not consider in this moment Mariah's need for extended time. Thus, her proposed solution does not attend either to the issue of extended time or of not wanting to be singled out.

In response to Nicole's suggestion, Mrs. Johnson asks what Mariah would be doing when the class is taking the test. Nicole responds:

**Nicole:** Hmm. Yes, I didn't think about that. She could maybe be reviewing some materials, um, but you wouldn't want her to stand out in that way (*Mrs. Johnson affirms*)...Maybe if she could take the test in class with everybody... but she needs extended time, yea, so she gets the extended time during her free period later that day. So then she's still in class with everybody taking the test (*Ms. Johnson: okay*) and nobody knows she is getting singled out to do her extra time because it is in her personal free period.

Nicole at first recommends that Mariah review her notes in class, but she quickly revises this thought when she realizes that this might also single Mariah out because she will be doing something different from the rest of the students. She then suggests that Mariah take the test in class and then continue during her free period. By her final recommendation, Nicole takes both issues (material

and psychological impacts) into account and is able to clearly express her rationale for this new recommendation.

### ***Summary of Jacob, David, Madison, and Nicole's Responses to Power and Oppression***

Although advanced beginner PSTs struggled with connecting the severity of the racist and ableist incident and its impacts on Mariah with some of their solutions during the initial simulation, each worked to develop a solution that attended to the harm caused to Mariah. In their varying responses, some may have placed the weight of the solution on Mariah, made recommendations that could further escalate the issue, or provided recommendations that primarily focused on responding to Brian. Each of these types of solutions failed to fully take up Mariah's perspective on her experience of the marginalizing incident.

One similarity between some of the PSTs in the advanced beginner LoE and those in the novice LoE during the initial simulation was in how they placed the onus for addressing the racist and ableist incident on the vulnerable student in different ways. Specifically, Jacob's (advanced beginner LoE) recommendation requires Mariah to help Brian to be a more empathetic person, and David's (advanced beginner LoE) recommendation leaves Mariah facing the brunt of possible escalation of Brian's behavior. In addition, some PSTs (Madison, David, Jacob, Jeffrey) did not include supporting Mariah in their recommendations, even though they recognized and worked to respond to the harm she experience.

In contrast with the PST in the novice LoE, in most cases the advanced beginners provided a rationale to the parent for their recommendations. Each of the PSTs reflected on the possibility of Mariah being marginalized given their recommendations to the racist and ableist incident; each was able to name the intersection of race and ability when their instructor provided probing questions; and three of four (Jacob, Madison, Nicole) adjusted their responses as a result. Like Jeffrey (novice

LoE), David was able to name that his response to Mrs. Johnson concerning Mariah's academics was problematic, but it remained unclear whether his perspective about Mariah's ability changed.

During the final simulation, after dialogue with Mrs. Johnson about her concerns, some of the PSTs in the advanced beginner LoE (Madison, Nicole, David) found solutions that met both Mariah's and Mrs. Johnson's concerns. However, although David provided a viable solution to the accommodations issue, he still recommended that Mariah return to special education in Global History and Algebra. He then backtracked, but by that point he had already signaled to the parent that he believed Mariah would not be successful in those two classes. Jacob, on the other hand, provided a recommendation that differed from his colleagues (i.e., modified tests), but his recommendation was not supported by the information provided.

Nicole's and Madison's enactments improved from the advanced beginner to the proficient LoE by the final simulation because they were able to provide recommendations and rationales that effectively addressed Mrs. Johnson's and Mariah's concerns, and they demonstrated flexibility and collaboration in doing so. David's enactment improved from the advanced beginner to the advanced beginner/proficient LoE because he was able to provide rationales for his recommendations and demonstrated some flexibility and collaboration initially, but then backtracked on his recommendation after the parent disagreed.

Jacob's enactment regressed from the advanced beginner to the novice/advanced beginner LoE because his recommendation during the final simulation lacked a rationale. Further, when Mrs. Johnson named her concern about modified tests, Jacob did not reflect on other possible solutions, exhibiting limited flexibility or collaborative skills. Although Jacob was open to reflecting on his practice in the reflections, his deficit perspectives of Mariah seemed to remain consistent from the initial to final simulations. Therefore, he struggled with demonstrating flexibility when Mrs. Johnson

questioned whether using modified tests was appropriate for Mariah given Mariah's goal of attending college.

### **Proficient Level of Enactment**

When Mrs. Johnson shares the incident that took place between Mariah and Brian and explains that she would like Mariah to be placed in all general education classes, Audrey focuses on the incident first. After demonstrating empathy, she explains:

**Audrey:** *(makes eye contact Mrs. Johnson)* It will happen immediately *(Mrs. Johnson: oh, okay)*.

Next time that I see Brian *(looks down across the table)* I'll pull him off to the side and we'll talk about it and eventually, if you're okay with it I would like Brian and Mariah to come back together, um, *(Mrs. Johnson: nods; Audrey makes eye contact)* and if Mariah's comfortable sharing her feelings in this situation and also Brian getting the opportunity to apologize and understand, see the hurt that he caused *(Mrs. Johnson: Okay; Mrs. Johnson and Audrey nod, Audrey looks at the special educator)*.

Audrey responds that she will speak to Brian immediately, demonstrating that she recognizes the urgency in attending to the incident. She does not consider that her idea to pull Brian aside for a talk has the potential to further escalate the situation; however, this is not brought up by Mrs. Johnson during the simulation. Audrey also suggests that Mariah share her feelings with Brian—her rationale being that she would like Brian to see the hurt he has caused. Audrey demonstrates awareness that Mariah may not be comfortable speaking to Brian and offers it only if both Mrs. Johnson and Mariah agree.

The only aspect of Audrey's recommendation that involves Mariah is her idea to bring both Mariah and Brian together to discuss what took place and for Brian to apologize. Similar to some of her colleagues, Audrey provides a recommendation that has the potential to escalate the incident further, and she does not consider learning more about Mariah's perspective on this directly from

Mariah. In contrast with her colleagues, she also states that she will only carry out her recommendation for Mariah and Brian to meet if she has Mariah's and Mrs. Johnson's approval. Based on her response to Mrs. Johnson, Audrey is working to attend to the psychological impacts of the incident and privilege Mariah's voice, though only part of her recommendation does this well.

For her academic recommendation, Audrey makes a generic suggestion about placing Mariah in all general education classes, but she does not share substantive examples that would support why she agrees with this transfer. She mentions Mariah's leadership ability and work ethic but does not offer any explanation about how these things will support Mariah's success in general education. Mrs. Johnson must probe her further before Audrey provides a more substantive response. At that point, she responds methodically, going through each class and making a recommendation.

She recommends general education Biology because it is Mariah's favorite class but does not provide any further explanation, although there were multiple examples in the progress report that would support this recommendation (Appendix B). She also recommends general education English, but again she does not take into consideration the background information and IEP snapshot provided to support this recommendation. She suggests that Algebra not be changed, and although this has the potential to be a strong recommendation, she does not state her rationale. For Global History she provides a strong rationale for her recommendation to continue special education, identifying Mariah's inconsistency in the class and also acknowledging that bouncing Mariah back and forth would be problematic. Although her recommendations make sense and she leverages the information she was provided across materials, Audrey only provides rationales for some of her recommendations but not others. Further, when articulating her rationales for each recommendation, she avoids positioning Mariah as "deficient, lacking, (and/or) inferior" (Collins, 2003).

Overall, Audrey attends to both issues Mrs. Johnson presents. Regarding the incident with Brian, she provides a solution that is executable but does not lay out in detail how and when it might be carried out until she is nudged by Mrs. Johnson to provide a timeline. She engages Mrs. Johnson in a conversation about the incident with Brian and does not shy away from tackling the race and ability issue first. She does have to be nudged by Ms. Smith to tackle Mariah's academic placement. In the end, she provides adequate placement recommendations by attending to some of the relevant information provided, but her rationales for each class require more clarity.

### ***Simulation Reflections***

When reflecting, Audrey is willing to revise her recommendations. I also pushed her to reflect on issues that were not directly brought up by Mrs. Johnson but had to be inferred. For example, I asked:

What might be the impetus for (Mariah) avoiding Brian and his friends? How might this impact your decision on what you say to Brian? What if Mariah is not comfortable with you speaking directly to Brian because it may lead to further mistreatment, how might you attend to this as well?

Audrey responds

**Audrey (reflection 3):** Could Mariah have internalized the comments of Brian and believe that they are true? Therefore, she questions her multiple identities as a caring, vibrant person who likes school and learning with various interests. *She may have thought all people see her the way she sees herself and now questions if they only see her as her race and disability.* She also does not want to continue to be seen that way and my talking to Brian about those two very things just reinforce the prejudices he has of her. If she can avoid him and be invisible to him, then *she can maintain a level of power/resistance against his negative attitude.* Although Mariah fears further mistreatment, in some ways, Brian is continuing to mistreat her as she avoids the classroom

and allows him to *feel comfortable in a classroom where his attitudes are not checked...* (Emphasis added)

Here, Audrey takes ownership over responding to the situation. She takes into account the possible harm caused by Brian and how that interaction could potentially impact Mariah's concerns about how others view her. She also recognizes Mariah's actions as a form of resistance but is mindful that not addressing the situation, "allows him (Brian) to feel comfortable in a classroom where his attitudes are not checked."

Audrey recognizes the tension created by this incident, and the balance of her statement provides a multi-layered plan to address the situation. She suggests engagement in classroom activities, separating Mariah and Brian, allowing Mariah to arrive to homeroom early, speaking with Mariah and the Johnsons about her next steps, speaking to Brian, and providing an opportunity for a discussion between students. The plan that she presents in her reflection is more robust than what she outlined during the simulation, and it takes up the psychological impacts the situation has had on Mariah with attentiveness to Mariah's perspective. Audrey also recognizes Mariah's actions as a form a resistance and protection and does not negate them as a valid way to respond to harm. Although not directly asked, she is thinking more fully about Mariah and Brian and their engagement in homeroom when she discusses integrating socio-emotional learning and issues of bias as a class.

As she reflects, Audrey recognizes the connection between the incident with Brian and the Johnsons' desire to place Mariah in general education classes:

**Audrey (reflection 3):** ... I did not mention Mrs. J(ohnsons)'s idea to have (Mariah) placed in all of her general education classes because of the racist/ableist incidents. My recommendations were purely academic. I did not link the Brian incident with why Mariah should be placed in general education classes. I kept them both separate. I am not sure this was appropriate or not.

In this final reflection, Audrey ponders whether in providing a recommendation she should have kept both issues linked to one another or not. She acknowledges that Mrs. Johnson directly links these ideas and that this link should be acknowledged, and she remains uncertain whether she made an appropriate decision in separating these two ideas. Each of the PSTs separated these two issues when providing recommendations, but only Audrey brings it up as a dilemma within her practice. She raises the point that her inability to make a connection between the issues that Mrs. Johnson presents rendered invisible the primary reason the Johnsons were urging for Mariah's transfer to general education. Audrey demonstrates a different level of criticality than her peers when reflecting on and analyzing her response to the incident.

### ***Final Simulation***

Audrey's recommendation in the final simulation immediately takes into account Mariah's concern about not being singled out in her Algebra and Global History classes. This is in contrast to her colleagues, each of whom make multiple recommendations before attending to this particular concern. Her initial recommendation is in the form of a question that she presents to Mrs. Smith (the special educator): "I don't know if this is allowed or not, would it be feasible, Mrs. Smith, for her to go ahead and take the tests in Algebra and Global History and finish them in resource room?" This question makes clear that Audrey is directly responding to Mrs. Johnson's previous comment. However, Audrey does not verbally state her rationale. Although she is uncertain, she leans on the special educator's expertise to develop a 'creative' solution to the issue.

### ***Summary of Audrey's Response to Power and Oppression***

In the initial simulation, Audrey attended to the racist and ableist issue first. She also provided a possible solution, but she had to be nudged to provide detail and a timeline. Similar to PSTs within the advanced beginner LoE, Audrey did not attend to Mariah beyond suggesting that Brian should apologize. She did, however, ask for Mrs. Johnson and Mariah's approval before

engaging in that aspect of the recommendation. Audrey also provided an adequate academic recommendation, but was inconsistent about providing rationales for some of the classes but not others.

In her reflections, she provided a more robust plan regarding Brian and Mariah that took up the psychological impacts of the situation for Mariah and included Mariah's perspective. She also noted that for her academic recommendation in the initial simulation she provided a rationale for some classes and not others.

In her final simulation, she provided a recommendation and rationale that took up both Mrs. Johnson's and Mariah's concerns and turned to the special educator for her expertise in executing her recommendation. Audrey's enactment developed from the proficient to the expert (for a beginning teacher) LoE because her final simulation recommendation and rationale were clear, she immediately took up the parent's concerns, and she deferred to the special educator's expertise when appropriate.

### **Engaging in Collaboration and Advocacy Practices with an Eye toward Equity**

Between the first and final simulations, PSTs developed their collaborative skills. This process provided them the opportunity to see both strengths and areas of improvement in their practice. When they become teachers, PSTs will be expected to attend and contribute as members of the IEP team. The expectation of collaborative practice for special educators is outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC),

Collaboration with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings (e.g., co-taught). Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem

solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning (McLeskey, 2017, p. 28).

As members of this team, general educators, are expected to collaborate with special educators and the other members of the IEP team. To engage in collaborative practices with equity in mind, PSTs must share knowledge of the student, listen, elicit, connect the information they receive, and contribute to making a recommendation. When they contribute, they must be able to demonstrate flexibility, given that members of the team do not always agree. They must also collaborate and advocate for resources or opportunities that support the academic, social, emotional, and/or physical development of students identified with (dis)abilities.

By the final simulation, most PSTs (Jeffrey, Madison, and Nicole) demonstrated flexibility by providing multiple academic recommendations until they found the most viable recommendation to meet Mariah's needs. They did this by eliciting information from Mrs. Johnson and actively listening to her concerns. In their reflections after the final simulation, they stated:

**Jeffrey:** I was much more careful with my vocabulary... and felt I listened well to Mrs. Johnson's concerns. My suggestions for ways for Mariah to avail herself of the extra time she is allowed in tests in a manner which would not "single" her out were responsive to Mrs. Johnson's hopes for Mariah and respectful of what Ms. Smith said we could do in response...

**Madison:** I think I addressed the intersection of race and disability much more effectively in this simulation than I did in the first. This development shows my continued learning about how students' identities affect their learning and experience of school.

**Nicole:** I think that my summary of Mariah's progress in homeroom went well. I referenced specific areas of improvement since January as well as specific activities that we have done during homeroom. I also think that my modification to my testing recommendation was good. My initial recommendation was flawed, but I was able to think on my feet, recall Mariah's free period, and offer a viable alternative.

Audrey was able to listen to Mrs. Johnson's concern and provide a recommendation that attended to Mariah's concern about being singled out and Mrs. Johnson's concern that Mariah was not taking advantage of her extended time. She reflected:

**Audrey:** ... I did a better job asking about Mariah and her feelings. My recommendations were more nuanced from before and I anticipated (a little) better her issues on race and identity.

David struggled with listening to Mrs. Johnson's concerns and grappling with recommendations that he formulated prior to the meeting, which accounted for his backtracking after being probed by Mrs. Johnson. In his reflection after the final simulation he stated:

**David:** Because I came in with a set of questions and knowledge about Mariah, her IEP, her parent's prior goals, and the prior concerns, I did not offer as many opportunities to be told/learn more about Mariah. Moreover, I am remembering in one specific instance, I didn't address her mother's concern immediately because I already had some ideas. My overconfidence actually limited how receptive I was this time around.

Jacob struggled with demonstrating flexibility. Although he provided opportunities for Mrs. Johnson to speak, he did not take up or connect her questions with her uneasiness about his recommendation. He also did not provide a rationale for his recommendation of modified tests. In his reflection, he stated, "I think that by providing Mrs. Johnson with more airtime—especially early on—I allowed for the meeting to feel more collaborative." Although the meeting felt more

collaborative to Jacob, he was missing primary aspects of collaboration during the simulation, particularly eliciting, connecting, and contributing a recommendation with a rationale based in the information provided.

Each of the PSTs also developed their skills in advocacy. Although PSTs did not advocate for resources for Mariah specifically, their actions did take up aspects of the definition I developed in **Chapter 1**:

Advocacy is the **actions** a teacher takes to **publicly** safeguard the rights and consider the views of parents and students that are potentially **vulnerable** to **inequitable practices** by acting on their behalf or ensuring they have agency to speak/act and make informed decisions on their own behalf.

Both Mariah and her family were vulnerable to inequitable practices because of their marginalized identities. During the initial and final simulations, PSTs worked to varying degrees to consider Mrs. Johnson's view and provide space for her perspective and desire to advocate for her daughter. PSTs need to continue to develop their skills in both collaboration and advocacy to engage in equitable practices that protect the rights and engage the views of students of color with (dis)abilities and their families.

## Chapter 5

### Class Discussions

The course that was the site of this study focused on preparing PSTs to teach and support students identified with (dis)abilities in middle and high school classrooms. In this chapter, I present two inequity reflections and five class discussions that engaged PSTs' understandings of inequity, particularly at the intersection of race and ability. When analyzing their initial inequity reflections, I applied the domains of power to help unearth whether their definitions and examples of inequity contained the structural, cultural, disciplinary, and/or interpersonal domains of power. I also analyzed their final reflections at the end of the course to see if domains of power that did not appear in their initial reflections were present in their final inequity reflections. This helped to identify their understanding of inequity at the beginning of the course and whether learning through the use of critical frameworks helped solidify and/or expand their understanding of inequity.

The first part of the course focused on analyzing the history of special education through the use of critical frameworks. The second part of the course introduced PSTs to the provisions of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), using the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) as a tool for instruction, participating in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, understanding (dis)ability categories, and partnering with families. The purpose of introducing PSTs to critical frameworks early in the course was to provide them with tools that would help them develop their ability to identify and respond to inequity in schools. This chapter focuses on answering the following question: How do preservice teachers' *understandings of inequity and their roles*

as members of the IEP team *shift* over the course of a 12-week class that integrates issues of inequity in special education and the use of critical frameworks?

PSTs entered the course with various understandings of inequity and how it manifests in society and in schools. Therefore, this chapter is written chronologically to illustrate PSTs' development over time: from their initial inequity reflections at the beginning of the course, through five class discussions, and their final inequity reflections at the end of the course. They engaged in 10-15 minute reflections at the beginning and end of the course. For their beginning reflections, I asked PSTs, "What is inequity? Does inequity exist in schools? Explain using one or more examples. Does inequity have any bearing on teaching practice generally? On your work with student identified with (dis)abilities?" Their responses to these questions ranged from being focused purely on the structural domain to multiple domains of power. In their final reflections, I asked, "What is inequity? How would you explain it to your students? Provide an example of inequity that exists in special education. How does inequity impact your teaching practice, particularly when teaching students of color identified with (dis)abilities?" These questions were modified to incorporate the connections the class was making between inequity and special education. Although PSTs responses also ranged at the end of the course, looking across both reflections, most PSTs (four out of six) took up each of the domains of power in their definitions and/or examples. Their reflections are captured in the sections *PSTs' Stance on Inequity at the Beginning of the Course* and *PSTs' Stance on Inequity at the End of the Course*.

The five class sessions I analyze in this chapter focused on the following two themes: (1) how PSTs take up issues of power and oppression/marginalization, and (2) the relationship PSTs see between inequity, collaboration, and advocacy. In preparation for the final simulation and their future practice, I developed in-class opportunities for PSTs to identify issues of power and oppression at the intersection of race and ability and connect this to their teaching, collaboration,

and advocacy practices. These five class discussions contain instances in which PSTs shared their understandings of inequity in relation to the concepts presented in class. These class sessions also provided PSTs with the language they needed to discuss racism and ableism with the potential of preparing them to better articulate their understanding and communicate more effectively with others. These class discussions are captured in the sections entitled, *Taking Up Issues of Power and Oppression/Marginalization* and *Inequity vs. Collaboration and Advocacy*.

Over the course of the semester, I provided PSTs with opportunities to discuss and individually reflect on historical and current issues of inequity within special education. In this chapter I present a range of responses using data taken from the course including whole class and small group discussions during weeks five, six, seven, eight, and eleven and individual reflections completed at the beginning and end of the course. The ways PSTs participate (e.g. quiet, active) and the thoughts they share throughout small and whole group discussion provide a window into how they engaged with the content in community with their peers. Their reflections also provide a window into their individual engagement with the content. Together these artifacts provide insight into whether PSTs resisted or adopted the ideas presented in class or whether they fall somewhere in between.

### **Overall Patterns in PST Engagement and Growth**

As I analyzed the class discussion data, patterns in PSTs engagement with critical frameworks emerged. PSTs engaged in discussion moves that demonstrated either resistance to or acceptance of the critical frameworks they learned in class. For example, throughout the semester, Jeffrey was the most resistant to engaging in discussions about critical frameworks or how they could be taken up in practice. In his initial reflection, he stated that he knows inequity exists. Unlike his colleagues, he placed the burden on students' circumstances outside of school and believed there was little or nothing schools could do to remedy inequity. He also voiced this perspective in small

and whole group discussions. There were also moments in which Jeffrey would engage his colleagues in conversations that distracted from their discussions of the critical frameworks; in these instances Jeffrey was demonstrating what I called *resistant deflection*. But there were moments in which Jeffrey engaged in whole group discussion to present his resistant perspectives, which I classified as *resistant engagement*.

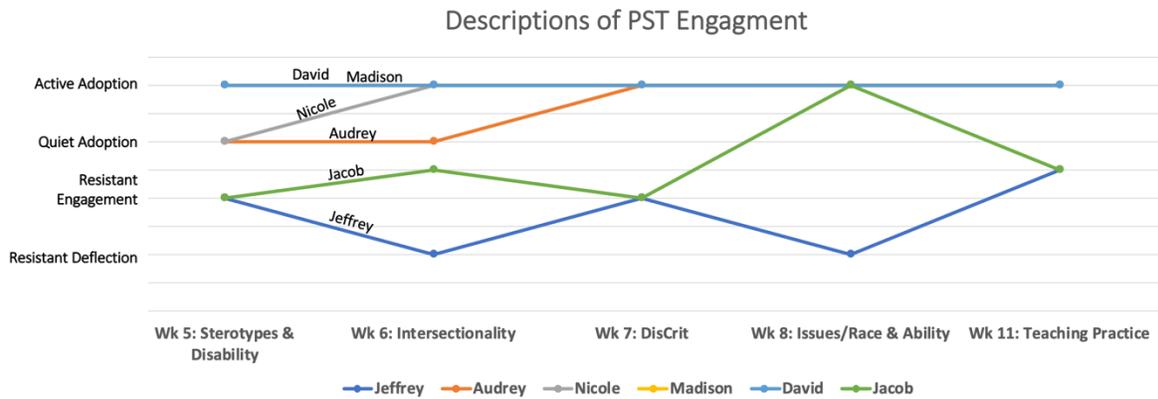
Jacob also demonstrated some resistance to critical frameworks but fully engaged in discussions and raised questions to the group to explore ideas further. He seemed to flip back and forth between taking up and rejecting critical frameworks. Jacob began with *resistant engagement*, but as the course progressed, he started to engage these frameworks sometimes embodying *active adoption* while at other times his position was ambiguous.

Nicole and Audrey did not participate as often as their peers in small and whole group discussions, but they did appear to actively follow the trajectory of discussions, based on what they shared both in their groups and in their individual reflections. They both seemed to take up critical frameworks to help expand their understanding of inequity. Thus, Nicole and Audrey engaged in what I classified as *quiet adoption* at the beginning of the course. Over the course of the semester, they begin to actively express their *active adoption* of the critical frameworks into their thinking.

Madison and David both stated their familiarity with discussions about race either in class or in their reflections. David initiated discussions and also invited members of his group into discussions about racial inequity. By contrast, Madison seemed to monopolize discussions, which in turn, silenced other members of her group. Madison and David engaged in *active adoption* throughout the duration of the course. I expected that PSTs could and would move fluidly through these modes of engagement and adoption as they grappled with the complexity of the topics covered during the course. Figure 5.1. demonstrates that fluidity with which some PSTs moved through these modes over time.

Figure 5.1

*Descriptions of PST Engagement*



In this chapter, I will first discuss PSTs’ stances related to inequity at the beginning of the course, then their stances toward inequity throughout the course which is revealed during multiple small group and whole group discussions and last, their stance toward inequity by the end of the course.

**PSTs’ Stances on Inequity at the Beginning of the Course**

To understand how PSTs conceptualized inequity and conceived of their roles in IEP meetings, I designed whole and small group discussions and reflections around a set of questions to document shifts in their thinking over time. Before engaging in course material, I asked PSTs to complete an initial inequity reflection. On the second day of class, PSTs were asked to reflect on the following questions: (1) What is inequity? (2) Does inequity exist in schools? Explain using one or more examples. (3) Does inequity have any bearing on your teaching practice, generally? On your work with students identified with (dis)abilities? Explain.

In these reflections, each PST named that inequity exists in schools and that it has a bearing on their teaching practice. Five identified inequities that impact their teaching practice and rejected the inequities named. One framed inequity as inevitable, without the possibility of being disrupted. Although they didn't name them directly, I was able to identify indicators of the domains of power

throughout their responses to varying degrees. In this section, I will use excerpts of PST reflections to demonstrate their understandings of inequity and the ways they conceived the impact of inequity on teaching at the beginning of the course.

### **Defining Inequity and Its Existence in Schools**

I asked PSTs to define inequity and provide an example of how it exists in schools in order to obtain a holistic understanding of whether they conceptualized inequity as primarily macro (structural), micro (interpersonal), or some variation. I specifically looked to see if their answers incorporated any of the four domains of power. This helped me to determine whether PSTs were seeing inequity operating on multiple levels within society and schooling.

When asked if they thought inequity existed in school, each PST stated that they believed this was true. PSTs' definitions of inequity and examples ranged in complexity, from incorporating multiple domains of power to focusing on only one. For example, Audrey's definition incorporated the cultural, disciplinary, and structural domains of power:

**Audrey:** Inequity is unfair and *allows those in power to impose their biases on society, especially upon those not in power.* These biases then reflect in the *culture, politics, and local, state and federal policies...* School districts are *funded based on the wealth of the community*, which indicates that all students are not provided an equitable education. This happen even though a student/child does not have any control over their circumstances. It also happens when the *classroom doors close and teachers do not work to ensure that all students receive the highest and best education, or they may allow their biases to inform the decisions they make on the type of education they receive.* (Emphasis added)

Audrey's definition specifically names that the biases of people in power are imposed on society. She provides examples of how these biases impact culture and policies within every institution. She recognizes how the bias of people who create policy and structure institutions manifests in the "culture, politics... and... policies" of the United States. In her example she discusses funding

inequity (structural) as well as teachers' low expectations of students (cultural) and the impacts of those expectations on students' education (disciplinary).

Nicole and Madison each engaged two domains of power when providing their definitions and their examples. For example, Madison wrote:

**Madison:** Inequity is when something is unfair, or does not give all students the same *opportunity*... One example of inequity existing in schools is the *Supreme Court case about whether or not [Metropolitan] Public Schools have a legal responsibility to teach students literacy schools*. I would argue that in a well-funded school district, or a *school district in a more affluent neighborhood*, this would have never even been a question. (Emphasis added)

Here, Madison defines inequity as a lack of access to opportunity. She alludes to the disciplinary domain of power, where rules are applied differently based on intersections among students' social identities, impacting their level of access to school funding. Her example integrates both the disciplinary (literacy for some and not others) and the structural (an issue taken up by the courts that would set a legal precedent) domains of power. She alludes to socio-economic status when she says, "affluent neighborhood," but she leaves race unspoken when naming Metropolitan Public Schools where a majority of students are African-American.

Similarly, Nicole's definition spoke of both structural ("resources") and disciplinary ("opportunities") inequities. She also explained that groups of people or individuals are impacted by these inequities. She provided an example that specified how a student's race can lead to inequitable outcomes in discipline. Nicole was more direct in using identity markers (i.e., race) to provide a specific example of inequity. Whereas Madison, although speaking of the intersection between race and socioeconomic status (SES), focused on SES.

David and Jacob focused on the structural domain of power in their definitions and examples. For example, David wrote:

**David:** [Inequity is] *Limited or no access to resources* due to systematic constraints... One of the most important inequities is a student's *zip code*, and the bearing that it might have on their educational attainment. *Since school districts are partially funded by local property taxes, access to resources (classes, materials, staff, etc.) can vary wildly.* This inequity is not based on any sort of just claim, but simply on one's address.

Although his definition lacks specificity, David's examples serve to explain what he may mean by "systematic constraints." He provides examples that focus on structural inequity, alluding to the connection between socio-economic status ("zip code"), property taxes, and school funding.

In his definition, Jacob explained that "minority students" are subjugated to unjust treatment based on how they are seen on the hierarchy of difference. The lower a student is in the hierarchy, the more unjust treatment they experience. Both David and Jacob discuss low-income schools. However, in contrast to David, Jacob raised race in his definition and socio-economic status in his example. Although, it is unclear whether he sees race and socio-economic status as interrelated.

Jeffrey's definition of inequity was a bit ambiguous as compared to his colleagues. In contrast to his peers' examples, Jeffrey, did not assign accountability for inequity to any particular segment of society that may determine how resources are allocated or how rules are applied:

**Jeffrey:** Inequity exists whenever an *individual is treated differently* and in a *pernicious fashion from other people through no fault of their own...* Unfortunately, inequity is *almost designed into schools and society.* Students arrive at school from different home environments where they may be ill-treated, students arrive at school with different resources and different levels of preparation for which they cannot be held responsible, and the schools generally do and generally can do little to make up for these differences. (Emphasis added)

In this excerpt, Jeffrey defines inequity as being treated differently in a way that is harmful, but his definition lacks specificity in that he does not describe how being treated differently is harmful. In

his example, he names the challenges that many students face that are “no fault of their own” and states that schools “can do little to make up for these differences.” The differences that he describes are “home environments where they may be ill-treated,” “different resources and different levels of preparation.” Although the cultural domain of power is present in his response, he seems to be repeating a common cultural narrative that places the reason for oppression on the oppressed and ignores the structural inequities that undergird these issues (O’Connor & Fernandez, 2006). He also seems to be making the claim that schools perpetuate the same inequities that exist in society, but he believes that there is nothing schools can do to disrupt inequities because students’ home environments, differing levels of resources, and differing levels of preparation are the cause of inequity.

Figure 5.2 outlines the domains of power present in each of the PSTs’ initial reflections on the definition of inequity and its existence in schools (questions 1 and 2).

**Figure 5.2**

***Domains of Power in PSTs’ Reflections when Defining Inequity & Its Existence in Schools (Initial Reflection)***

Name	Reflection Defining Inequity & Its Existence in Schools (Questions 1 & 2)	Domains of Power			
		Interpersonal	Disciplinary	Cultural	Structural
Audrey	Initial Reflection		✓	✓	✓
Madison	Initial Reflection		✓		✓
Nicole	Initial Reflection		✓		✓
David	Initial Reflection				✓
Jacob	Initial Reflection				✓
Jeffrey	Initial Reflection			✓	

Most of the PSTs’ responses (five of six) incorporated the structural domain of power, indicating that prior to engaging in the course, PSTs’ had familiarity with structural inequity. Two PSTs

incorporated the cultural domain of power and three incorporated the disciplinary domain of power, each tying the disciplinary and cultural domains of power to structural inequity.

PSTs' responses ranged in complexity, with some PSTs focusing on multiple domains of power and some focusing on a singular domain. When describing how inequity exists in schools, most PSTs focused on inequities along the lines of race and socioeconomic status. Over the course of the semester, as PSTs were introduced to intersectionality and DisCrit, I looked to see if they were able to expand their understandings that students can experience inequity across multiple social identities including race and socioeconomic status. Additionally, I checked for whether their definitions of inequity expanded to incorporate the domains of power that they did not include in their initial responses.

### **The Impacts of Inequity on Teaching**

PSTs were asked to think about inequity in relation to *their* teaching practice and then, more specifically, *their* work with students identified with (dis)abilities. This question focuses students on the interpersonal domain of power. Each PST expressed in varying ways how inequity impacts their teaching practice and work with students identified with (dis)abilities. To varying degrees, PSTs made connections between the interpersonal domain of power and the other domains, demonstrating varying levels of complexity in their thinking about inequity and its impact on teaching practice. Audrey, Madison, and Nicole focused on the cultural, disciplinary, and interpersonal domains; Jacob on the interpersonal domain; David on the structural domain; and Jeffrey on the structural and disciplinary domains of power in their responses.

Audrey's, Madison's, and Nicole's responses highlighted the interactions among the cultural, disciplinary, and interpersonal domains of power. Audrey's explanation of how biases impact teacher expectations, tolerance for behavior, and provision of academic support highlighted how negative cultural messages that undergird teacher bias can extend to their interpersonal relationships with

students (e.g., speaking to the translator instead of the student that is deaf) and their decisions about which students are deserving of assistance. Comparably, Madison and Nicole both considered the potential of varying ways of treating students based on social identity (disciplinary) because of how particular groups of students are viewed by teachers (cultural). Madison identified students of color as an example, and Nicole lists different social identities. All three PSTs emphasized that students identified with (dis)abilities can be mistreated (interpersonal) because of their identities.

Similar to his colleagues, Jacob rejected the mistreatment of students. He uses the phrase “regardless of where the student comes from,” which may be an allusion to race, SES, and/or ethnicity. He spoke to the cultural stigma around (dis)ability (referring to “antiquated beliefs”) and the mistreatment within interpersonal interactions that may occur because of it (for example, students may be “maligned in the classroom”). David focused exclusively on the structural domain of power (this laser focus seems to be a continuation from his earlier responses to questions 1 and 2). David emphasized that although teachers may have graduated from strong teacher education programs, their lack of access to resources (it is unclear which resources he was referring to specifically) hinder them from engaging in effective practice. He defined resources as both material and human. For students identified with (dis)abilities, in particular, he explained, insufficient staffing and training hinders teachers' ability to meet the needs of this group of students. It seems like he saw educators from “strong teacher education programs” as a different group than “staff with the knowledge to help them (students identified with disabilities) address their particular needs.” Jeffrey also discussed the structural domain of power. In contrast with the others, Jeffrey discussed how structural constraints hinder the disciplinary decisions of teachers and the interpersonal interactions between teachers and students. Also in contrast to his colleagues, Jeffrey frames these inequities as insurmountable.

Figure 5.3 outlines the domains of power present in each of the PSTs reflections when relating inequity to teaching practice generally (question 3).

**Figure 5.3**

***Domains of Power in PSTs' Reflections when Explaining Inequity & Teaching Practice (Initial Reflection)***

Name	Reflection Inequity & Teaching Practice (Question 3)	Domains of Power			
		Interpersonal	Disciplinary	Cultural	Structural
Audrey	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
Madison	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
Nicole	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
David	Initial Reflection				✓
Jacob	Initial Reflection	✓		✓	
Jeffrey	Initial Reflection	✓	✓		✓

Most PSTs (five of six) discussed multiple domains of power in their responses. When asked about teaching practice, PSTs discussed the interpersonal domain of power although it was not present in most of their definitions of inequity. This indicates that they are aware of the relevance of the interpersonal, disciplinary, and cultural domains of power to their practice, but it is unclear why there appears to be a disconnect between their definitions of inequity and their discussions of how inequity relates to teaching practice. Most of the PSTs were able to point to examples of how multiple domains of power operate in schools but seemed to need support in connecting their conceptual understandings to examples from their teaching or what they observe in schools.

Although asked to think about inequity in relation to *their* teaching, they focused on broad examples of inequity in schools. They may have interpreted the question as asking them to speak in general about inequity, instead of their own teaching practice. They were also asked to think about inequity in relation to *their* work with students identified with (dis)abilities. Although each PST provided examples, their examples were not directly related to their own teaching practice. This may

be because they have had limited opportunities to discuss the relationships between inequities within special education and their own teaching practice prior to this course. Another possibility is that PSTs have had limited opportunities to engage in practice by this point in their program. Another possible area of support these responses revealed was that PSTs may need help to connect their understandings of inequity and the examples they have learned with their personal teaching practice. Over the course of the semester, I looked to see if PSTs began making connections between inequities in special education and (a) their personal teaching practice and (b) the impact that their decision-making can have on students identified with (dis)abilities and their families.

### **Course Overview**

The first segment of the course focused on the history of inequity within special education and applying the critical frameworks of intersectionality and DisCrit to analyze instances of inequity. After participating in the simulations (week two), PSTs engaged in activities and discussion about the difference between social and personal identities during week three. In that class session, I highlighted the importance of self-reflection—of “thinking introspectively” first—and then “thinking about our students.” I deliberately used language like “our” and “we” here and throughout the course to communicate our joint ownership of the work of teaching and advocating for children.

The focus of this class session was to think about the larger societal context and about the multiple identities that we and our students bring into the classroom. I highlighted the importance of learning about special education in context, and I told PSTs that we cannot take context for granted because schools are social spaces. I also emphasized that we engage in relationships with one another in school contexts and highlighted that we have to think about our engagement with others. I connected this to their reflections on the simulations in which they asked about how to deal with bullying, racism, and ableism and how to support parents through those issues. I explained that in order to do this work, we need to think about the social spaces of school and how to support

students in those spaces and that this impacts how students experience our classes and how we experience our classes as well.

During weeks five, six, and seven, PSTs spent time engaging in activities around the social construction of (dis)ability, intersectionality, and DisCrit. Below are excerpts of class discussions that map the trajectory of PSTs' thinking related to inequity as well as their understandings of these critical frameworks over the course of these activities and discussions. One theme that emerged in class discussion was PSTs' openness (or lack thereof) to expand their understanding of students' experiences with inequity at the intersection of race and (dis)ability. Another theme that emerged was PSTs' ability to make connections between inequity in special education and their teaching practice, particularly connecting their understanding of structural inequities with their interpersonal interactions with students and families. These themes emerged from PSTs' discussions about the social construction of (dis)ability, intersectionality, DisCrit, structural inequity, and their teaching practice.

### **Taking Up Issues of Power and Oppression/Marginalization**

In their initial inequity reflections, each PST stated that they believed inequity existed in schools and provided at least one example of how it manifests. Throughout multiple class sessions, Audrey, Nicole, Madison, and David demonstrated *quiet* and *active adoption*. They engaged with issues around inequity related to race and (dis)ability and took up critical frameworks to enhance their thinking. When discussing the social construction of (dis)abilities, they each discussed deficit-laden ways that people with (dis)abilities are viewed through the eyes of the able-bodied and how these stereotypes are represented through media. When presented with intersectionality and DisCrit frameworks to critically analyze a case involving the misidentification of Black students for special education, this group of PSTs, applied the frameworks, presented examples, and discussed privilege and marginalization when working with their peers. Jacob demonstrated *resistant engagement*. He

actively engaged in each of the discussions listed above, at times pushing back and at other times taking up ideas presented by his colleagues around the prevalence of inequity at the intersection of race and ability status. He shared similar perspectives to Jeffrey, a PST who demonstrated *resistant engagement*. Throughout the course, Jeffrey staunchly pushed back against applying critical perspectives to analyze inequities that students experience at the intersection of race and ability.

### **Stereotypes and (Dis)ability**

During week five, I asked PSTs to think about the ways (dis)ability has been socially constructed over time. They read chapter two of Baglieri & Shapiro (2012) which discusses the positioning of people identified with (dis)abilities throughout history. Although the article does not discuss the intersection of race, we did take up race during the next class. In the activity below, PSTs were provided with a chart, modified from the reading, that contained examples of media (e.g., books, movies, etc.) that have characters identified with a (dis)abilities as well as the deficit themes that these stories tend to perpetuate (Table 5.2). I asked students to engage the following questions: *If our only exposure to people identified with (dis)abilities is through books or media, how might these stereotypes impact our interactions with them? How then is (dis)ability socially constructed? How does this parallel across [how] race, class, and gender can be socially constructed?* Here, the purpose was for PSTs to think about how people identified with (dis)abilities are positioned culturally and also to consider more broadly how other social identities are socially constructed.

David (Latinx man), Audrey (White woman), and Jacob (White man) were in a group with three other PSTs. Madison (White woman) and Jeffrey (White man) were in another group with their colleagues. Nicole (White woman) was in a third group with five of her colleagues. Although in different groups, David, Audrey, Madison, and Nicole expressed similar perspectives. They voiced in different ways that limited exposure to people identified with (dis)abilities causes (able-bodied) people to “oversimplify” or “make assumptions” about people with (dis)abilities. Jacob and Jeffrey,

on the other hand, pushed back against these comments, focusing instead on the literary aspects of the stories highlighted (see excerpt of list, Figure 5.4).

**Figure 5.4**

***Excerpt of Stereotypes of People Identified with (Dis)abilities***

Stereotype	Attitudes toward PIWDs	Examples
<i>The object of pity— The diseased or sick patient</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... seen as suffering from their condition.</li> <li>... belief that the person is unaware of their (dis)ability.</li> <li>... seen as an eternal child that never grows.</li> </ul>	Tiny Tim in <i>A Christmas Carol</i> —“The image of the pitiable disabled person serves as ‘vehicle of others’ redemption, <b><u>existing not for himself or herself, not as a human being in his or her own right, but to provide the occasion for non-disabled people to renew their humanity</u></b> ” (p. 31)
<i>The subhuman organism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People with intellectual (dis)abilities are viewed as subhuman, animal-like.</li> </ul>	<i>Of Mice and Men</i> —Lennie, an intellectually disabled adult, is described as an animal, walking “heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws,” drinking “with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse”... Lennie is shot in the back of the head at the end by George his caretaker. <b><u>George being characterized as being humane and Lennie is shot in the same way a dog was shot earlier in the novel.</u></b>
<i>Sinister or evil: The menace or the monster</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deformity of body symbolized deformity of soul; physical handicaps are equated with evil.</li> </ul>	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i> (giants, describe as evil) <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> (dwarf, described as monstrous) Captain Hook in <i>Peter Pan</i> (named for his prosthesis)

Note. Modified from Baglieri & Shapiro (2012), *Disability Studies in the Inclusive Classroom, Paradigms of Disability*.

David was the first to provide his perspective in his group, saying:

... Whether the book you read was written by a person who is impaired... Whether you only know one person or have heard or seen one person or two people who are impaired. I think it’s just a limit and therefore more likely to oversimplify or make assumptions about people.

Audrey built upon David’s point and added that a person only sees (dis)ability through their own (able-bodied) eyes, and therefore it is easier to remove the humanity from a person identified with a (dis)ability. She explained that it is about what the able-bodied person sees, and these perceptions are informed from the media which impacts how the able-bodied person relates to someone

identified with a (dis)ability. Throughout this exchange, David and Audrey seemed to use the word “you” as a way to implicitly identify able-bodied people, instead of clearly stating this in their language.

Both David and Audrey appeared to buy into what the chart presents, namely that how common forms of media present negative stereotypes of people identified with (dis)abilities. David highlighted the limited exposure able-bodied people have to people identified with (dis)abilities, and Audrey highlighted that the limited perspective that able-bodied people have is fed by their media intake. Audrey presented two additional ideas to the group. First, she posited that people identified with (dis)abilities do not make progress in civil rights unless it benefits able-bodied people. She explained:

**Audrey:** It's kind of what the article for this week was sort of touching on, is that civil rights were until it benefits us, you know? Or that we can become normal. That's the other thing too, I was thinking of this, is that the article that we read this week was about ... I feel like I've been spoken for and I've been spoken at, but I haven't been spoken to. I think there's a little bit of this one. People just write and say, "I think this is who Lenny is, 'cause *Of Mice and Men* is one of my favorite books, and I think that this is who Lenny is." But nobody asked Lenny who he is, so. And Lenny doesn't have the ability to speak for himself, or on his behalf.

It is important to note that Audrey had made the same point earlier in the discussion when she stated that able-bodied perspectives are forced upon people with (dis)abilities. Here, Audrey adds, with reference to the reading, that people identified with (dis)abilities are often spoken at and not spoken to, and she provides the example of Lennie from *Of Mice and Men*, who “doesn’t have the ability to speak for himself, or on his behalf.” David affirmed her statement.

Nicole affirmed a similar point in her group when she explained that having meaningful relationships with people who are identified with (dis)abilities impacts one's thinking:

**Nicole:** I think what's always been hard for me is the meaningful relationships part. It's so clear that people who have meaningful relationships with people who have disabilities have totally different views of interacting with people with disabilities and thinking about them. As hard as you try to change your mindset, I feel like without that relationship you're always interacting with them differently. Unless, I guess, you have more interactions with them, but to me there's such a contrast between how people, like you said (Jimmy, another student in her group), put a ceiling on what people with disabilities can do. Or just the way they interact with them, depending on the types of relationships.

She states here that believes that without having that relationship, able-bodied people interact with people identified with (dis)abilities differently. She connects her statement to her colleague's previous statement by saying "people" place a ceiling on what people identified with (dis)abilities can do. She also states that one's interactions may vary based on their relationship to a person identified with a (dis)ability. Here, Nicole acknowledges the limited interactions able-bodied people have with people identified with a (dis)abilities as an issue.

Nicole and members of her group connected their discussions of stereotypes to their field experiences. Nicole emphasized the importance of relationships in being able to interact with people identified with (dis)abilities in ways that are not harmful responses to stereotypes. Later in the discussion, she added that able-bodied people only see the (dis)ability, as opposed to other aspects of the student's identity. Other members of the group affirmed with "mm-hmm." Nicole continued that she did not know which of her students had IEPs and that they were "normal" students to her. Although Nicole said this in an asset-based way, her phrasing again demonstrates how we are socially conditioned, even in our speech, to position people identified with (dis)abilities as other.

Nicole stated that she shouldn't think about her students identified with (dis)abilities "differently" and that she was thinking specifically about how their (dis)abilities do not "show up." It is unclear from her statement what (dis)abilities she is referring to or how she expects her students' (dis)abilities to express themselves.

Instead, Nicole questioned whether her students needed IEPs as well as why she hadn't learned about this until well into knowing her students. She explained that she still did not see their (dis)abilities even though they were documented. She stated that she guessed that they have learned how to "cope" with their (dis)abilities since they've had them for so long. She expressed that she thought it was weird that she learned this information only after knowing her students. Nicole named how impactful stereotypes could be and that interactions with people identified with (dis)abilities was integral to not perpetuating these perspectives. In her comment about her students, she also revealed the need for unlearning because of the ways able-bodied people have been conditioned to see people identified with (dis)abilities "differently." She also provided an example from her own field experiences.

Madison shared an example with her group that demonstrated a similar sentiment:

**Madison:** ... narratives we have in our head about what people with (dis)abilities, how they experience the world (*unclear*). Those narratives then play out on how we interact with them, so you may talk to them differently if you think, "Well, deaf people aren't as educated."

Madison begins this discussion by highlighting the narratives able-bodied people have in our minds about how people with (dis)abilities experience the world. She uses the example of thinking a deaf person is not educated. In a related contribution she made to her group, Madison drew a parallel between the above response and *The Hate U Give*, a book that contends with the issue of racial profiling, and she explained, just like people can render folks' experiences invisible because of their race, they can do the same thing with (dis)ability.

In their groups, both Jacob and Jeffrey made similar points in response to these comments from their colleagues. Jacob responded to his group, explaining that none of the works present themselves as a “definitive work on (dis)ability.” Jacob explained a literary technique called the McGuffin to his group by providing an example. He explained that Forrest Gump being the eternal child is essential to the movie's plot, and to think that it is necessary but insignificant is to ignore the fact that this trope was used to develop an entire story around this character. Also, by stating “these works,” he separates the author from the text that the author created. In this discussion, he did not take up ideas about ability status or authors' other social identities. Jacob explained that to see a text as a definitive work on (dis)ability is ignoring the point of the movie.

Jeffrey made a similar argument:

**Jeffrey:** Yea absolutely... Forrest Gump is a fairy tale. To treat it as anything else or to treat Forrest as anything but a fairy tale character, he is the eternal innocent... he is not really a character in some sense because he never changes... he's kind of floating above it all and is not tainted by it, it's fine for a fairy tale [crosstalk 42:40]... I mean, I agree with you perfectly. You can't look at these as other than stereotypes, I would say. They're not trying to be anything other than stereotypes. I would doubt if you spoke to the director of *Forrest Gump* and said, "Is this an accurate depiction?" That wasn't the point. (*quick laugh*)

Jeffrey stated his agreement with Madison's perspective but then refutes it by presenting an alternative perspective. He uses the example of *Forrest Gump*, explaining that this character, the eternal innocent, has a specific purpose in the story. Jeffrey states his agreement again and then says that one cannot look at what is in the media (e.g., books) as anything other than stereotypes. He says he doubts that the director would say that is an accurate depiction of a person identified with a (dis)ability, but that that is not the point of the story. Similar to Jacob, Jeffrey does not attend to the possible impacts of looking at a movie like *Forrest Gump* uncritically or to the possibility of movies

reinforcing stereotypes about intellectually disabled people. Nor does he take up his colleague's point that the experiences of people identified with (dis)abilities are coming from the perspective of able-bodied people.

After the small group discussion, I engaged the class in a whole group discussion and asked them to share what developed from their conversations. Jacob presented his perspective to the entire class to take up before passing the baton to Jeffrey:

**Jacob:** So, are we only to read works by folks with (dis)abilities if we're to ... I mean, I'm just curious as to like, I read somewhere, somebody said, "Do we only read books by birds if we want to be an ornithologist?" How do we separate that? I'm just the crusty old white guy who's kinda just saying ... Jeffrey, where you at, man? *(Some students laugh; I also laugh off-camera.)*

Jacob poses a rhetorical question that seems to be a response to his group's discussion, asking if we are to only read works by people identified with (dis)abilities in order to learn about (dis)ability. He also states that he is a "crusty old White guy," which is interesting because race hadn't been mentioned by the PST who commented before him. Here, he seems to allude to being old-school and White and possibly narrow-minded about some things. Jeffrey responds to Jacob:

**Jeffrey:** To your point, I have a problem with the in-ter-stich, intersectional-

**Ebony:** Intersectionality?

**Jeffrey:** Yeah, that article (Collins & Bilge, 2016, Chapter 1). You start, you know, I was joking with a friend about it and I was saying, "If this means that the only psychiatrist who can work with an Uzbekian, lesbian female is another Uzbekian female psychiatrist because only they can share the experience," I said, "Your therapeutic population's going to be pretty small." It seems like too much of the article, for my taste, was dividing, atomizing populations and making it so like, "If you haven't been part of this tiny population, there's

no way you can work with us." I was thinking as I walked over here today, it's exactly the opposite with a medical doctor in most professions. You don't treat... Every cardiologist treats everybody somewhat similarly. I mean, there are some population things they're aware of, but a cardiologist looks at a person's heart. He's not looking at the outside. So, I don't know where I'm quite fitting that last piece in, but I think so much of what we're talking about is chopping the pie ever finer and we're getting away from just being human beings and treating people as people. I don't know, it just felt that way to me, that particular article and where your comment took me. So.

Jeffrey supports Jacob's point by referring to the article on intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016) that was assigned to the class a week prior. He presents intersectionality as divisive, seeking to separate people by "dividing, atomizing populations and making it so like if you haven't been part of this tiny population there's no way you can work with us." He provides the example of an Uzbekian, lesbian, female only wanting to be treated by an Uzbekian, lesbian, psychiatrist. There seems to be a hint of sarcasm in his response. His perspective here is that by using intersectionality to think about the differences in peoples' experiences, all "we're talking about is chopping the pie ever finer and we're getting away from just being human beings and treating people as people." He also uses the example of a cardiologist only looking at the heart and not looking at the "outside."

Nicole responded to Jeffrey's comment:

**Nicole:** I don't really remember the details of this article because I read it a while ago, but I didn't think that it was saying that you had to be the same as the person you're helping. Just that you had to recognize that people have different identities that are coming together to make them as people. Keep that in mind when you're talking to people or making judgments

about people or working with people. That everyone has different things that are working together at once and even though they're not the same as the things that you have, maybe there are these overlaps because everyone has so many different parts of themselves. Then I also think that cardiologists and medical doctors are supposed to consider differences among people and if they don't then they're not doing a great job, maybe.

Nicole starts her reply by stating that she does not remember the details of the article but that overall it is saying the opposite of what Jeffrey describes. In response to Jacob's initial comment and the Jeffrey's most recent comment, she explains that the article does not mean you have to be the same as the person you are helping but, instead, that one must recognize that people have different identities that make them who they are as people and must keep that in mind when making judgments or working with people. She also adds that people have different things working together, and, while there may be overlaps, everyone has different parts of themselves. She also responds to the cardiologist comment by clarifying that cardiologists and medical doctors are supposed to consider differences or they are not doing a great job, "maybe." She may have added maybe to hedge her statement so that it did come off as a strong refutation. Nicole's perspective aligns much more closely with the article than Jeffrey's in that she is naming the complexity of the varying identities that individuals hold. However, what Nicole is still missing from her response is a recognition of the importance of operationalizing power and oppression and the fact that people are oppressed because of socially constructed differences. She alludes to this here but it is not explicit.

Tasha, another PST in the class, extended Nicole's point. This is particularly important to note because she speaks directly to Jeffrey and critiques his thinking. Her critique of Jeffrey's response is more explicit than Nicole's because Tasha summarized Jacob and Jeffrey's argument and made a value judgement that their perspectives were "black and white thinking," or, in other words, simplistic. Mary, another student, added to the conversation, speaking more specifically about social

identity. She used part of Jeffrey's argument to pose her critique, saying that intersectionality is about the very thing that Jeffrey suggested, treating other people like human beings. She explained that the treatment that Jeffrey referred to looks very different depending on a person's gender, race, and other identities. She suggested the need to be aware that some people are not treated the same way as the "majority culture." Given that she had mentioned gender and race specifically, her identification of the majority culture could refer to cisgendered White males, but it is not completely clear.

During this whole class discussion, Jacob and Jeffrey reiterated the arguments they made in their small groups, demonstrating resistance to taking up critiques of the media and media representation of people identified with (dis)abilities. Jacob's outreach to Jeffrey demonstrated that Jacob was aware that Jeffrey held a similar view to himself that focusing on social identities and stereotypes distracts from recognizing the value of literature and, in Jeffrey's words, distracts from "treating people as people." Jeffrey stated that he read the article on intersectionality as "dividing, atomizing populations."

The example Jeffrey presented during the whole group discussion drew upon a misinterpretation of the intersectionality article assigned the week prior. He focused solely on identity, which Nicole pointed out. Her response indicated that she was personally taking up the larger themes of intersectionality, and she recognized the possible negative impacts of not attending to people's varying identities when "making judgements about people or working with people." Tasha and Mary expanded on Nicole's response, also refuting the ideas that Jacob and Jeffrey present, although responding more directly to Jeffrey. They also added issues of bias, race, gender, and privilege to the conversation.

### ***Summary of PSTs' Perspectives on Stereotypes and (Dis)ability***

At the end of week five there were two distinct perspectives on intersectionality. The first perspective was that intersectionality is an analytic tool that helps us think critically about social identity and privilege, which takes up the ideas presented in the article. The second perspective was that intersectionality is divisive, highlighting individual differences in order to differentiate and separate people from one another. Overall, Jacob and Jeffrey's stance (first perspective) on the social construction of identity and intersectionality stand in contrast to Nicole's perspectives (second perspective). Based on small group discussions, Audrey's, Madison's, and David's perspectives seem to be more in alignment with the ideas Nicole presented during whole group discussion.

Audrey, David, Madison, and Nicole discussed the limited perspective that able-bodied people have in their understandings of people identified with (dis)abilities, adopting these critiques from the readings and providing examples to support their position. Audrey and Madison presented similar arguments that being able-bodied allows people to negate the humanity of people identified with (dis)abilities, therefore feeling like able-bodied people speak at and not to them. Nicole shared that limited exposure leads to able-bodied people taking up deficit-perspectives and developing problematic assumptions about people identified with (dis)abilities. Jacob and Jeffrey focused on individual works of literature in their small groups but did not respond to the ideas their colleagues presented about the media's role in perpetuating deficit-based stereotypes of people identified with (dis)abilities and able-bodied people's deficit-based assumptions. They took up these arguments in whole group when they questioned whether people have to embody all of the same identities in order to relate to one another. Audrey, David, Madison, and Nicole began to take up perspectives of people who are marginalized because of their (dis)ability; whereas Jacob and Jeffrey push back against the alternative perspective presented.

## Intersectionality as an Analytic Tool

The activity described below took place during week six. This activity built on the discussion that Jeffrey initiated in week five. The purpose of week six was to provide PSTs with an opportunity to explore intersectionality further. I connected intersectionality to our previous discussions about stereotypes of people identified with (dis)abilities from the week prior. I asked PSTs to analyze the "definition" of intersectionality presented by Collins and Bilge (2016):

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the **complexity of the world**, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of **social and political life** and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally **shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways**. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and themselves.

I also reframed two ideas presented by Jacob and Jeffrey during week five into two questions to guide week six's discussion. The questions were: *Is it that only people of the same intersection of social identities are able to write about, relate to, teach, engage, and understand each other?* and *What purpose does attending to the intersection of multiple social identities serve in understanding, seeing, and treating others as human beings?* I asked PSTs to keep these questions in mind throughout class as they explored the definition of intersectionality and the domains of power.

For the first activity, PSTs discussed the definition of intersectionality presented by Collins and Bilge (2016) above. During the second activity, I asked PSTs to explore the domains of power presented by Collins and Bilge and find specific examples provided in the text. I included both activities in order to capture each PSTs' perspectives on intersectionality. David's, Jacob's,

Madison's, and Audrey's perspectives are highlighted in the first activity. During the second activity, we hear Jeffrey's and Nicole's perspectives. For this class, David and Jacob were in the same group; Madison, Audrey, and Jeffrey were in another group together; and Nicole was with her colleagues from the previous week.

PSTs engaged intersectionality in various ways. Jacob demonstrated a perspective that seemed to fall in between *resistant engagement* and *quiet adoption* by making a comment that was somewhat ambiguous as to whether he was critiquing or endorsing intersectionality. David, Madison, and Nicole demonstrated *active adoption*, sharing the ways that intersectionality can be helpful in understanding inequity and/or understanding the relationship between social identity and people's experiences. Audrey demonstrated *quiet adoption* by taking the stance of a learner and stating agreement with an aspect of Madison's explanation. Jeffrey was conspicuously silent about his perspective on intersectionality during these discussions, given that he opened the discussion of intersectionality the week prior. I classified this as demonstrating resistant deflection.

David and Jacob, along with one of their colleagues, engaged the most in their group conversation. As they spoke, they worked to make sense of how intersectionality connected to social identity. What was missing from their conversation was the role power plays in "social and political life" along the axes of people's multiple social identities. Jacob explained the importance of context:

**Jacob:** It seems to be important to understand that context matters, you know? If you're just looking at somebody as just a data set, you're really stripping away a bunch of the meaning. Where they came from and who they are.

Jacob states that context is important when understanding people because if you look at people "as just a data set," it interferes with developing a deeper understanding about who they are. By "data set," he may be suggesting looking at statistical data that outlines people by race, gender, socioeconomic status, etc. Or, he may be suggesting, as Jeffrey stated in the previous class session,

that intersectionality “is chopping the pie ever finer,” which distracts from treating people as human beings. He uses the phrase “stripping away a bunch of meaning” particularly when referring to “where they came from and who they are.” It is unclear if he is stating this as a critique of intersectionality or if he thinks that intersectionality might help uncover the complexity of people within social contexts.

David shared:

**David:** ... I think of, *Dear White People* on Netflix. People often say African-American students, or black students, have a harder time getting into college, right? But then when you look at the show it tells you, no. Low-income African Americans from inner city have a hard time getting into college, not these higher income or these individuals from suburbs. So on and so forth, so it lets you really get at the, who is experiencing inequity specifically? Not just like, this category, and that category, and that category. This subset of people, really.

David shares the different college experiences faced by low-income African-American students as opposed to affluent students, as they're represented on the show *Dear White People*. He highlights that low-income African-American have a difficult time getting into college, and intersectionality helps them, as educators, to focus on the group of people being impacted by specific types of inequity. David speaks to the fact that the combination of identities has meaning and impacts who different people are and how they are positioned in the world. David presents a conception of intersectionality as understanding the complexity of intersecting social identities.

David extended his example:

**David:** ... For example, I saw this article maybe a year ago, "You'll be surprised at the most successful college graduates," or something like that, and it was Nigerian Americans. And people obviously the surprise was that it was a Black person, right? That was the shock value, right? When I'm like, "Okay, but so what does that say about this group of Black

people as opposed to this group? What are they experiencing differently than other groups?"

I think intersectionality really allows us to do that; to see what intersections really impact people.

David's additional example about Nigerian Americans being the most successful college graduates demonstrates that being identified as Black does not mean that individuals experience the same outcomes across the board. He then raises a question that illustrates how using intersectionality as an analytic tool can help them consider social identities in more depth: "... what does that say about this group of Black people as opposed to this group? What are they experiencing differently than other groups?" Another member of the group asks if the students were Nigerian American or international and someone else responds that whether they were born in the United States or not "changes everything." This is not fleshed out in the conversation, nor how this "change" is connected to intersectionality.

Madison shared that she had a lot of opinions because she studied this topic extensively, and she did not want to overtake the conversation. Here, she positioned herself as knowledgeable before monopolizing the conversation. Madison's move resulted in an opportunity for other PSTs to learn from a colleague with knowledge in this area, but it also limited other PSTs' contributions even if their ideas/conceptions/understandings were not fully formed. Madison explained the concept of intersectionality as:

**Madison:** ... Imagine an actual intersection, a really complicated intersection. Each one of these things is a social... So you've got class, you've got gender, sexuality. Those are all the things coming together and then here is the person and that person is the experience. The culmination of all of those things together... And then if you try to take one of those things away, the whole thing falls apart. Right? If you try to discount that person's class, you are now missing a chunk of who they are. (*Audrey: Okay*) This is a graphic way I a lot of times

use to teach it. The idea is that when you understand how all of the different pieces come together, it's about the organization of power. It's about how this thing depends on this thing, depends on this thing, and those relationships of each other (*Audrey: Okay*) make that person. Because if they have a different identity, like if you were from a different social class, it would be different in the identity. (*Audrey: Okay*) I don't know if that made any sense. I mean, this came out of critical race theory and legal studies, so the idea was understanding how the law impacts different people of different identities differently. I just said differently way too many times. Thinking about why ... It came from Black women, is how intersectionality was originally formed. So, it was why do Black women experience the law differently than do White women? It's conversations about Black women are statistically of lower socioeconomic classes. So it's all those things compiled onto each other and you can't take any one of those little things away and it still, it wouldn't still be the same.

**Audrey:** Okay, okay.

**Madison:** And I think I like the use of the analytic tool because it's not that you could do this for every single person and it would solve some problem. It's that it's a way of thinking that helps you ask better questions about their experience.

**Audrey:** Okay, I like that part of it.

Madison explained intersectionality as a culmination of a person's social identities, arguing that if someone tries to take one of those identities away, then they lose an understanding of who that person is. She says that one has to understand how all the different pieces (i.e., social identities) come together, and it is about the "organization of power."

In her explanation, Madison mentions "organization of power" but does not clearly explain what this means. Madison uses the example of how Black woman are treated differently by the legal system but is not clear about how power and oppression play a role in the distinct type of treatment

they receive. She explains that if a person has a different identity (e.g., social class), “it would be different in the identity,” but what she means here is a bit unclear. She also explains that intersectionality came out of critical race theory and legal studies to understand how the law impacts people of different identities differently. She further explains that most Black women are low-income and that these intersections matter to understanding what is happening to them. She sees intersectionality as an analytic tool because “it’s a way of thinking that helps you ask better questions about their experience.” Audrey responds that she likes that part of it.

Madison’s explanation left little time for the other members of her group to contribute. In this discussion, Audrey took the stance of a learner and responded to Madison as she spoke. Madison shared her understanding of intersectionality, focusing on social identities and using examples to help engage the concept of power, but she was unclear in making the connection between power and oppression in her explanation. Jeffrey, who had been particularly active in the group discussion about stereotypes and had raised his perspective on intersectionality the week prior, did not contribute to this discussion.

Nicole's perspective aligned with David's, Madison's, and Audrey's, each of whom focused on social identity. Nicole shared:

**Nicole:** I think too with the positionality you were talking about, understanding that just because if you're saying something that is in the majority in one category, they could also be in the minority in another category that affects other people. Like, interacting with the world and how they're treated.

Nicole seems to take up her group’s earlier discussion of power and privilege when she makes her comment about positionality. She adds complexity when she explains that people could be both privileged and marginalized, impacting how the world engages with them and how they are treated. Her statement seems to summarize the group’s conversation about stereotyping and the

assumptions and treatment that come with it. Although the group touched on power and privilege in their discussion of the intersectionality definition, their conversation focused more on social identity and assumptions. Nicole's comment at the end of the conversation seems to begin to pull power and privilege back into the discussion.

During the first discussion of this class session, Jacob highlighted the importance of social context to understanding who a person is and where they are from. He may have been alluding to the idea that looking at groups through statistical data ("data set") only provides a limited understanding of people, therefore social context is important. In David's, Madison's, and Nicole's statements, power is embedded, but they do not make the connection explicit. For example, David provided the example about the different types of oppression different groups of Black people face, and Madison provided the example of Black women who experience the law differently than White women. Embedded in Nicole's explanation is how power and oppression manifests differently based on the privileged and marginalized identities of a person.

After I provided the class with a definition and explanation of each domain of power, I then assigned each group a domain of power to explore and provide an example from the Collins and Bilge text; they entered these examples in a Google document shared with the class. Jeffrey initiated off-topic conversation at the beginning of this small group discussion, which was taken up by the rest of the group. After this Madison shared an example:

**Madison:** Yes. I think if we want to do another one, a good example would be the legal structure. That's not really enough text, though. That's just something to consider. Wasn't there something too about the way that they ... Or am I getting this section mixed up? Where they talked about something about holidays? And they shut certain stadiums down for a holiday, which then allowed them to increase the prices?

**Jeffery:** Mm-hmm (affirmative). Never be surprised by an organization dedicated to doing one thing, making money, finds lots of different ways to make money. FIFA doesn't exist to play soccer. It exists to make money from soccer.

**Madison:** Yeah. On page 21 it says, "The erasure of blackness as a political category allowed discriminatory practices to occur against people of visible African descent in education and employment because there were neither officially recognized terms for describing racial discrimination, nor official remedies for it." And they're talking about in democracy and social protest in Brazil. So how the law of Brazil shaped—shaped the law. In Brazil, shaped the law.

Madison shares an example of the structural domain of power. She mentions the legal structure but says there is not enough text, so she provides another example of FIFA shutting down certain stadiums which allowed them to increase their prices. Jeffrey adds that they should not be surprised by organizations finding different ways to make money, FIFA being a prime example. Although this comment is related, he does not connect it to the discussion of intersectionality or inequity. Madison shares a quote that highlights how the laws of Brazil prevented people of African descent from obtaining any remedy for racial discrimination.

After this, Jeffrey helped Mary correct something in her writing, and he and Mary begin an off-topic conversation concerning this. Audrey refocused the conversation when she began sharing another example, "The other example I was thinking too is the myth of like, hard work and..." However, she was unable to finish her statement because I called everyone back to whole group.

### ***Summary of PSTs' Perspectives on Intersectionality as an Analytic Tool***

Nicole, Madison, and David were able to think through the definition of intersectionality and apply the domains of power. Nicole demonstrated complexity in her thinking about social identity and its relation to inequity when she discussed people having both privileged and

marginalized identities, which impacts how the world engages with them and how they are treated. Madison and David both presented examples that demonstrated their investment in using intersectionality as a framework. For example, David explained that intersectionality disrupted the tendency to homogenize groups. Audrey was willing to learn more about intersectionality and affirmed that she likes how intersectionality can help one ask better questions about what other groups experience. Jacob discussed the importance of context, but it is unclear whether he is taking up intersectionality or critiquing it based on the conversation during the previous class. Jeffrey made a comment that was related to the discussion but served to distract instead of engage his groupmates in using the framework. Nicole, Madison, David, and Audrey were engaged intersectionality to expand their understanding of inequity. Jacob participated in the discussion, but it is unclear whether he was invested in taking up this framework. Jeffrey did not seem to take up the framework in his thinking.

### **Inequity vs. Collaboration and Advocacy**

In weeks seven, eight, and eleven, PSTs began to make deeper connections between inequity in special education and their teaching practice. Week seven provided further insight into Jeffrey's perspectives related to the multiple discussions on inequity in special education. He also demonstrated *resistant engagement* by making a deficit-based comment that homogenized students identified with (dis)abilities. Jacob's ideas fell between *resistant engagement* and *quiet adoption*. He worked with his group to help him reconcile his rejection of IQ testing with being able to collaborate effectively during IEP meetings.

In week eight, I asked PSTs to take up the perspective of a Latinx parent of a student identified with (dis)abilities and work to understand the different ways parents resist, the reasons for that resistance, and what this knowledge means for teachers' interactions with parents. David, Madison, Nicole, Audrey, and Jacob demonstrated *active adoption* by raising multiple ideas about the

affordances and constraints of parent resistance and its impact on their relationships with families. During week 11, when PSTs discussed structural inequities and their relation to their own teaching practice, Jacob and Jeffrey raised questions that demonstrated they were grappling with their individual agency in disrupting an inequitable system, falling in between *resistant engagers* and *quiet adopters*. The same week, Audrey, Nicole, and Madison demonstrated *active adoption* by discussing their responsibilities as teachers to use their power to advocate, make space for, and support parents and students' agency.

### **Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) as an Analytic Tool**

In addition to having PSTs analyze the definition of intersectionality and find examples that explain each domain of power, during week six I gave them segments of the *Larry P. v. Riles* case (Appendix E) and asked them to identify which domains of power were operating. During week seven, we extended our work with intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) using the *Larry P.* case. I explained to PSTs that DisCrit would help us to “sharpen how we’re identifying the type of inequities that are happening” in the case. Additionally, this would help PSTs develop a common language for identifying inequity. I directed their small groups to look back at the *Larry P.* case and identify inequity based on the (modified) DisCrit tenets.

David and Jacob’s group looked at Tenet seven and engaged in a discussion about IQ testing:

**Jacob:** I mean, as teachers we could ... I'm thinking about the bureaucrat reading (Lipsky, 2010) and how we are foot soldier bureaucrats, or whatever. Street level bureaucrats and how we can choose to opt out of things like IQ testing.

**Brice:** I wouldn't say opt out, but I would say we're obviously gonna be in case conference groups for various students, whether it's IEP meetings or determining a (dis)ability. But

taking the IQ results with a grain of salt and not setting things in stone based off of just one thing... Using observations more than results, I guess. But also at the same time, you have to count on results for something...

**Jason:** I think it all comes back to using an outside source when it comes to the empirical numbers. I think the teachers should be given a vote, a say, an opinion on what the students like. Do you think this would help? Then you get a third party review to look at just the IQ test and all of these outside factors and just be like, "Well, based on the way they're answering I think they probably could get help." Or, "No, this is something else. This is they couldn't sit still long enough for this test." You know, talk like that. They don't know anything about the student.

**Brice:** What I think back to is that like, the way that I look at IQ testing is that sure, it'll give you some sort of baseline of something, but it definitely does not quantify intelligence whatsoever because there's multiple forms of intelligence. Say you have a student that's just like, say in my science class, bio. They're not performing well, but then you have a wood shop or an auto shop and they are brilliant with stuff. It's just various forms of intelligence. Based off of my interpretation, sure, maybe there might some slight (dis)ability, but then based off the auto shop teacher they could be totally something different. You know what I mean? ... Their IQ, who knows where it could be.

**Jacob:** We like to talk about funds of knowledge in the writing center. Imagine you're a genius in wood shop.

Jacob asks if as teachers they should reject the use of IQ testing and cites *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service* (Lipsky, 2010) from the previous week (chapters 1, 2, and 8). In presenting this question, Jacob seems to be trying to reconcile the reading (and class session on Lipsky), our previous class discussion in IQ testing (through the *Larry P.* case), and the actions he

should take as a teacher to advocate for students. Jason and Brice engage his question, and Brice, pulling from a previous in-class discussion, explains the need to make balanced decisions regarding the academic plans of students identified with (dis)abilities. He rejects the idea of rejecting IQ testing altogether and takes up the idea that IQ testing is one of various pieces of information that can assist in decision-making. Jacob's final statement connects Brice's comment to discussions of funds of knowledge from his work in the writing center, and he seems to be processing Brice's example when he states, "Imagine you're a genius in wood shop."

In Madison and Jeffrey's group, Madison shared an example where a White student identified with a (dis)ability had an outburst and the all-female administrative team had difficulty restraining the student. She connected this to DisCrit by explaining that students identified with (dis)abilities are more likely to be arrested. She says:

**Madison:**... we end up having to call the police because the teachers and the principal—he's a big child, physically large and our all-female administrative team there are four of them could not get him under control... they had to call the police because "you're putting other kids at risk right now"... they could not restrain him, this happens to be a White student... talk about... more likely to be arrested... (nods)...

**Jeffrey:** Someone acting out like that. The teachers are... afraid of the lawsuit from anyone and everybody. I understand, even if they could control it physically, they're not going to (be) that eager to do it. And let's even get funnier; if one of them tries to subdue him in a perfectly reasonable manner, and she or he gets hurt doing it, then the school gets sued from both directions. The parents of the student being subdued and then this teacher who got hurt subduing a student. So it just cascades. I guess I'm coming at this a little differently... severe intellectual or emotional problems, and the question is, how do we educate them? We can get around many different axes, but at the end of the day... Autism spectrum, deep

autism spectrum, not Asperger's. But when you start getting deep into it, they can get very easily over-excited and then they can really lash out. We're not really equipping the school. You can say you want to "mainstream" them to use the standard terminology, but then at a certain level when you're mainstreaming this population, you are ... I guess there's another point I've gotta get in here. We are in a critically resource-constrained environment. We're not gonna throw money at these problems; society's already determined that. Yes, we will throw money at B-231 bombers, but we will not throw any money at education.

**Madison:** Not throw it at education, yeah.

**Jeffrey:** So, and I know I'm sounding bad here, but I'll keep flailing onwards. You've got this limited environment, you've got a certain population that you've got a real problem with. So, if you put them in the classroom, you risk taking away from the education of the average kid. I mean, there was one line in that Fuch's (1995) article that he goes, "We're seeing a modest improvement at a cost of 2-3 times what it costs us to educate the other people." I'm thinking, "Wow, a modest improvement where you're spending 2-3 times more per student to get a modest improvement." At what point are those resources ... I mean, this is an economic optimization question. Now, I realize no one wants to think that way and I don't really want to think that way because I would throw more money at the problem, but we're not given that option. You start having to really face the problem that to put them in the mainstream you are impacting the mainstream students at some level. You're doing better by the special students, but you're not doing better by the mainstream. Then at some level we've gotta be honest and there are kids who cannot be safely mainstreamed. I wish that were not the case, but I don't think that's what we're talking about. So-

Jeffrey makes a comment about the risks of engaging students identified with “severe intellectual or emotional problems” in the situation Madison presented, including the risk to the school. He then asks, “How do we educate them?” When he says “we,” he seems to be referring to general educators because he goes on to say that students identified with (dis)abilities with severe intellectual and emotional impairments disrupt the learning of general education students. Here he seems to indicate that the particular kind of student in Madison’s example should not be general educators’ responsibility to educate. He gives the example of students on the Autism spectrum and mentions that there are not enough financial resources to support incorporating them fully. He makes a statement that this country invests money in the military but not education. Madison agrees with the last sentence of his statement.

Jeffrey continues, highlighting limited resources and a “population that you’ve got a real problem with.” His comments raise the question of why he considers students identified with severe intellectual and emotional (dis)abilities a “problem”? How does this perspective on children then impact how he as a teacher engages or disengages students? He shares an example from the Fuchs’ article that states that there is a modest improvement in the achievement of students identified with (dis)abilities even though 2-3 times more money is spent on them. Both Jeffrey in his response and Fuchs and Fuchs (1995) in their article, leave out the structural and disciplinary inequities that negatively impact the educational opportunities for this group of students. Fuchs and Fuchs also do not make clear which students they believe were benefiting from special education funding.

Jeffrey couches his criticism as an “economic optimization question,” but he then goes on to state:

You start having to really face the problem that to put time in the mainstream you are impacting the mainstream students at some level. You’re doing better by the special education students, but you’re not doing better by the mainstream.

This seems to mimic the argument that inclusion benefits Black students because they are exposed to White students—in this case, Jeffrey seems to be arguing that inclusion benefits students identified with (dis)abilities because they are exposed to general education students. This argument assumes that able-bodied students receive no benefit from engaging with (dis)abled students. It also assumes that students identified with (dis)abilities have nothing meaningful to contribute to a general education classroom.

This argument also misrepresents the instance that Madison presented as a larger problem than it is. Students identified with (dis)abilities who have outbursts are a small segment of the special education population, although they may be suspended more frequently (U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Madison continued by stating her support for the principal's desire not to call the police, although some faculty in her school did not agree. Madison also supported the principal's orientation toward restorative justice. Jeffrey asked whether or not restorative justice applies because it is something that is implemented after harm is done. He seemed to miss Madison's interpretation of restorative justice, and she responded that the principal's decision not to call the police right away was what was restorative because she was trying to find another way to attend to the issue. Jeffrey reiterated that restorative justice is only applicable after the issue is deescalated. He shared a story about his friend's younger brother who was identified with a (dis)ability and threw a box of nails at him, he asked, "What do you do? You duck?" After this activity, each group shared out briefly and focused on one or two tenets of DisCrit in their responses. Madison and Jeffrey did not share their discussion in whole group discussion.

### ***Summary of PSTs' Sensemaking of (Dis)ability and Inequity***

This segment of the class discussion revealed Jeffrey's perspective on students identified with (dis)abilities. Jeffrey once again displayed hesitancy in taking up DisCrit in a way that allows him to understand the ways that students identified with (dis)abilities have been marginalized. His

response to Madison's example took a singular instance and applied it to students with Autism as engaging in the same way in every situation. His language signaled exclusion of students identified with (dis)abilities, particularly students with Autism, from interacting with their general education peers. Jeffrey actively resisted discussing the event from a critical perspective although Madison mentioned arrest statistics (discussed previously in class) that demonstrate that students identified with (dis)abilities are disproportionately arrested in school. Jacob's question, with his reference to the *Bureaucrats* reading, suggested that he was gaining an understanding that he, as a teacher, has decision-making power in schools. He asked directly about IQ testing, revealing his disdain for the practice, and his colleagues discussed ways that he could leverage the power he has to disrupt inequitable practices that could result from placing significant weight on IQ testing. Although it is unclear if he agreed fully with his colleague, his final comment demonstrated an openness to engage their perspective.

### **Recognizing an Issue of Inequity Presented by a Parent at the Intersection of Race and Ability**

During week eight, we read "Family Resistance as a Tool of Urban Reform" (Graff & Vazquez, 2013) which presented the experience of Beatriz, a Latinx mother of a child identified with Autism, and her interactions with her child's school. Beatriz expressed her concern about her child eating sugar to her child's kindergarten teacher. Beatriz worried because sugar caused her child to be hyperactive. She went to the school to explain this to her child's White teacher, and the teacher seemed to ignore Beatriz's concerns. At first, Beatriz thought that it may have been a language barrier that prevented the teacher from understanding her, so the next time she visited the school her husband accompanied her because he was a more fluent English speaker. During this meeting both Beatriz and her husband felt ignored, and so they decided not to express their concerns to the teacher. Beatriz would see sugar on her child's clothes, and this confirmed that her concerns were

ignored. Soon after the meeting with the teacher, Beatriz's child got in trouble for having an outburst and was deemed "uncontrollable" by the principal.

The class engaged in whole and small group discussions about inequity experienced by families of color and those families' resistance to inequity. This discussion demonstrated that most of the PSTs were building their capacity to critically analyze and articulate how power and oppression manifests within interpersonal interactions between families and school personnel. For instance, David, Nicole, Jacob, and Audrey were able to clearly see the ways Beatriz and her family were disadvantaged in their interactions with the school. Nicole specifically named race and ability status. Although Audrey did not name social identity specifically, she presented a point that her colleague built off of to speak specifically to the relation between power and social identity in schools. Jacob noted how stereotypes around parent non-involvement are perpetuated in schools. Jeffrey did not engage in this discussion on inequity and family resistance in whole group, but he actively engaged later in the class when the discussion shifted from family resistance to decision-making during IEP meetings. In his small group, he engaged in a side discussion related to movies and race (although race remains unspoken).

After the small group discussions, I initially opened the whole class discussion with the question, "What is resistance? How might we define resistance?" This led to a specific conversation about the affordances and constraints of Beatriz's decision to engage in this form of resistance.

David and Nicole shares constraints:

**David:** I just think of the be quiet and march. Don't engage with anybody. Or like, call to arms, you know? It's just being seen as aggressive and such, as opposed to being seen as passive and uninterested. It's hard.

**Nicole:** For constraint, they talked about in the article how it was self-defeating resistance 'cause you're not doing anything to change what had happened. So there's a chance that things don't change at all.

Jacob builds on Nicole's response:

**Jacob:** Sorry, it was just that here it says that the feelings of disempowerment actually kind of perpetuated it as well. It was like a self-perpetuating cycle, where the more she disengaged, the worse she felt about her situation. And it seems like resistance is oftentimes a cause to feel more confident, or like an empowerment. Where it just seemed like this further disempowerment.

David shares that being either categorized as aggressive or passive can be detrimental, and he describes making the decision to take either stance as "hard." Here, David unpacks how parents of color may be perceived by school personnel because of their racial identities, although he doesn't name race explicitly. This follows a pattern David had established of speaking about race but not naming it, whether he was introducing a new point or critiquing statements made by his colleagues.

Nicole draws from the article, explaining that Beatriz's action was "self-defeating resistance" because her decision did not lead to any change in her child's situation. Nicole highlighted that "passive" resistance may lead to the issue being unresolved, and, in her small group conversation, she notes, "Just more generally, it's people who are White and able-bodied who are advantaged. Then anyone who doesn't speak the language perfectly is disadvantaged." Taking Nicole's whole group and small group comment together, signals that she notices the Beatriz is disadvantaged in this situation (she focuses on language specifically), and, because she engages in "passive" resistance, her issue has the potential of remaining unresolved in this situation.

Jacob builds on Nicole's response by explaining that this can be a "self-perpetuating cycle," that could lead to further alienation of the parent and feelings of disempowerment. Jacob highlights the detrimental impact "passive" resistance may have on the parent's experience. In his small group Jacob makes the point:

**Jacob:** So the language barrier does exist and it creates a sort of wide gulf so that they can't meet in the middle. They can't manage. But it's really that they won't manage. It's really that those in power, those school administrators are unwilling to facilitate the needs of the family. A lack of interest or involvement in school related activities, so it's misperception, you know? It's like, "Oh, they must seem uninterested in school."

Jacob's whole and small group comments highlight Jacob's recognition that Beatriz and her family were being placed at a disadvantage. He is able to see that the parent's actions could be misconstrued by the school. Although he identifies that the administrators were unwilling to facilitate the needs of the family, Jacob did not name the teacher as also being complicit. In the vignette presented in the article, Beatriz directly named race and stated, "I'm certain if I were American had White skin and blond hair, they (educators/special education team) would have given my daughter the services that she needed," (p. 81). Jacob does not take up race in his response.

In her small group, Audrey highlighted that the teacher's actions have more of an impact on the student than the student's actions have on the teacher,

**Audrey:** ...We've got 120 students, right, but students only have eight teachers at my school. That weight that you have and the decisions that you make in and of itself are just, affect the student more in general than the decisions that the student makes, you know?

Another student in the class summarizes and extends Audrey's point by saying, "So, there's more at stake for the mother and the student than there is for us as teachers that are healthy, able-bodied, White, middle class, upper middle class."

Madison shares her perspective of an affordance of resistance which seems disconnected from the scenario being discussed:

**Madison:** I read this book about slaves who, during time of slavery in America, in order to practice resistance they would throw these big dance parties on where they lived in their pathetic little houses that they were given by their owners. They would do these ridiculous things and get really drunk and have these wild dance parties and stuff. And the author's whole point of talking about it was that even in the context of slavery, these people were still able to make a choice about what they did during their free time to push back against the oppression that they were living under. She talked about how they would purposely do the work really slow, so as to make things go impossibly slow. And even though that doesn't seem like much, that was their little way of being like, "We're not doing this. We're not gonna play this game." So, that's what this made me think of.

David immediately critiques her response:

**David:** I just wanted to add though, that even in that case the type of person, because of their intersecting identities, will have more to lose in resisting in certain ways. In their case, even something like doing something slowly could've ended up being killed, right? Which maybe is probably not the case for certain individuals otherwise.

Madison argues that resistance can be liberating for those who are oppressed. She awkwardly presents her example, and her use of the words "pathetic," "ridiculous," and "wild" could be construed as nonchalant and insensitive. She seems to desire to emphasize that resistance has the potential to provide those who engage in it joy in the midst of oppression.

David takes the position that the constraints of resistance for people of color (with intersecting marginalized identities) far outweigh the affordances. David's comment here connects to his previous statement about a parent's actions being misconstrued whether they respond aggressively or passively. David emphasizes that consequences for Africans if they were punished for doing their work slowly could be death, which is not something that people who are privileged would have to consider. David does not name race in either of his statements during this segment of class, but, throughout the course, he would often push back by sharing the perspectives of marginalized groups, particularly people of color. One possible explanation for this is that David, as a Latinx man, may have been hedging his language because of the predominantly White context in which these conversations were taking place.

### ***Summary of PSTs' Perspectives on Inequity and Family Resistance***

Different aspects of the text seemed to provoke PSTs' thoughts around their own agency, the negative impact "passive" resistance has on parents, and the tension that parents of color face when engaging with schools. Audrey stated that her actions as a teacher have more of an impact than the student's actions have on her, which highlighted the level of power that teachers have in schools. Nicole and Jacob identified that Beatriz's resistance had a negative impact on her, and, when parents are forced to resist in this way because they are alienated, further alienation and disempowerment could occur. Madison brought a different perspective on how resistance can be empowering, discussing a book she read about slavery; but David pushed back against her comment, reminding his colleagues that parents being seen as aggressive or passive can have dire consequences for them and their children as there have been dire consequences for people of color resisting throughout history. In their discussion, PSTs raised the complexities of interactions between parents and teachers across race and their direct impact on their treatment of parents and students in schools.

## Connecting Structural Inequity to Teacher Practice

During week 11, I shared statistics related to suspension rates of students identified with (dis)abilities across racial categories, both nationally and in the state where the University was located. I reminded PSTs that in their first inequity reflection each of them stated that they believed structural inequities exist, and I also explained that these statistics confirm that belief. I asked them to talk about how their knowledge of structural inequities could inform their practice when they are engaging with parents of students identified with (dis)abilities.

When discussing this question Madison shared an observation she made when attending an IEP meeting:

**Madison:** In the IEP I observed... the parent was the first one to kind of get the most air time, which was something I thought was really interesting. Because I felt like it really resonated with a lot of what we've talked about in this class. Who you understand as the expert of knowledge on a student, and who gets to take up space in a conversation.

Madison connects previous class discussions with what she observed at her school site. She emphasizes the need to acknowledge the parent's expertise and have an awareness of who is able to engage in the conversation about a student.

By contrast, Jeffrey was unsure whether his actions as a teacher could impact the dynamic of an IEP meeting:

**Jeffrey:** ... What I'm saying is that you know, you're being handed a packet of information and, as you say, the parent's there and how do you react to them differently? Or how do you do better, if you will, I guess is what we're probing. I don't know that you can bring... How much new can you bring to this whole thing? You can certainly be polite and all that good stuff, but are you really going to change the dynamic?

**Tasha:** I think it's maybe more about like, in terms of changing the dynamic, trying to create a better space for parents. In that one recording we heard of... I forget which class it was, but where she was like, "Yeah, the teacher was cold to me (*Emilia: Oh, yeah*) and you need to be extra warm and nice for parents like me, who've dealt with this stuff." Maybe just being extra warm and [crosstalk 03:27] beyond your normal state of being.

Tasha, a PST in Jeffrey's group, pushes back by acknowledging that teachers can "create a better space for parent." She draws on the recording of a Black mother that we discussed as a class weeks prior and provides the example the parent shares of a teacher being "cold" towards her. Tasha suggests that teachers push themselves to be welcoming to a parent even if it means disrupting their "normal state of being." Throughout the course Jeffrey brought up valid dilemmas that teachers face in negotiating their relationships with students and parents, but, as here, he did not challenge himself to produce possible solutions to the examples he presented. Often, it was his colleagues who did the mental work of providing possible solutions or alternatives to his perspectives.

Midway through their conversations, I asked students to discuss the difference between advocacy and agency, adding the questions, "...how do we, as educators, advocate? And how do we promote agency?" Audrey provided a specific example from her experience at her school site:

**Audrey:** I was just thinking the IEP meeting I went on the transportation is a major issue. Just thinking, we would advocate for our students to have better transportation in order for us to allow them to promote their agency at school. But it's almost doing something, needing to go to others making your argument, advocating. To be advocating means you have to go possibly... Use your power, but maybe go outside of your power structure to make some things happen. Where to me, agency is we have this ability within our role as a teacher to promote the students' agency. There's nothing I can really do about that student getting to

school, but I can advocate what are we doing to address the transportation issues many of our students are experiencing to get to school on time?

Audrey also presented this example in her inequity reflection and used this example to think about ways teachers can advocate for students despite structural barriers. She explains that advocacy may have to go beyond an IEP meeting or one's immediate level of power. She believes that teachers can demonstrate agency and promote students' agency. Although she cannot directly impact the time a student gets to school, she posits that she could advocate for the school to address the transportation issue. Audrey describes advocacy as using one's power to bring attention to inequity. She also positions teachers as agentic within their own roles, and argues that one aspect of their roles is to support student's agency.

Audrey saw her work as a teacher connected to broader issues that may extend past her classroom. In a similar vein, Nicole makes a connection between agency and power:

**Nicole:** I think that that point is interesting and it sort of like the difference between advocacy and agency. Like, you teach 'em all this stuff, but the students have... First of all, people have to recognize that they have power and what they say matters. Then the student has to feel actually like they have agency, so I think that's where there's a gap. We can teach about the stuff, but if a kid doesn't feel like anyone's gonna care, no one actually does care.

Nicole speaks specifically to student experiences. She explains that a gap exists between people recognizing what students say matters and students believing that what they say matters. She further explains that a child can be taught how to advocate for themselves and demonstrate agency, but it is pointless if people do not recognize or take up what students want for themselves.

### ***Summary of PSTs' Perspectives on Inequity and Teacher Practice***

This discussion around teacher practice and inequity, brings up different aspects of relationships between teachers and families for the PSTs. Audrey gave an in-depth explanation of

her thoughts on agency and advocacy in which she positioned herself as a responsible actor in schools. Nicole recognized the tensions that students experience when attempting to exercise their agency in school. Madison acknowledged the importance of a parent's voice in conversations about their children. Jeffrey seemed uncertain about whether his actions as a teacher could impact the dynamic of an IEP meeting. Each PST made a connection between inequity in special education and their teaching practice whether they saw themselves as having the power to disrupt inequity or not.<sup>3</sup>

PSTs in this study began connecting course material with their experiences in schools as early as week five. For example, Nicole discussed her dilemma of seeing students identified with (dis)abilities as different from their peers during the class discussion on stereotypes. During week six, Madison shared a situation that took place in her school where a White student identified with a (dis)ability had an outburst. During week eight, both Audrey and Madison shared their experiences of participating in an IEP meeting when discussing the connection between structural inequity and teaching practice. Week 11 was the first time Jeffrey raised a question about whether his actions as a teacher have any impact on the dynamic of an IEP meeting. Throughout the course, PSTs made connections to their current and/or future school experiences as they connected what they were learning throughout the course with their ideas, observations, and concerns about teaching.

### **PSTs' Stances on Inequity at the End of the Course**

For the final inequity reflection, I modified the questions so PSTs could discuss their own teaching practice more specifically. Similar to their first reflections, PSTs' responses to the final inequity reflection ranged from specific examples to their general understandings of how inequity manifests in schools. Here I wanted to provide an opportunity for them to think more practically about inequity and their daily work as teachers. The questions/phrases in italics represent the

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<sup>3</sup> David was absent from class this week.

modifications I made for the final reflection: (1) What is inequity? *How would you explain it to your students?* (2) Provide an example of how inequity exists in *special education*. (3) *How does inequity impact your teaching practice, particularly when teaching students of color identified with (dis)abilities?*

### **Defining Inequity and Teaching Students**

This section will focus on the final reflection of five PSTs (out of six), I did not receive Jeffrey's final reflection therefore his is not included in this section. For the PSTs discussed below, their definitions of inequity acknowledged the existence of power structures that position people into hierarchies based on the intersections of their social identities. PSTs' also recognized that these structures have material impacts on individuals' access to resources and opportunities in society. Taken together they defined inequity as the "systemic and systematic placement of artificial barriers to create arbitrary (but justified) hierarchies in our society" (Audrey, structural) that "unfairly deny others' access to resources or opportunities" which may be based "on race, gender, ability status, or other identity factor(s)" (Nicole, interpersonal, disciplinary, and/or structural). Marginalized groups are "exploited" and this exploitation is "reinforced through human" interactions (David, interpersonal). The artificial barriers erected create a "disparity between groups of people" (Jacob, structural), perpetuate "discriminatory practices that cause unequal outcomes for individuals," and limit "access to resources, because of power systems that shape their lives" (Madison, disciplinary and structural). These excerpts demonstrate that, by the end of the course, PSTs' understandings of inequity had converged on similar intellectual territory.

Audrey's initial definition of inequity directly discussed power. She stated, "inequity... allows those in power to impose their biases on society." This idea also undergirds her final definition in which she discusses the impact of power on individuals via "artificial barriers" and "arbitrary hierarchies." In parenthesis she states that arbitrary hierarchies are "justified," but it is unclear whether she means that those in power justify the creation of these hierarchies or that her

perspective is that the creation of these hierarchies is justified. Based on her reflections and class discussions it seems like she would support the former, but her meaning remains unclear.

Nicole's definition remains consistent from the first to the final reflection, and she provides different examples to support her definition within each reflection.

David's initial definition focused on the limited access to resources that particular groups in society have. In his final reflection, he describes inequity as "multi-faceted" and "multi-pronged." Although he does not explain this in detail, he does state that the differences that individuals embody have been exploited and that this exploitation is reinforced through human interactions. His final definition moves away from primarily focusing on access to resources and takes on a broader scope.

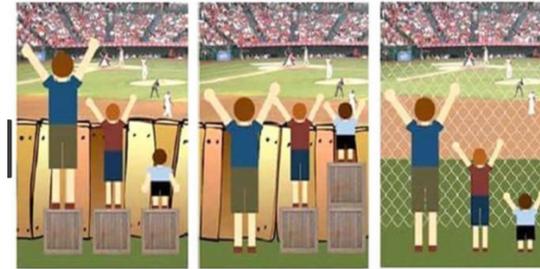
Jacob's initial definition expressed that students are placed in a hierarchy based on their individual differences. His final definition embodies the same sentiment, as when he defines inequity as a "systematic disparity between groups of people." What his final definition adds is his recognition that the perpetuation of inequity can be deliberate. He uses the word "systematic" to emphasize this point.

Madison's initial definition of inequity was "when something is unfair or does not give all students the same opportunity." By the final reflection, Madison's definition of inequity becomes more refined. She specifies the unfairness as "discriminatory practices" and add that this results in "unequal outcomes."

PSTs provided varying examples to help explain inequity to their students. Audrey and Nicole present similar explanations. Audrey suggests the image in Figure 5.5 below to support her explanation of inequity:

Figure 5.5

*Audrey's Suggested Visual Aid for Explaining Inequity*



**Audrey:** ... *In American society, inequity often affects those who are not heterosexual, white, middle and upper middle class males. To teach inequity to my students, I would talk them through this and explain that the fence represents an arbitrary barrier justified to keep a baseball in play. The different supports to overcome the barrier, the boxes represent the corrective actions for folks to see over the fence. The equality represents just that—everyone gets the same thing no matter people's situations. The middle represents equity to justify the distribution of corrective actions so that everyone can look over the fence. However, we should all recognize that it is the fence that should get replaced...* The fence is justice as it rights the past wrong of the arbitrary barriers and the unnecessary corrective actions. It is a situation where everyone is able to live freely and enjoy the same liberties and benefits of all.

Audrey and Nicole both suggest using an image that would help support their explanations of inequity. Audrey provides a detailed response that describes how she would explain the three sections of the image, not only addressing inequity but also justice. Nicole explains that she would use a similar picture that focused on the first two images to explain that in an inequitable society, different people will need different supports “in order to be given a fair chance.”

In his reflection, Jacob describes his current work in his field placement and how he is working to engage discussions about inequity in his teaching. Similar to Audrey and Nicole, Jacob

believes that educating students about inequity can be incorporated into his teaching practice. Jacob provides an example of how he used class content to incorporate discussions of inequity into his daily practice. He explains, “For instance, I built a unit around *A Raisin in the Sun* wherein we looked at government housing policy and how the system was rigged in favor of Whites in postwar America... We discussed how these issues exist to this day.”

By contrast, Madison does not provide specifics about how she define inequity to her students but instead gives a general statement about what she would tell them:

I would explain inequity to my students as being a social situation where not all individuals have the same access to resources, because of power systems that shape their lives. This lack of access to resources then, creates unequal outcomes of success.

It is unclear how she would make this relatable to students, but she provides a premise on which she would have this discussion.

David provides examples of inequity but admits that he is struggling with figuring out how to embody this complexity in his teaching:

**David:** ... For example, students with physical impairments do experience physical differences from the majority of the population. However, this does not necessarily place them at an inherent disadvantage. Yet, since we have created a world that fits the able-bodied human, we have reinforced these differences and created inequities between those who are able-bodied and disabled. Moreover, as we read and discussed via the dis-crit article, inequity is reinforced in a variety of ways. It is not just a social reinforcement, but there is structural, disciplinary, etc. *Therefore, it is an intersectional matter. If it were just as simple as one issue, we might be able to more readily tackle it, but it is not that simple. I honestly do not know how I could capture all the nuance (which I very very much have not done here) and explain it to my students. That would need to be embedded within my units and their education.* (Emphasis added)

David and his colleagues grapple with the idea of taking up a discussion of inequity in their practice. Although not directly stated, PSTs take up issues of power and oppression in their explanations and when stating their understandings of inequity. Madison names power explicitly but she does not provide an example of how she might explain the concept of power in relation to inequity when teaching students. In his explanation, David, incorporates discussions in class about DisCrit and intersectionality and names how these theories overlap to support his understanding of the ableism.

### **Inequity in Special Education**

PSTs discussed inequity at the intersection of race and ability, which was the focus of the class, when asked directly. Below PSTs discuss various examples focused on the intersection of race and ability either discussing teachers specifically, schools generally, or White parents' complicity in inequity. Audrey and David discuss the denial of access to educational opportunities and teacher low expectations/lack of knowledge.

**Audrey:** ... discretion of teachers often perpetuates the idea that students of color need to be controlled and their compliance is more important than their learning. They are not given the same opportunities as students not only in wealthier suburban districts, but also among their teachers who are to be advocates and providers of an equitable education.

**David:** ... While the goal is to have all students in general education, the reality is that not all general ed teachers are equipped to fulfill their needs, or will not be privy to their particular needs. An IEP is not a suggestion but a legally mandated document. Yet, since there are limited accountability measures and consequences for general educators and schools, this arrangement is wrought with inequity.

Audrey discusses how teachers' negative perceptions of students of color (cultural) guide their interactions with these students (interpersonal), and, instead of advocating for students of color, teachers also limit the opportunities they provide to different students (disciplinary). Audrey also

discusses the lack of educational opportunities for students of color when compared to students in schools from wealthier, typically White districts (structural). David discusses the challenge general educators have with supporting students identified with (dis)abilities because they are not “equipped to fulfill their needs” (interpersonal), and, although the IEP is a legally mandated document, there are limited accountability measures in place to ensure that general educators and schools are enacting the IEP effectively (structural).

Madison and Nicole take similar stances but discuss schools generally. Madison states, “... Students of color identified with a (dis)ability are also more likely to receive harsher forms of discipline...” (disciplinary). Nicole explains, “... For example, a lack of school resources may lead to the denial of the accommodations that students need to succeed..” (structural). Madison provides an example that focuses on disproportionality in discipline and Nicole focuses on the lack of material resources that may lead to ineffective implementation of a student’s IEP.

Jacob explains that “unjust practices” can impact students identified with (dis)abilities from the structural to the interpersonal levels and that in his own academic experiences he has seen the exploitation of special education services by White parents (structural, interpersonal, disciplinary):

**Jacob:** Over the course of this class we have discussed the unjust practices that go into identifying students with (dis)abilities, from the allocation of funds on a district level to the use of language on an interpersonal level. Inequity is everywhere. *In my own academic background, I have seen White families gaming the system in order to obtain medical assistance for their academically struggling student.* (Emphasis added)

PSTs draw on their perspectives from various in-class discussions, sharing aspects of our discussions that are most salient to their understanding. For example, Audrey discusses teacher discretion that focuses on the power educators have within educational spaces (week six). David draws from our discussion about the lack of oversight of IDEA implementation on the state and

federal levels during week eight. Madison refers to our discussion of special education and school discipline, focusing specifically on race (week 10). Figure 5.6 provides a comparison between the domains of power present in PSTs initial and final reflections.

**Figure 5.6**

***Domains of Power in PSTs' Reflections when Defining Inequity & Its Existence in Schools (Initial & Final Reflections)***

Name	Reflection Defining Inequity & Its Existence in Schools (Questions 1 & 2)	Domains of Power			
		Interpersonal	Disciplinary	Cultural	Structural
Audrey	Initial Reflection		✓	✓	✓
	Final Reflection	✓	✓	✓	✓
Madison	Initial Reflection		✓		✓
	Final Reflection		✓		✓
Nicole	Initial Reflection		✓		✓
	Final Reflection	✓	✓		✓
David	Initial Reflection				✓
	Final Reflection	✓			✓
Jacob	Initial Reflection				✓
	Final Reflection	✓	✓		✓
Jeffrey	Initial Reflection				✓
	Final Reflection	Missing Data			

Audrey, Nicole, David, and Jacob incorporated the interpersonal domain of power in their final reflections, in addition to the other domains of power that were present in their initial reflections, when defining inequity and discussing its existence in schools. This may indicate that these PSTs made connections to how macro inequities impact teachers' interpersonal interactions with students.

Audrey, Madison, Nicole, David, Jacob, and Jeffrey discuss the structural domain of power in both their initial and final simulations. This may highlight their understanding that structural inequity is connected to the inequities experienced in other domains.

Audrey, Nicole, and Madison discussed the disciplinary domain of power in both their initial and final simulations, possibly indicating that they see a connection between the disciplinary (how rules are enforced) and the structural (the rules that exist) domains of power.

Most PSTs did not incorporate the cultural domain of power in their final reflections although in class discussions issues about how students identified with (dis)abilities and/or Black students are perceived in schools was present in various discussions. PSTs may have needed additional opportunities in class to make more direct links between the cultural domain of power and the other domains.

### **The Impacts of Inequity on Teaching**

When asked specifically how inequity impacted their personal teaching practice with a focus on students of color identified with (dis)abilities, PSTs discussed their fears, how they saw power operating in schools and in their personal practice, and current experiences as a student teacher. For example, Audrey discussed her fear of perpetuating inequity without the consistent support of her courses at the University. She highlighted the cultural and interpersonal domains of power in her comment:

**Audrey:** ... I worry I will take on their biases of thinking students of color with (dis)abilities not only have less intelligence and less to contribute but also are emotional less human and therefore disciplined... We not only perpetuate the stereotypes in our profession but cause their fellow students to perpetuate them as well by modeling this sort of inequitable behavior.

Madison, and Nicole discussed power dynamics between students and teachers, students and their peers, and systems of power. For example:

**Madison:** When teaching students of color identified with disabilities, *I must be aware of the power systems that shape their lives*, and do my best to make sure that they are as involved in the

general education classroom as (much as) possible. *This may mean that I teach content* about racism and its history, and/or the history (and ongoing) discrimination against people with disabilities. This also means that I *closely monitor my classroom management and discipline practices*, to make sure that I am not reinforcing inequities. (Emphasis added)

Madison focuses on how power operates in the system of schooling (structural) and within the interpersonal relationships of members within the school community (interpersonal). Madison also expresses that power impacts their engagement with students, their interactions between students, and management and discipline practices (disciplinary). Although Nicole made a similar comment, her reflection centered the interpersonal domain of power. Madison and Nicole used verbs such as, consider and aware and support, scaffold teach, and monitor—the former two signaling reflection and the latter three action.

Although David's response did not highlight any domain of power in particular, he provided his understanding of how students who hold "multiple historically marginalized identities" are positioned in society and schools:

**David:** First and foremost, we must recognize that there is an inherent power imbalance in teaching students that hold historically marginalized identities. With respect to these students, we must also acknowledge that they hold multiple historically marginalized identities. Therefore, the intersectional experience with these identities further compounds the impact of their experiences, and likely places them in an even more vulnerable position than those which only hold a single oppressed identity. In this respect, I must recognize the impact of history in our relationship. Surely I must provide that which is legally mandated and I am committed to morally providing them with. But, at the same time, I must recognize that they likely arrive to my classroom with an experience of inequity. It is not my sole job to right the ship, but I must acknowledge this and work to earn their trust.

In contrast, Jacob connected the question to his current experience as a student teacher:

**Jacob:** ... *I do hope to incorporate discussions of inequity in my class, and look to encourage an open dialogue with my class, but apart from that and White parents taking advantage of beneficial medical "treatment" delineated above, I haven't seen the lasting effects of inequity when teaching students of color identified with (dis)abilities.* (Emphasis added)

Jacob explains that although he has students of color, including some who are identified with (dis)abilities, he has not seen the type of inequity we have discussed in class in his daily experiences. He hopes, as he mentioned previously, that he can incorporate these discussions into this work from students, but he is yet to see the lasting effect of inequity for students of color identified with (dis)abilities.

Audrey, Madison, Nicole, and David looked forward to their future practice in these responses, while Jacob focused more on his current experiences. They all seem to take up the idea that inequity exists at the intersection of race and (dis)ability, although in Jacob's case, he has not personally seen what we discussed in class as of yet.

When asked how inequity impacted their teaching practice with a focus on students of color identified with (dis)abilities, most PSTs in the initial (five of six) and final (three of five) reflections discussed the interpersonal domain of power (Figure 5.7 below). This may indicate that they see their personal treatment of students of color identified with (dis)abilities directly impacting their ability to build relationships and teach them. PSTs incorporated more domains of power in their responses to the initial reflection when discussing how inequity impacts *their* teaching practices generally. They were also asked about inequity impacting their work students identified with (dis)abilities. As noted previously, PSTs provided general examples that did not speak directly to their own practice.

In their final reflections, PSTs focused specifically on their own practice but incorporated fewer domains of power in their responses. A possible reason for this may be that they were just beginning to process and articulate their personal stances and orientations toward students identified with (dis)abilities. Additionally, they may have access to fewer examples of their work with students identified with (dis)abilities because of their short experience in the classroom thus far.

**Figure 5.7**

***Domains of Power in PSTs' Reflections when Explaining Inequity & Teaching Practice (Initial & Final Reflections)***

Name	Reflection Inequity & Teaching Practice (Question 3)	Domains of Power			
		Interpersonal	Disciplinary	Cultural	Structural
Audrey	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
	Final Reflection	✓		✓	
Madison	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
	Final Reflection	✓	✓		✓
Nicole	Initial Reflection	✓	✓	✓	
	Final Reflection	✓			
David	Initial Reflection				✓
	Final Reflection				
Jacob	Initial Reflection	✓		✓	
	Final Reflection				
Jeffrey	Initial Reflection	✓	✓		✓
	Final Reflection	Missing Data			

**Articulating Their Role as Members of the IEP Team**

Prior to engaging in the course, most of the PSTs saw their role on the IEP team as only about sharing their knowledge of the student to the team to help develop a plan that is suitable to meet the student's needs. At the end of the course, prior to their final simulation, (five of five) PSTs reiterated that an aspect of their role as a member of the IEP team is sharing knowledge of their student. However, their responses also took up their perspectives on advocacy, collaboration, connecting, listening, and contributing during IEP meetings.

In their final reflections, Madison and Nicole focused almost exclusively on their responsibility to share their knowledge of their student. For instance, Nicole wrote:

**Nicole:** As a general educator, *my role on the IEP team is to share my observations* of the student in question. I need to *offer my insights* into the child's social and academic experience at the school and use my experiences with the child to *consider the validity of the IEP team's plan*.

(Emphasis added)

Nicole sees her role as sharing knowledge of her student by offering her insights based on her experience with the student. She explains that she would use this knowledge to consider if the plan suggested by the IEP team is appropriate for her student (connecting). In addition to seeing her role as a general educator as contributing to building a plan for a student, Madison added that her responsibility is to help determine resources and accommodations (advocacy) for her student. She also said that she is basing this on her knowledge of and interactions with her student (sharing knowledge of student) and that she must ensure that she is implementing her student's accommodations in her classroom.

Audrey and David talked explicitly about social identity and power when discussing their role as advocates during IEP meetings. For example:

**Audrey:** After participating in the IEP meeting, it is about becoming an *advocate for our students* within our school and departments. It is *partnering with the special education teacher* to find ways to co-teach and truly provide avenues to *maximize student learning for students identified with (dis)abilities*. It is *questioning our own practice* to see where we have blind spots and working within your school culture to ensure you are providing an equitable education for students with an IEP. Finally, we need to *ensure parents and students felt heard and that we are addressing their concerns, respecting their perspectives, and empathizing with them*. This is particularly important for me as a white, straight, middle class woman who has different intersectionalities compared to

parents and students who may suffer from racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, and xenophobia... (Emphasis added)

Audrey sees her role as advocating for students and partnering with the special education teacher (collaboration) in ways that would maximize student learning. She emphasizes the importance of critically analyzing “our own practice” and ensuring that students and parents feel heard when expressing their perspectives and that their concerns are addressed (listening, connecting). She sees this as particularly important because of the multiple privileged identities she holds.

David explained that there are responsibilities that are explicit and implicit. Those that are explicit are providing observations (sharing knowledge of student) and providing his perspective on the best environment for his student (contributing). Those that are implicit include being an advocate for his student because of power imbalances that impact students’ daily lives. Jacob saw advocacy as an important part of his responsibility, particularly because, as he put it, inclusion does not necessarily equate to equity. He saw advocacy as sharing student strengths (sharing knowledge of student), incorporating suggestions given by others (listening, demonstrating flexibility), and providing evidence of student growth (sharing knowledge of student).

### ***Summary of PSTs Final Reflection***

With the first two questions of the final reflection, I asked PSTs to discuss inequity specifically and how they would discuss inequity with their students. Their responses ranged from general descriptions to more complex explanation using visuals. In their responses, PSTs were beginning to think about how to translate the knowledge they were building around inequity and the domains of power to help students understand its complexity. When asked, PSTs were also able to name ways that students of color identified with (dis)abilities are marginalized in schools and to connect larger societal inequities with their interpersonal interactions with these students.

Additionally, issues of power and oppression undergird PSTs' responses about their role as members of the IEP team. In their initial reflections, they saw their roles as sharing knowledge about how their students are doing in their content area. By their final reflection, they incorporated collaboration and advocacy into their responses as well. They not only discussed sharing knowledge of the student but also discussed listening, connecting, and contributing during meetings. Audrey and David spoke directly to social identity and power, demonstrating their recognition of how power manifests in educational spaces and their thinking about their social identities as well as the identities of their students and families. PSTs were beginning to connect how collaboration and advocacy can serve to disrupt inequitable practices.

## Chapter 6

### Discussion

In order for PSTs to disrupt inequitable practices that can harm families and students, they must understand the complexity of inequity along the lines of social identity and how power and oppression manifest within society and the education system. Therefore, they must engage in practice and learning opportunities that helps them uncover how inequity manifests in society and schools. Students of color identified with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable groups in schools and this is seen throughout suspension/expulsion, restrictive placement, and post-secondary employment statistics (Blanchett, 2009; U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2014). Research demonstrates that PSTs enter their teacher education with varying levels of knowledge of inequity related to race and ability status (King, 1991; Broderick & Lalvani, 2017). White PSTs in particular have limited engagement with people of color prior to entering their teacher education programs (Sleeter, 2008). However, it is important not to assume that PSTs of color enter teacher education programs with a critical understanding of structural inequities that have historically impacted people of color in the United States (Cherry-McDaniel, 2016). We also must not assume that if PSTs enter with an understanding of how groups have been historical marginalized by race that this understanding applies consistently across other historically marginalized identities (i.e. ability status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc.). It is also important to acknowledge that limited interactions PSTs that are considered able-bodied have with people identified with disabilities prior to teaching can negatively impact their perceptions of people identified with disabilities (Bank, 2015). For these reasons, the course at the center of this study focused specifically

on the intersection of race and ability. PSTs engaged in discussions and practices at the intersection of race and ability status with varying levels of prior knowledge and criticality. The purpose of these discussions and practices was to disrupt dysconsciousness (related to race and/or ability status) and support PSTs in developing their critical consciousness.

King (1991) defines dysconsciousness as “an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as a given” (p. 135). Freire (1970) discusses the need for students to develop critical consciousness in order to engage in critical intervention. Dysconsciousness is diametrically opposed to critical consciousness and critical intervention. Critical consciousness is required to identify inequity and determine an appropriate response (critical intervention). Dysconsciousness can be applied to different forms of inequity (King, 1991; Broderick & Lalvani, 2017), including race and ability status. As dysconscious racism “tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges” (King, p. 135), dysconscious ableism is an “impaired or distorted way of thinking about (dis)ability...one that tacitly accepts dominant ableist norms and privileges” (Broderick & Lalvani, p. 895). PSTs can range in their positions related to race and ability from dysconsciousness to critical consciousness. It is important to note that movement from dysconsciousness to critical consciousness is not linear which implies that learning and unlearning happens over time and conflicts between previously held beliefs and new ideas are inevitable.

In their initial simulations, PSTs ranged in their recognition of and response to the racist/ableist incident presented by Mrs. Johnson. Most PSTs (4 of 6) did not name or signal to Mrs. Johnson that they saw this as an issue of racism and none of the PSTs indicated that they saw this as an issue of ableism, although they all acknowledged this as an issue of bullying in which Mariah was harmed. Half of the recommendations (3 of 6) did not attend to Mariah’s potential needs for support in the situation and ranged from not addressing Mariah at all to placing the burden of

helping Brian on Mariah. Although PSTs were able to recognize that Mariah was harmed, their difficulty in either recognizing or discussing the specific type of harm Mariah experienced may have inhibited their ability to present a recommendation that fully met Mariah's needs as a Black student identified with (dis)abilities.

During the initial simulations, PSTs also ranged from conveying deficit-based perspectives to asset-based perspectives of students identified with (dis)abilities through their language use and underlying perspectives. For example, Jeffrey named general education classes "normal" classes and labeled students as "fast or slow." Jacob explained that Mariah would not be accepted by her general education teachers because of her (dis)ability and David alluded to the idea that Mariah is not college-ready given that she does not have a 4.0 average. These perspectives are based in the dominant narrative used to compare general education students with students identified with (dis)abilities and position students identified with (dis)abilities as having limited strengths in comparison with their general education peers. In contrast, Madison, Nicole, and Audrey speak directly to Mariah areas of strength and need as they provide a recommendation without engaging normal/abnormal dichotomies. This provides room for PSTs to tap into the multidimensionality of Mariah and provide recommendations that attend to both Mariah areas of strength and need. Each of the PSTs struggled with providing rationales for their recommendations, which ranged from not directly stating their rationales to providing rationales for some recommendations and not others, as a result, hindering their ability to fully express to Mrs. Johnson how their recommendations best met Mariah's social and/or academic needs. PSTs were probed about their language, perspectives, and recommendations in order to support reflection on their practice while also engaging in discussions focused on inequity at the intersection of race and ability during the course.

PSTs also ranged in their approach to the subject matter within the course. As demonstrated by PSTs inequity reflections written at the beginning of the course (chapter 5), each entered with a

belief that inequity existed and manifested in schools and were able to provide at least one example. However, their definitions and examples referenced different domains of power, making it unclear whether they were seeing the connection between macro and micro inequities. Therefore, by engaging critical frameworks as analytic tools, the course provided PSTs opportunities to see how these domains of power overlap and the ways structural inequities can manifest in their classrooms and in the educational spaces around them.

PSTs varied in their desire and/or ability to take up the frameworks of intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) as well as discussions related to stereotypes of people identified with (dis)abilities, recognizing racism/ableism, and connecting structural inequities to their practice. During week 3 of the course PSTs split into two camps, the first rejecting the content presented and the other supporting it. As the course progressed, the first camp split into two groups, the PST who continued to reject what is presented (Jeffrey) and the PST who worked to reconcile his beliefs with the class content (Jacob). Jacob, the PSTs in the second group consistently engaged the frameworks throughout the course even though it was not always clear whether he adopted them. The PSTs in the second camp consistently engaged frameworks as analytic tools throughout the course.

Jacob and Jeffrey pushed back against their colleagues belief that the media presents stereotypes of people identified with disabilities and as a result fuel the deficit perspectives of able-bodied people (week 3). Jacob raised the question, "So, are we only to read works by folks with disabilities if we're to...I read somewhere, somebody said, "Do we only read books by birds if we want to be an ornithologist?" How do we separate that?" and Jeffrey critiqued intersectionality, stating his belief that it is divisive. By week 7, Jeffrey and Jacob's approach to the material diverged from each other. For example, when discussing DisCrit, Jeffrey took an example of an outburst of a student identified with a (dis)ability presented by his colleague to support his argument that certain

children identified with (dis)abilities should not be placed in general education and expressed his belief in a unidirectional benefit from students in general education to students in special education. Jeffrey's stance upholds the status quo as opposed to taking up a framework that requires him to think critically about exclusionary perspectives. In contrast, Jacob asked whether he should enter meetings wholly rejecting IQ testing, indicating that he is working to reconcile what he was learning in the course with the realities of schooling. Near the end of the course (week 11), Jeffrey asks a question regarding whether it possible for teachers to change the dynamic of IEP meetings and whether there is anything new a general education teacher can contribute.

The split between their approaches are also reflected in their simulation reflections. Jeffrey does not engage in critical analysis of his practice and Jacob suggests *slight* changes to his practice. Jeffrey circumvents writing about the issues of racism and ableism in detail and when asked to think about *how* the instance of bullying for Mariah was different than it would be for himself, he was able to state that the issues Mariah faced had different consequences for her but stopped short of answering *how* those consequences differed. Jacob explained that he would change his approach *slightly* by addressing the issue with Brian first before moving on to discussing Mariah's academics. He did not recognize the impact that a change he defined as slight would have on his relationship with Mrs. Johnson and Mariah. Although both PSTs shared similar perspectives at the beginning of the course when discussing the social construction of (dis)ability and both hedged in taking up these frameworks, they approached the content in contrasting ways. Jacob often engaged in discussions with his colleagues about these ideas, whereas Jeffrey presented challenges but left the work of addressing them to his colleagues.

Madison, David, Nicole, and Audrey were more inclined to embrace and/or apply the frameworks during class activities and draw on their personal and professional experiences across discussions. As mentioned above, David, Madison, Nicole, and Audrey expressed that limited

exposure to people identified with disabilities causes able-bodied people to oversimplify and make assumptions about people identified with disabilities. When engaging intersectionality, they each discussed ways that intersectionality would be helpful in understanding inequity. In their discussions, member of this group focused on recognizing issues of racism and ableism and connecting teaching to structural inequities. They were also willing to discuss how race, power, and social identity are connected to decreased parent involvement in schools and the negative impacts of exclusion on parent participation. They also reflected on how issues of power impact the decision to acknowledge parents' expertise, promote student's agency, and impact teacher's advocacy practices.

This orientation was also highlighted in their simulation reflection. For example, David explained that he should have named the issue as discrimination and his own experiences of racism impacted his ability to fully attend to Mariah's experience. Madison discussed her position as a White teacher to support students that are marginalized. Audrey discussed the intersection of race and ability and the impact of school culture on the prevalence of racist/ableist interactions. When asked to apply intersectionality to the situation, Nicole was able to see the interaction between race, gender and (dis)ability, name the dominant identities held by Brian, Mariah's marginalized identities, and connect it to societal power dynamics.

### **Final Simulations**

By their final simulations, five PSTs demonstrated growth as measured by their ability to connect their knowledge of Mariah to the information Mrs. Johnson provided and provide a recommendation that attended to Mariah's academic and social needs. The PST that moved from a proficient to expert level of engagement (LoE; Audrey), the two that moved from an advanced beginner to proficient LoE (Nicole, Madison), and the PST that moved from a novice to advanced beginner LoE (Jeffery) each demonstrated a growth in their collaboration skills by actively listening to the information Mrs. Johnson shared and connecting it to their recommendation. These PSTs

demonstrated flexibility by adjusting their recommendation if it did not initially attend to Mrs. Johnson's concern about Mariah taking her accommodations and Mariah's concern about being singled out because she is a Black student with a learning disability. The PST that moved from advanced beginner to advanced beginner/proficient LoE (David), demonstrated the skills listed above but struggled when he rescinded a recommendation that incorporated Mrs. Johnson and Mariah's concerns to focus on a recommendation he developed prior to the meeting. The PST that moved from advanced beginner to novice/advanced beginner LoE (Jacob) struggled with connecting Mrs. Johnson's concern to his recommendation therefore missing the opportunity to collaborate.

PSTs perspectives of their role as members of the IEP team also expanded. In their first reflection, most of the PSTs focused on sharing the knowledge of the student based on their student's engagement with the content of their class. By their final reflection, PSTs discussed sharing knowledge of their student, listening to the parent, connecting ideas, and contributing during meetings – important elements of collaboration and advocacy. These beginning steps demonstrate a pivot in their thinking about their ability to contribute to IEP meetings.

A pattern emerged between PST ability and/or desire to take up critical frameworks and critically reflect on their practice and the execution of their final simulation. PSTs who rejected or struggled to reconcile the frameworks with their perspectives and hesitated on critiquing their practice remained in the novice and advanced beginner LoE by the final simulation. This group stayed primarily on the left side of the spectrum.

A particular challenge for me was disrupting Jeffrey's silence to the issues. In class discussions and simulation reflections, he consistently maneuvered away from issues of race and ability by either focusing the discussion on his own personal experiences or critiquing technical aspects of the simulation. I responded to Jeffrey individually through his simulation reflection and

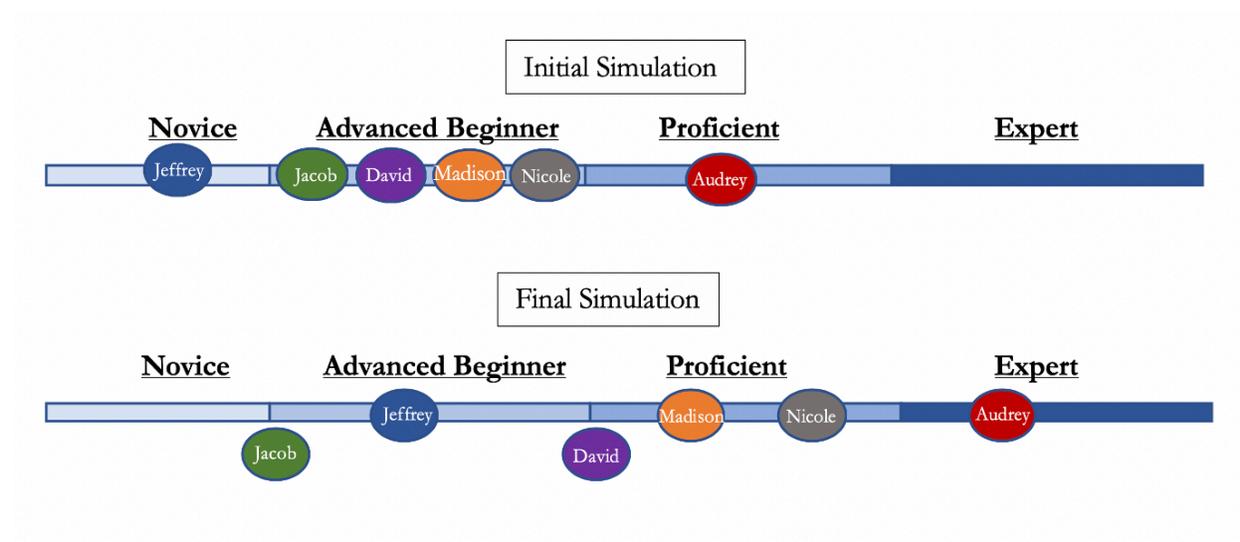
other class assignments and although he demonstrated growth in the final simulation, he continued to need instructor intervention to support his grappling with issues of racism and ableism.

Although Jacob consistently engaged with the frameworks, he struggled reconciling his beliefs with critical analysis of his privileged identities (i.e able-bodiedness, race). Jacob seemed to regress in his final simulation, this may be a result of his continued to struggle with reconciling the new knowledge gained in this course with his prior beliefs and perspectives.

The students who engaged the critical frameworks and were willing to critique their practice (at varying levels of criticality) moved from the advanced beginner and proficient LoE to advanced beginner/proficient, proficient, and expert LoE. This group moved primarily to the right side of the spectrum (Figure 6.1).

**Figure 6.1**

*PST Initial and Final Simulation Level of Engagement (LoE) Comparison*



PSTs in this study range between dysconscious racism/ableism to critical consciousness. Dysconsciousness can manifest in their speech, actions, or both. The integration of critical frameworks and reflection throughout the course were preliminary steps in assisting PSTs with disrupting dysconsciousness and supporting their move toward critical consciousness.

## Implications

Findings of my research reiterate the need for deliberate engagement with PSTs on issues of race and its intersection with other marginalized identities to provide them with the tools to articulate their thinking, question previously held assumptions, and develop practices to disrupt inequity as noted by various scholars that study both racism and ableism (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Khasnabis et al., 2018; Lalvani & Broderick, 2013; Sleeter, 2008). Using simulations as a method to prepare general education teachers in special education practices has the potential to expand both teacher educator pedagogy and pre-service teacher equity practices. At the end of the course, PSTs' levels of enactment were at different places along the spectrum. Although most (5 of 6) PSTs showed growth between initial and final simulations, this study reveals that continued professional development throughout their teacher preparation programs and when they enter schools is important for teachers to move from dysconscious racist and ableist to critically conscious perspectives and practices. This study also highlights the interconnected work of engaging critical frameworks, teacher educator supported reflection, and practice-based pedagogy that helps provide PSTs with language, alternative perspectives, and opportunities to practice implementing equity practices.

Instructors play a critical role in providing differentiated instruction for PSTs through individual reflection – this helps mitigate the challenge of attending to the different knowledge bases and levels of equity practices that are revealed during initial assessments, reflections, and class discussions. The partnership of instructor-supported reflections and practice-based opportunities capture both PST articulation of concepts and application of what they learn to their practice.

This study also highlights the importance of carefully developing simulations to prepare PSTs for their work with communities of color. It also highlights the importance of engaging PSTs

content area knowledge within simulations. Simulations that address inequity must be carefully constructed to represent communities of color in ways that are asset-based and highlight specific skills that enrich PSTs equity practices. This provides opportunities for the instructor to direct PSTs to specific skills of strength and areas of improvement. PSTs must also reflect on their simulation throughout the semester in order to (1) reflect on different aspects of their practice with each reflection or (2) engage in extended reflection of a particular practice and (3) review and respond to areas of improvement they observed or are noted by their instructor.

For the simulations in this study, PSTs were assigned as homeroom teachers because the course brought together PST across various content areas. Although this allowed for similar experiences across PSTs, it also opened the opportunity for some PSTs to detach from making recommendations or reflecting on their practice and relinquish responsibility for Mariah's academic and social progress. Future simulations should incorporate PSTs content areas through the use of student work.

## **Contributions**

### **Pedagogical Contributions**

A major contribution of this study is its application in reassessing how we, as teacher educators, leverage text, whole and small group discussions, PST participation, course experiences and knowledge base, our assessment practices, and the links between our lived experiences and our practice. Teaching is a complex practice (Ball & Forzani, 2009), our work as teacher educators should be constantly transforming and moving toward social justice and until we get there, our work is not done.

**Leveraging texts.** I set the expectation early that PSTs should engage in texts (readings, audio recordings, videos, etc.) to develop their understanding of the materials. For the first five weeks of the course, we engaged each of our texts in depth in order to build PSTs knowledge of the

foundational frameworks of the class and to indicate to them that I expected them to engage their perspective on the readings during each class discussion. Although we were not able to delve into every text in depth as we did for the foundational texts, PSTs continued to refer to the texts they were assigned each week as we engaged in new topics. Each of the topics covered over the course of the semester took up aspects of the critical frameworks either directly or indirectly. For example, I invited speakers whose work focused specifically on disrupting inequity focused on race and/or ability status. The session on *school discipline* was developed with intersectionality and DisCrit in mind. This session focused specifically on the interpersonal domain of power (teachers have the authority to enforce discipline policy) and multidimensional v. singular notions of identity (disrupting narratives around labeling students of color identified with (dis)abilities as “troublemakers”). The lesson on *teacher discretion* was developed with the interpersonal and cultural domains of power in mind as to disrupt narratives about who can and cannot achieve in particular content areas and how the power teachers use to make decisions can serve to uplift or marginalize students. Multidimensional notions of identity, interdependence of racism and ableism, and the material and psychological impacts of race were also considered in the planning of this session for the reasons noted above. Taking up critical frameworks can help in focusing our objectives for each class session and ensuring that we highlight the ways inequity can manifest in various aspects of teacher practice.

**Leveraging whole/small group discussion.** Research has demonstrated that PSTs, particularly White students, may find discussions about race harrowing (DiAngelo, 2010; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014). This informed my decision to leverage small group discussions more heavily than whole group discussions. PSTs in this study were able to engage in small group conversations with their peers that they had taken courses with previously, providing opportunities for them to share their thoughts and perspectives, freely. I leveraged whole group to introduce new topics and connect

previous comments PSTs made in either small group (after listening to small group recordings) or whole group to connect to the upcoming topic. I also used whole group to respond to their reflections (holistically) as an introduction or to facilitate the continuation of a conversation (for example, “In your reflections you each stated that inequities exist in education, here are statistics related to X that support this belief, how might this impact our practice?”), and to provide PSTs the opportunity to share ideas discussed in their groups.

When educators grapple with issues of race and/or its intersection with other identities, there are times where problematic stances are shared in whole and small group discussions. I used these comments or questions to inform my planning for the following class, and to respond to areas of confusion and/or misunderstandings. For example, a common question that is asked, and was asked by one of my students, is “Why can’t we just treat each other as human beings?” In the following class session on intersectionality, I returned to that question, reframing it to inform our inquiry into intersectionality by asking, “What purpose does attending to the intersection of multiple social identities serve in understanding, seeing, and treating others as human beings?” with the purpose of signaling to the PST that I value his engagement with the work but also pushing his (and his colleagues’) thinking about whether or not all individuals in society and schools get treated as human beings. If the comment or question arose in small group, instead of singling out individual students, I would address these ideas within the content of the following class in order to clarify any misunderstandings or to disrupt deficit thinking. Additionally, to help PSTs hear/see the growth in their thinking, I would quote each PST to introduce a class session and discuss how their ideas connect to one another. This helped them see the work we were doing as a community.

Relationship building is key to this work. Although my PSTs knew each other previously, we engaged (I participated also) in activities to think about our personal identities (i.e. favorite music, hobbies), what differentiates them from our social identities (i.e. ability status, race, gender), and our

social identities in relation to our students. It laid important groundwork for the class but also provided an opportunity for PSTs to learn new things about each other and about me, as their instructor. After these activities, we debriefed and three PSTs shared that it was challenging to speak about their social identities because of its “controversial” nature. This allowed us to get that out on the table early in the semester and allowed me to address it before we engaged in more complex conversations. Throughout the semester PSTs engaged with each other, built on each other’s ideas, challenged each other, and surreptitiously named inequity in ways that they knew their colleagues would understand. This demonstrated to me, as the instructor, that there is a very important process that PSTs go through to get to the point of directly naming racism and even in the small incremental steps there is growth.

Courses are social spaces, they have life. Therefore, it is essential as educators that we remain flexible knowing that our students enter with various levels of knowledge, abilities to express their understandings, and abilities to actively execute their beliefs. This requires that our pedagogy shift as PSTs our shift, at times these shifts are incremental, and at other times tremendous.

**Giving and receiving grace.** Understanding that growth can manifest in unexpected ways, I approach teaching with the understanding that I may be working with PSTS who spent most of their lives looking, thinking, and acting through one perspective (whether they were 20-something or 60-something). This helped me to put the work that I planned to do in perspective and not to expect that all my students would do a miraculous 360 with my course. This emphasized for me my responsibility in laying the groundwork for their future growth. It was not lost on me that this work is hard, trust is difficult to attain, and both my PSTs and I made mistakes. They not only needed my grace but I also required theirs. For example, an incident that took place on campus and our first class after the incident I went back to business as usual and it took reflection and attending town halls regarding the incident to realize I took a harmful approach. I wrote a letter of apology to my

PSTs and informed them that it would be the first thing we would tackle the next class. PSTs shared their perspectives, their hurts, their worries – particularly that their instructors had taken the initial approach I had – and in their willingness to have talk with me, they showed me grace in the same way I work to do when they made mistakes.

**Taking nothing for granted.** Research has demonstrated that students of color do not receive what they need at predominantly White teacher education programs (Gist, 2017). I refused to take for granted that I may have students, both PSTs of Color *and* White PSTs that have experienced (in the case of PSTs of Color), have been processing, and/or grappling with race. Although they may have been familiar with the foundational activities, I made it a priority to push them to think about marginalization at the intersection of race and ableism and share their understanding about racism but trouble their conception of other marginalized identities (specifically ability) that intersected with race. David, the PST of color highlight in this study shared,

My membership in a subset of marginalized communities does position me to uniquely empathize with other oppressed peoples, but this membership does not bestow upon me a full understanding of oppression and much less how others comprehend and experience their own. To a great extent, this understanding has become repositioned in my purview.

Begrudgingly, I will admit that as a first-generation, low-income, Latinx individual, I had come to view myself as somewhat of an expert on the concept and consequent impact of intersectionality on people's lives. In fact, in all sincerity, during our beginning sessions it was rather challenging to accept that we were being assigned introductory materials regarding issues of social identity and intersectionality. In many ways, it felt as though these courses were specifically catered to white, middle-class individuals who had not experienced these issues in their own lives, or at the very least people who did not explicitly study these concepts due to

their major or chosen line of work...In this respect, people of color have often felt like they have not gained much in the way of new learning, revelations, and/or reflections...Well, for a brief moment, this course felt like that. Fortunately, that all changed relatively quickly.

Though there were a great many sessions that were insightful due to the content, there were none more revealing than the session in which we read the article, “Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language,” by Nora Groce. It was revealing for a multitude of reasons: 1) It was an incredibly thought-provoking narrative which allowed me to better approximate my biases and presumptions towards the (dis)abled community, 2) and the discussion break-outs with my peers were incredibly fruitful both for positive and revealing reasons. It is my honest belief that we are all convinced that we are good people simply because we do not actively wish harm on someone or on a group of people. It is through this very line of reasoning, by which we can claim not to be racist if one does not actively hate people of color...

I became aware of my biases most obviously as a result of the narrative. I found myself thinking thoughts like, “yeah, but there are so many individuals who are afflicted by this impairment, of course it makes sense to live in such a way that they are included.” In general, my thoughts were all based on the foundation that majority rules. If there were a large enough population that beckoned such accommodations, then their needs would be met, such as they were in this narrative. Alarmingly, if we attempt to apply this very logic to ideas like racism—a concept I consider myself much more knowledgeable about—I am essentially stating that as long as there are more white individuals, then it makes the most sense to cater to their needs and expectations since they hold the largest number of stakeholders. The problem is that I know that I do not agree with that notion, in fact it is antithetical to my philosophy as a person. By propagating this

view, I would be in favor of the continued oppression of colored peoples. So, knowing this, I asked myself why was I applying this same flawed logic to issues regarding (dis)abled folks? Once these thoughts flew through my mind, it did not take me long to arrive to the realization that it was because I lacked empathy for (dis)abled folks. Yet, accepting and recognizing this required that I also concede that I had biases and presumptions, regardless of the fact that I formed part of other marginalized groups that were fighting against their own demons. Of course, I am aware that such a phenomenon exists. It is the same reason that the Latinx community can look down on Black folks, the reason that colorism exists even within families, etc. But, admitting that I had these previously held biases and assumptions was challenging to admit.

As David notes, each of us have biases and presumptions. Although not directly stated, his reflection implies that there is value in structured opportunities to support our engagement and disruption of biases and presumptions we hold.

**Diversity of knowledge does not only exist in K-12 classrooms.** Acknowledging that I would have a variety of PSTs with knowledge and/or experiences of racism and/or ableism, I did not want PSTs with these understandings and/or experiences feel like they were beginning from the ground up – again. Often in TE programs we study issues of marginalization separately, applying intersectionality helped my PSTs think about marginalization with more complexity. I provided opportunities for PSTs to discuss racism (leveraging their knowledge) when thinking about ableism (which most of us who are considered able-bodied do not have to consider in our everyday lives).

What is most exciting about this study is that demonstrates the very fact that stances are malleable and as educators we can move the needle for both PSTs that enter our class with robust knowledge and those who are grappling with discussing -isms for the first time. This study reminds me that learning (for everyone) takes time and that it is important to develop an environment

conducive to engaging in this work – ensuring PSTs that it is okay to make mistakes and that responding to a person’s mistakes does not require a psychological take down to make a point. As an educator I must be able to see the potential that lies in the most challenging to the most engaged student. Additionally, PSTs provide instructors with multiple opportunities to take up their ideas – both problematic and profound – and think of ways to integrate and reframe questions that are meant to trivialize our content to uplift and emphasize its importance.

**Continuity between classwork and assessment practices.** Just as the course is built on the foundation of The Color of Mind, intersectionality, and DisCrit, so were the assessments with the purpose of providing opportunities for PSTs to put their beliefs/understandings into practice and reflect on what they may have done to support the parent and student and what aspect of their practice may have served to marginalize them. This is especially important because even though PSTs may have some idea of what they *may* do, they do not know what they would *actually* do until they have an opportunity to practice it. They also do not know that they would *change* in their practice, until they actually *reflect* on it.

**Link between lived experiences and practice.** We, as teacher educators, need to reflect on our stance in relation to ableism, racism, sexism, classism, etc., not superficial reflection that usually come in the form of soundbite we throw around with our colleagues but engaging in individual – and group reflection with people we can trust that are going to call us out on our *stuff* because *we all have stuff*. We have to care about the lived experiences of young people and their families. We have to care about the lived experiences of teachers and our PSTs that will become beginning teachers. We have to care about dealing with our own racist, ableist, sexist, classist, etc., tendencies. We have to ask ourselves what theoretical frameworks will help unearth this *stuff* for ourselves and for our students. Then use those theoretical frameworks to structure the design of curriculum that incorporates theory (why PSTs do what they do) and practice (what PSTs do) and

use this to guide their growth, as future teachers, and our growth as practitioners. This work requires us to give grace and also comes with a cost, Jacqueline Mattis (personal communication, April 2, 2020) described what this work requires of us,

WE are talking specific types of learning (race, identity, social justice)...actually requires TEs to have a prophetic vision about their students where you can imagine them evolving before they evolve, develop a curriculum, be patient enough, when it comes to these issues that holds the possibility of growth, compassion(ate) space to make mistakes...and it comes with a cost and we need to name that – need to make that known – how you think about the costs, creating a context for growth, normalizing calibrating growth in small ways that you cannot underestimate...

As many teacher educators of color have shared, this work does come at a cost and requires us to be compassionate in ways that White people cannot imagine. Part of this work that Black educators of White students choose to take on are the emotional and psychological blows that can come with engaging in social justice work. It is not for the faint of heart, many can attest to that. This is also an opportunity for our White colleagues to not only acknowledge this but to be co-conspirators (Love, 2019), research has demonstrated that there are already those that have taken up their role in this shared work, but there is always space for more. The more of us that engage in this work, the more teachers impacted—the more families protected from harm, respected, heard, and engaged in partnering with teachers. I know I would be hard pressed to find a teacher educator that does not agree that this is important for the growth and development of students, so why aren't we each engaging in this work? Tackling this question will help start our own process of reflection.

### **Methodological Contributions**

The course introduced my students to the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality and Disability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit), so it was important that I analyzed whether these frameworks supported my PSTs development. Applying the same frameworks to frame the analysis of this study helped to reveal if PSTs, prior to the course, entered with particular knowledge and practices embodied by these frameworks. In order to answer the question of how PSTs incorporated

DisCrit into their thinking and practice, I analyzed their simulations and reflections based on this framework.

Additionally, using the same framework to both develop the curriculum and analyze PSTs uptake, help me to learn what aspects of the frameworks and the course resonated most and the least with PSTs. Engaging this methodological stance would ultimately improve my practice and the ways I engage these frameworks in future classes. The simulations focused on issues that incorporated the first four tenets of DisCrit (see **Chapter 2**). I was able to use the same tenets to analyze PSTs recognition of the issues present and whether their responses and recommendations attended to the intersection of racism and ableism, multidimensional identities, the material and psychological impacts of social construction of race and ability and uplifting marginalized voices (and experiences). I was also able to observe whether their discourse about Mariah focused on her multidimensionality and took her marginalized perspective into account. Using DisCrit to analyze their individual reflections provided a window into whether they recognized aspects of their practice in relation to the first four tenets needed to be improved and whether their reflections on their practice transferred into action.

Applying intersectionality revealed how PSTs were making sense of power and oppression in their reflections at the beginning and end of the course. The specific domains of power – interpersonal, cultural, disciplinary, structural – revealed PST prior knowledge of how inequity manifests in schools. Applying the same framework to their final reflection revealed whether they incorporated additional domains of power into their thinking and identified which domains of power are most salient to their thinking about inequity. Analyzing class sessions that incorporated intersectionality and DisCrit revealed whether PSTs were applying or rejecting these frameworks over time. Studying both their reflections and in-class discussions also revealed parallels between their public and individual stances in relation to these frameworks.

Establishing a methodological frame for course development around issues of marginalization and power and applying the same frame to analyze PST uptake of the material and how they incorporate specific theories into their practice is a powerful tool to track PST development and uptake of class content over time.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

My findings demonstrate that although PSTs may enter a course with familiarity around issues of inequity, they require a foundational in understanding the complexity of how intersecting social identities can lead marginalization. This demonstrates the need for the application of intersectionality as a theoretical framing for work we do in education. Findings also revealed that knowledge of marginalization related to one social identity (i.e. race) does not equate to understanding marginalization of another social identity (i.e. ability status) which highlights how DisCrit can help PSTs delve deep into the complexity of specific intersecting identities. Grounding both theories in understanding the history of how inequity has manifested in education, for example, provides the context for why historical issues continue to persist (The Color of Mind).

Theoretical frameworks provide us with different avenues of looking at the same complex system, what this work does is combine these theories not only in research (which has been done by scholars across multiple areas of research) but also teaching practice. Important questions to ask when thinking about choosing theoretical frameworks that could be used to support teaching practices are: What does this theoretical framework help to reveal in research? What might this framework help our students to see? If one framework reveals part of the picture, what else do I want my students to see and understand, and what other framework(s) can help reveal additional complexity? How can I layer and scaffold these theories in a way that both develop my students' understanding and challenge their thinking?

This can also be extended to work with in-service teachers, how might we use intersectionality and DisCrit to analyze teacher practices within schools and support the creation of professional development that attend to specific tenets of DisCrit? For example, are teachers having difficulty seeing the strengths of their students identified (dis)abilities (tenet 2)? Do teachers seem to be misinterpreting student resistance (tenet 7)? Applying these frameworks to teacher practice and then engaging in research on that practice can help us ask focused questions, provide focused findings, and engage in focused teacher development.

## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Excerpt of Simulated Parent Materials

#### Home Environment

Mariah Johnson is a personable and energetic Black, Caribbean-American 14-year-old girl in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mariah has a younger brother named Xavier that attends the nearby elementary school, Live Oak Academy. He is eight years of age and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Darrian Johnson works in construction and Mrs. Rasheeda Johnson is a beautician. Mrs. Johnson owns her own hair salon and often arrives home late. Mr. Johnson arrives home a couple of hours after Mariah and Xavier arrive from school, and he usually prepares dinner and helps them with their homework. Mr. Johnson accepted a 3-month construction project opportunity in a neighboring state, so for the next few months Mariah will be watching her younger brother after school until Mrs. Johnson gets home. Mariah and her family attend a non-denominational church every Sunday. Mariah is a member of the teen dance ministry at her church.

Mariah and her parents are very close and Mr. and Mrs. Johnson talk to Mariah about their emigration to the United States, instances of racial discrimination they have experienced, and the ways that they and their family persevered despite challenges. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson want Mariah and her brother to be proud of their cultural heritage. Mariah and her brother Xavier visit Trinidad annually and stay with their mother's sister where they attend summer enrichment in reading and math, take swimming lessons, visit family and visit their parents' childhood homes. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson often talk to Mariah and her brother about their childhood in Trinidad. Mr. Johnson continues to follow politics there and often discusses it with Mariah. They often talk about the racial discrimination there and the ways that it parallels the United States. Mariah expressed an interest in dance to her parents in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and she currently takes hip-hop, African, modern, tap, and ballet classes at a Black-owned dance company in Detroit. Her parents chose this dance school specifically because her dance school teaches about the origins of different African instruments, dance styles, and cultural dress. They also chose this company specifically because it is a Black-owned studio and Mariah can feel a sense of community with other Black youth. Mariah enjoys her dance classes and learning about African culture. She is proud of her Caribbean heritage. When Mrs. Johnson realized that Mariah was not reading many books written or featuring people of color in school, she began buying books for Mariah. Mariah's favorites are the *Color of Water* by James McBride and *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas. Mrs. Johnson and Mariah read together often. Mrs. Johnson quizzes her about the books they read together, helps her with unfamiliar vocabulary and clarifying parts of the plot that Mariah may be confused about. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson make sure that Mariah has enrichment opportunities in the summer, help her with her homework, and provide opportunities to work on her reading and math skills because Mariah has struggled in these areas and they are the main areas of her (dis)ability.

Xavier currently attends Mariah's former elementary school, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson consider this school very racially and ethnically diverse but as Mariah has moved to middle school and now high school, they have found that there is less racial diversity. This makes them skeptical of whether Mariah's racial and cultural identities would be affirmed. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have been actively discussing different colleges Mariah can attend after graduating, especially Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and wonder whether Mariah's disability identification will negatively impact her ability to attend college. Mariah and her brother often help her father with projects

around the house, and he uses those opportunities to teach them about measurement and geometry. As a family they go to museums, music and art fairs, concerts, plays, dance performances, movies, family paint nights and roller skating. Sometimes on Saturdays, Mariah goes to work with her mother and helps around the salon. When there is nothing to do, she will find a chair and read until her mother needs help.

### **Who is Mariah?**

Mariah is not afraid to speak her mind when discussing a topic of interest even if other students disagree with her opinions. She often uses her personal experiences, what she learns from her family, and what knows about the world around her to support her explanations during class discussions. Her peers often confide in her and her teachers find her to be good-natured, even-keeled, and fair. Mariah often sticks up for students that have difficulty speaking for themselves. She enjoys English class because she likes connecting her experiences to the experience of the character and identifying the protagonist and antagonist, often pushing students to look in the text to prove their arguments.

Mariah has positive relationships with both teachers and peers. Mariah's peers often confide in her and her teachers find her to be good-natured, even-keeled, and fair. Mariah loves to engage in spirited debates with her classmates, especially in English class. She enjoys talking out her ideas aloud and would help her classmates if they need help with something she understands.

Reading *The Color of Water* with her mother sparked Mariah's interest in reading about Black and Mixed-raced families and their experiences. She looked up pictures of James McBride and his mother. She especially liked the end of the book where James McBride wrote about what each of his brothers and sisters accomplished as adults. Although Mariah struggles with writing, she enjoys writing short stories about her friends and family and sharing it with her teachers. Mariah and her mother read a chapter a night. Mariah would sometimes read ahead and they would talk through elements of the plot that Mariah needs help understanding. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson have begun to read more books featuring Black characters and their families with Mariah (i.e. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *The Darkest Child* by Delores Phillips).

### **Classroom Dynamics**

The demographic composition of Mariah's school and most of her classes are eighty percent White and twenty percent students of color. In Mariah's homeroom class that occurs after 2<sup>nd</sup> hour/period (20 minutes) there are 23 students in the class – 15 White students, 3 Black students, 2 Asian students, 3 Middle-Eastern students. In homeroom, Mariah and her classmates hear daily announcements, engage in team building activities, and meet with their guidance counselor, when necessary. Mariah is social with her classmates and teachers. She enjoys sharing her opinions in class. She has a group of friends that she spends time with both in and outside of school but enjoys getting to know new people.

### **Mr. & Mrs. Johnson Hopes, Dreams, & Aspirations for Mariah**

Mariah wants to either be a dancer or writer. Her parents want her to continue the things that interest her. They also want her to have agency and express when she needs help and classroom supports. Mariah wants to attend college, but she is unsure if she wants to move away from home.

Her parents want her to continue to be passionate about the things that she enjoys doing and to pick a career that she loves that highlights her multiple strengths.

They also mentioned that they would like Mariah to join some extracurricular activities because it would look good on college applications. They often talk to Mariah about how she is progressing in her classes. They also had questions about whether Mariah would be obtaining a diploma and if options for extra-help are available. Mrs. Johnson would like to hear back from teachers more often on Mariah's progress. Although Mr. and Mrs. Johnson see Mariah is keeping up, they want to make sure they stay on top of it because they want her to take all general education classes.

### **Mr. & Mrs. Johnson's Observations & Concerns**

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are aware that Mariah struggles with reading, and want to know if the school has peer-tutoring or if the team knows of any reading programming that they can enroll Mariah in next school year. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson shared that Mariah enjoys writing, she has a journal at home that she often carries around with her, jotting down her thoughts and poetry. She often reads her poetry to her parents but her Ms. Johnson notices grammatical and spelling errors in Mariah's writing. Mr. Johnson mentioned that he helps Mariah with her mathematics homework when he can, and they are considering obtaining a tutor to make sure she stays on track with algebra.

At the last meeting, Mariah shared that Biology and Art are her favorite classes and that she might want to join the volleyball team or the debate team her history teacher was telling her about. Mariah is currently in two general education classes (Art, PE), her other classes continue to be small classes (special education classes with 15 students or less with a special education teacher and a teacher's assistant) and resource room, where she obtains academic support for her content areas subjects.

### **Mr. & Mrs. Johnson's Request for an IEP Meeting**

Mariah was identified as having a learning disability in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and has been in small classes since then. From their discussions with Mariah's teachers, IEP meetings, and their own observations Mariah's learning disability are in the areas reading, writing, and mathematics. They know that Mariah's IEP lists her goals in these areas and that Mariah receives additional time to complete test and assignments. Her small classes have fifteen students or less, and most of her classmates are also identified with learning disabilities. Her general education classes range from 25-30 students. In each of her classes since the fifth grade, Mariah has had one teacher and one teacher assistant. Currently, Mariah is in small classes for English, Mathematics, Science, and Global History. She is in general education classes for Art and Physical Education. She also has resource room, which meets daily.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson advocated for Mariah to be placed in all general education classes but they received pushback from Mariah's teachers and the special education coordinator at Mariah's previous school. They explained that Mariah was doing well in the small class setting, obtained individualized support and had access to the same curriculum that general education student received. Mr. & Mrs. Johnson agreed to keep Mariah in small classes since she was experiencing success, this most recent incident (explained below) resurfaced Mr. and Mrs. Johnson's desire for Mariah to be placed in general education classes.

For this upcoming IEP meeting, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson want to discuss Mariah's current schedule and academic supports. They want Mariah to be placed in all general education classes with resource room, for three reasons (1) that Mariah is doing well in her smaller classes and wants to be moved back into general education, (2) there was an incident that occurred with a White general education student in homeroom and they are worried that this would have a negative impact on their daughter socially, and (3) that her classes in special education would hurt her access to college in the future.

Mariah explained to her parents that she has been getting to homeroom late because a few weeks ago a

White male general education student, Brian, said he saw her walking out of Ms. William's Biology class which is composed of mostly students of color, he told Mariah he heard that Ms. William's class is "where all the Black kids are" and that he heard it was the "slow class." He asked Mariah if she was in the "slow class." The students that were with him were mostly White, Mariah explained, and they laughed after he said that to her. She would arrive to homeroom late so that she did not bump into him and his friends in the hallway and could find a seat away from them after all the students were seated. This incident occurred in December and Mariah's special education teacher, Mrs. Smith, scheduled a meeting for the first available time in January.

This is of great concern to Mr. or Mrs. Johnson because they do not want their daughter mistreated because of her race or the fact that she is identified with a disability. They know that she needs supports but believes that these supports can be given to her in a general education classes with resource room because they do not want their daughter to continuously experience this type of treatment from her peers. It has also made them think about her college prospects and whether being in small classes would hinder her opportunity to attend the college of her choice. They would like to explain that Mariah is still hurt by the incident but did not feel comfortable telling anyone what happened because she did not want anyone to force her to interact with the boy again. When Mr. and Mrs. Johnson questioned Mariah after they received an automated message from the school about her being late to class, Mariah reluctantly explained the situation and decided to deal with it "in her own way," which is to avoid engaging with this student.

### **Decision Rules for Standardized Parent's Responses During the Simulation**

When appropriate, Mrs. Johnson responds using "we" signifying how both she and Mr. Johnson feel about Mariah's goal/interests, their hopes/dreams/aspirations, and any concerns/worries they have

## Decision Rules for Parent and Special Educator

	<sup>4</sup> If the PST...	Parent	Special Educator
1	Greets Mrs. Johnson	Mrs. Johnson should enter, greet both the special educator and pre-service teacher (PST), and should remind the team that <i>her husband could not make the meeting because he is working on a special project out of state</i> , but she will share what takes place during the meeting with him and/or he looks forward to meeting with them soon.	"Hello Mrs. Johnson, it is a pleasure seeing you again, I'm Ms. Smith, I chaired Mariah's last IEP meeting."
2		As the special educator is going through Mariah's progress comments, Mrs. Johnson will comment that "Mr. Johnson has been helping Mariah with Algebra," "Mariah really enjoys Art," and "Biology is one of Mariah's favorite subjects."	Review Mariah's report card grades and progress comments (reading Mariah's grade and then the most recent comments, starting with Algebra down to resource room).
3	Begins the conversation asking if Mrs. Johnson has any questions.	Mrs. Johnson begins with the incident, "I'm glad you asked, this is the reason my Darrian and I called this meeting today. Mariah shared with us why she has been arriving late to homeroom and said she dealt with the situation "in her own way." A few weeks ago, Mariah told us a White student named Brian, who is also in your homeroom class saw Mariah walking from Ms. William's Biology class, which is one of her small classes. He asked her if that was where all the Black kids were and that he heard it was the "slow class." He asked Mariah if she was in the "slow class." A group of his friends, mostly White students, began to laugh. After that happened, she would purposely arrive to homeroom late so that she did not bump into him and his friends in the hallway and could find a seat away from them after all the students were seated. She told us she wanted to deal with it in "her own way" instead of telling the teacher and having to interact with that student again."	<b>Important Note:</b> Although you may be tempted to take an advocacy stance, please do not probe or lead – it is important for the PST to demonstrate their ability to respond to Mrs. Johnson's concern and provide suggestions/recommendations on both the racist and ableist issues. Below there are suggestions on how to redirect PST, if necessary.
4	Shares that Mariah has been getting to homeroom late	Mrs. Johnson should respond, "Mariah is not typically late for any of her classes."  Pause and wait for PST's response.  <b>If the PST moves on</b> "I would like to discuss this a bit more"	

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from simulations developed by Debi Khasnabis and Simona Goldin (University of Michigan)

		<p><b>If the PST asks for Mrs. Johnson’s perspective on what she thinks could be going on, continue stating,</b></p> <p>“Darrian and I have been talking about this and this is one of the reasons we wanted to have another meeting. Mariah shared with us why she has been arriving late to homeroom and said she dealt with the situation “in her own way.” A few weeks ago, Mariah told us a White student named Brian, who is also in your homeroom class saw Mariah walking from Ms. William’s Biology class, which is one of her small classes. He asked her if that was where all the Black kids were and that he heard it was the “slow class.” He asked Mariah if she was in the “slow class.” A group of his friends, mostly White students, began to laugh. After that happened, she would purposely arrive to homeroom late so that she did not bump into him and his friends in the hallway and could find a seat away from them after all the students were seated. She told us she wanted to deal with it in “her own way” instead of telling the teacher and having to interact with that student again.</p>	
4A	Asks if there is something they can do to respond to this event	“This bothered us because we do not want our child to be made fun of because of her race or learning disability. We know she needs supports but we believe that she can get the supports she needs in a general education classroom. We would like Mariah to be transferred to all general education classes because we do not want her to keep experiencing this type of treatment from her classmates.”	
4B	Gives a response that does not attend to either the class placement or the racialized incident	Mrs. Johnson responds, “Mariah is still hurt by the incident but did not feel comfortable telling anyone what happened because she did not want anyone to force her to interact with that student again.”	
4D	Responds to the academic issue but not the racialized incident (after conversation about the academic issue).	Mrs. Johnson responds, “I would like to discuss with you what happened between Mariah and Brian.”	
4E	Recommends that Mariah continues with the same schedule	<p>“Why do you think that keeping Mariah in small classes is best?”</p> <p><b>After PST provides reasoning</b> (based on relevant information), “When Mariah shows improvement in these classes, will we be able to meet again at the end of the school year to review this decision again?”</p>	“Yes, we can schedule another meeting before the end of the school year.”

4F	<p>Recommends that Mariah is placed in general education for certain classes</p>	<p>“Which classes do you suggest?”</p> <p><b>If PST provides reasoning</b> (based on relevant information), “When Mariah shows improvement in the other small classes, will we be able to meet again at the end of the school year to review this decision again?”</p>	<p><b><u>If the PST lists classes but does not provide reasoning, “Why do you suggest those particular classes?”</u></b></p> <p>“Yes, we can schedule another meeting before the end of the school year.”</p>
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## Appendix B

### PST Materials

#### Part I: Context and Goals (Initial Simulation)

As a general educator you will work with students identified with (dis)abilities and their parents. In addition to phone calls, emails, and parent-teacher conferences, you will be expected to participate and contribute to the development of your students' Individualized Education Plan. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a document that is developed through the collaboration of the IEP team to provide a student identified with a disability the academic, social, emotional, and/or physical supports they need to be successful in the school environment.

Supporting the development of the IEP requires collaboration with students, parents, and other stakeholders (i.e. social workers, physical therapists, guidance counselors, etc.), which is essential to high quality teaching. IEP meetings provide an opportunity for you to both share what you have learned about your student and to learn about your student from the point of view of families and other stakeholders that work with your student.

As the general education teacher in this simulation, you will be enacting a portion of an IEP meeting. You will have a 15-minute conversation with Ms. Smith, a special educator at your school, and Rasheeda Johnson, the mother of your 9<sup>th</sup> grade student Mariah Johnson. You refer to Mariah's parents by their last name Mrs. and Mr. Johnson, as is customary at your school. Both Mr. Darrian Johnson and Mrs. Rasheeda Johnson typically attend Mariah's IEP meetings. In preparation for the meeting, the chairperson of the special education department sent an email informing the IEP team that only Mrs. Johnson will be attending the meeting, and that her husband Mr. Johnson will not be attending the meeting because he is working on a special construction project out of state.

You are anticipating that Mrs. and Mr. Johnson want to learn about how Mariah is doing academically and socially from your perspective. Mariah has had one IEP meeting for the year so far. The IEP that is in your materials is the IEP that was developed from that meeting in late October of this present school year (2018-2019). Mariah's parents have requested an IEP meeting and they would like to discuss Mariah's current schedule and academic supports.

#### **You will be assessed on your ability to do the following:**

1. Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child .
2. Demonstrate active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues.
3. Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress.
4. Advocate for resources that would help students succeed academically and socially.

In the attached materials, you will find a copy of Mariah's IEP and Mariah's student profile (that includes Mariah's report card, teacher comments, and excerpts). You do not need to make your own determination about Mariah's academic development. You have been provided with materials that outline Mariah's academic progress. Please use these notes to inform your conversation during the parent-teacher conference.

## Enactment

When Mrs. Johnson enters, the IEP meeting will begin with:

- You and the special educator greeting her and introducing yourselves.
- The special educator will review information from the last meeting (summary of last meeting, Mariah's current schedule, report card grades, and updated comments from teachers) and then you will have an opportunity to share your knowledge about Mariah with Mrs. Johnson.

When it is your turn to share,

- explain to the parent what you have learned about Mariah from community building activities and how she is doing in homeroom.
- Based on what you learn from Mariah's parents, your colleagues, Mariah's participation in homeroom, and Mariah's current goals, you will share your perspective on whether Mariah's current class assignments and her current academic supports are appropriate.

To conclude, discuss what you have learned from the team, and make sure academic and/or social goals that you see as appropriate for Mariah.

After the simulation, you will respond to a few questions about the IEP meeting. One of the questions will ask you...

### Part 2: Student Background Information

You are the homeroom teacher for Mariah Johnson, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader. Mariah is in your homeroom class that occurs after 2<sup>nd</sup> hour/period. Mariah is a personable and energetic Black, Caribbean-American 14-year-old girl. She has positive relationship with students in each of her classes. The demographic composition of Mariah's school and most of her classes are eighty percent white and twenty percent students of color. In your homeroom class there are 23 students – 15 white students, 3 black students, 2 asian students, 3 middle-eastern students. Mariah arrives to all of her classes on time. Mariah often enters class deep in conversation with one of her classmates and greets her teachers as soon as she enters the classroom, sometimes engaging her teacher in the conversation she is having with her classmates. She enjoys sharing her opinions and probes her classmates about their ideas. When in the lunch room, she eats lunch with a racial and gender diverse group of students. If she sees a student sitting by themselves, she invites them to eat with her friends.

Mariah has been identified as a student with a learning disability which impacts Mariah's school-based reading, writing, and mathematics performance. Educational testing and classroom performance reveals that although Mariah demonstrates strength in reading comprehension, difficulty in reading words (out of context) and pronouncing new words makes it difficult for Mariah to fully comprehend complex text with new vocabulary. Mariah is able to add and subtract quickly. Her multiplication fluency is slightly under the average range. She struggles with complex word problems that require multiple steps to complete. Mariah is able to compose complex sentences and paragraphs that remain on topic. Mariah continues to need support in spelling, oral expression, and listening comprehension.

Mariah's peers often confide in her and her teachers find her to be good-natured, even-keeled, and fair. Mariah often sticks up for students that have difficulty speaking for themselves. She enjoys English class because she likes connecting her experiences to the experience of the character and identifying the protagonist and antagonist, often pushing students to look in the text to prove their arguments.

You observe that Mariah is kind to towards teachers and peers. She seems to enjoy school, interacting with her friends at school and working with her peers during group activities. Informally, you have spoken to some of Mariah's other teachers and they mentioned that she arrives to class on time daily, hands in assignments on time and participates in class. As her homeroom teacher, through conversations and community building activities you have gotten to know Mariah over the past four months and learned that she enjoys attending school, dance classes, and socializing with her peers. Recently, Mariah has been arriving late to (3<sup>rd</sup> period) homeroom and walks in during the middle of announcements. You notice that lately she has been sitting away from most of the students in homeroom when she comes in. Although Mariah's closest friends are not in homeroom with her, she usually converses with other students in the class.

At the last IEP meeting, Mariah shared that Biology and Art are her favorite classes and that she might want to join the volleyball team or the debate team her history teacher was telling her about. Mariah is currently in two general education classes (Art, PE), her other classes continue to be small classes (special education classes with 15 students or less with a special education teacher and a teacher's assistant).

Special Education Programming:

Most students identified with a learning disability in your school are placed in either:

1. General education classes without special education support – Some students may be identified with a disability but may only need accommodations (on testing) or related services (e.g. physical therapy, social work, etc.) outside of the classroom.
2. General education classes with resource room – Students attend all general education classes and have one special education support class – resource room – to assist them with their academic classes.
3. Mixture of small classes and general education classes – Based on the areas where the student needs support they are given small class for only those areas. This may range from one small class to small classes in all major subject areas. Mariah has a mixture of both small and general education classes, she currently has small class in all her major subject areas and two general education elective classes.

### **Part I: Context and Goals (Final Simulation)**

As a general educator you will work with students identified with (dis)abilities and their parents. In addition to phone calls, emails, and parent-teacher conferences, you will be expected to participate and contribute to the development of your students' Individualized Education Plans. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a document that is developed through the collaboration of the IEP team to provide a student identified with a (dis)ability the academic, social, emotional, and/or physical supports they need to be successful in the school environment.

Supporting the development of the IEP requires collaboration with students, parents, and other stakeholders (i.e. social workers, physical therapists, guidance counselors, etc.), which is essential to high quality teaching. IEP meetings provide an opportunity for you to both share what you have learned about your student and to learn about your student from the point of view of their family and other stakeholders that work with your student.

As the general education teacher in this simulation, you will be enacting a *segment* of an IEP meeting. You will have a 15-minute conversation with Ms. Smith, a special educator at your school, who is Mariah's resource room teacher and case manager, and Mrs. Rasheeda Johnson, the mother of your 9<sup>th</sup> grade student Mariah Johnson. You refer to Mariah's parents by their last name Mrs. and Mr. Johnson, as is customary at your school. Both Mr. Darrian Johnson and Mrs. Rasheeda Johnson typically attend Mariah's IEP meetings. In preparation for the meeting, Ms. Smith sent an email informing the IEP team that only Mrs. Johnson will be attending the meeting, and that her husband Mr. Johnson will not be attending the meeting because he has not yet returned from a special construction project in Indiana.

You are anticipating that Mrs. and Mr. Johnson want *your perspective* on how Mariah is doing academically and socially. Mariah has had three IEP meetings for the year so far. The IEP profile that is in your materials is compiled from the IEP that was developed from Mariah's IEP meeting in early February of this present school year (2018-2019) to finalize Mariah's change in academic placement. Ms. Smith has called the IEP meeting to discuss Mariah's transition and placement into all general education classes and the effectiveness of her accommodations and modifications.

**You will be assessed on your ability to do the following:**

5. Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child.
6. Demonstrate active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues.
7. Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress.
8. Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially.
9. Have knowledge of the student's disability category and use that knowledge to provide a support rationale for suggested next steps.

In the attached materials, you will find a copy of **Mariah's report card grades and report card comments, her progress report from your last meeting, and her Individualized Education Plan**. Please use these notes to inform your conversation during the parent-teacher conference.

### Enactment

When Mrs. Johnson enters, the IEP meeting will begin with:

- You and the special educator greeting her and re-introducing yourselves, as you already met in January.
- The special educator will review information from the last meeting (summary of last meeting, Mariah's current schedule, report card grades, and updated comments from

teachers) and then **you** will have an opportunity to share your knowledge about Mariah with Mrs. Johnson.

When it is your turn to share,

- **explain** to the parent what you have learned about Mariah since your last meeting. Also **discuss** how she is doing in homeroom.
- Based on what you learn from Mariah's parents, your colleagues, Mariah's participation in homeroom, and Mariah's IEP, **you will share your recommendation on whether Mariah's current class placement** (general education classes for her core subjects – Algebra, Global History, Biology, and English – and resource room) **and current academic supports are appropriate based on your expertise as a general education teacher.**

Make sure you consider what you have learned from the IEP team as you formulate your response and determination of the appropriate academic placement for Mariah.

After the simulation, you will respond to a few questions to help you reflect on the IEP meeting.

## **Part 2: Student Background Information**

You are the homeroom teacher for Mariah Johnson, a 9<sup>th</sup> grader. During homeroom, students hear daily announcements, engage in community building activities, and are visited by guidance counselors, when necessary. Mariah is in your homeroom class that occurs after 2<sup>nd</sup> hour/period each day. Mariah is a personable and energetic Black, Caribbean-American, 14-year-old girl. She has positive relationships with students in each of her classes. The demographic composition of Mariah's school and most of her classes are 80% white and 20% students of color. In your homeroom class there are 23 students – 15 White students, 3 Black students, 2 Asian students, 3 Middle-Eastern students.

Mariah has been identified as a student with a learning disability which impacts Mariah's school-based reading, writing, and mathematics performance. Educational testing and classroom performance reveals that although Mariah demonstrates strength in reading comprehension, difficulty in reading words (out of context) and pronouncing new words makes it difficult for Mariah to fully comprehend complex text with new vocabulary. Mariah is able to add and subtract quickly. Her multiplication fluency is slightly under the average range. She struggles with complex word problems that require multiple steps to complete. Mariah is able to compose complex sentences and paragraphs that remain on topic. Mariah continues to need support in spelling, oral expression, and listening comprehension. Mariah has joined the dance team and the debate team since your last IEP meeting.

Mariah is a bit quieter in homeroom but she continues to engage actively during team building activities and makes it to homeroom on time. Mariah has been engaging more with her peers and has been sitting with her friends in homeroom more frequently. When in the lunch room, she continues to eat lunch with a racially and gender diverse group of students. If she sees a student sitting by themselves, she invites them to eat with her friends.

Mariah's peers continue to confide in her and her teachers find her to be good-natured, even-keeled, and fair. Mariah arrives to each of her classes on time. Mariah continues to enjoy English class and was able to start a new unit in her new English class at the beginning of the third marking period. She participates more frequently in small group than in whole group activities since her move to general education. Mariah continues to do well in Art, Physical Education, and Biology. She is having more difficulty in Algebra and Global History than anticipated, given that her grades during the second marking period increased in both classes.

You observe that Mariah is kind towards teachers and peers. She seems to enjoy school, interacting with her friends and working with her peers during group activities.

Since the incident with Brian, Mariah has continued to avoid him and his friends but is not as withdrawn in homeroom as she was in January. She continues to speak with other students in homeroom. During team building activities, she told you she preferred not to be grouped with Brian or his friends. You have accommodated her request and frequently check in with her about how she feels in homeroom. Mariah was receptive to your suggestion that the class engage in community building activities instead of directly talking to Brian because she felt that it would make the situation worse. You have reached out to the administration about school culture (although you did not name Mariah or Brian). They were receptive, but based on your discussion with Mariah, you wanted to take more immediate action. You have worked with the social workers in your school to engage students in activities around personal and social identities and team building.

With the help of the social workers at your school, you have engaged students in a series of activities to develop their understanding of personal and social identities, stereotypes, and discrimination. You engaged students in an activity where students completed a personal identities graphic organizer and discussed their personal identities in small groups. Students rotated to three groups, with allowed them to learn about different members of the classroom community (you structured the groups so that Brian and Mariah were not in the same group). Two social workers visited your homeroom on another occasion to discuss with students what social identities are and the ways people can be discriminated against based on their identities.

You also engaged students in a social identities activity, where they filled out a graphic organizer about their various social identities and chose which identities they would like to share with the group. You noticed that during that activity in particular, Mariah was engaged and enjoyed sharing aspects of her Caribbean-American identity. She shared with the class that she often visits Trinidad with her family and is proud of her Caribbean roots.

On another day, you engaged students in an activity around stereotypes and implicit bias, using examples that spanned the intersection of multiple identities and led a class discussion about how our assumptions based on stereotypes can lead to biased actions against others (you included (dis)ability in your discussion). Over the course of these activities Mariah seemed to open up a bit more in homeroom.

After your meeting with Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Smith in January, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Johnson spoke with Mariah about transferring to general education. The team decided that Mariah would complete the second marking period in small classes. Mariah was placed in general education for all of her classes – Algebra, Global History, Biology, English, Art, & Physical Education – at the beginning of the third marking period. Your school has a nine period school day, Mariah also has

lunch and one free period. She continues to have resource room; and she goes to a testing room to receive **extended time** on examinations in a **separate location**. These two accommodations were added for her general education classes in addition to Mariah receiving them during statewide testing. It is currently the beginning of the fourth marking period and this meeting was called by Ms. Smith to review how Mariah is doing academically and socially in general education and to decide if her placement and accommodations are appropriate.

Since there is no co-teaching model in your school, special education teachers provide consultation to support students identified with disabilities placed in general education classes. The general educators that teach Mariah’s classes receive consultation from Ms. Smith, Mariah’s resource room teacher and case manager. Ms. Smith has reached out to each of Mariah’s teachers to get a report on how Mariah is doing in class and plans to share this at the IEP meeting. Teachers in your school provide extra-help after school 2-3 days a week (as per school policy), some teachers provide extra-help during the school day and before school but it varies by teacher.

**Least Restrictive Environment Continuum:**

Restrictiveness	Continuum	Number of Students
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Most Restrictive</b></p> <p><b>Least Restrictive</b></p>	<p><b>Homebound or Hospital:</b> Student receives special education and related services at home or in a hospital.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Few Students</b></p> <p><b>Most Students</b></p>
	<p><b>Residential Facility:</b> Student is placed in a residential facility where children receive care/services 24 hours a day.</p>	
	<p><b>Separate School:</b> Student is placed in a separate school for students with special needs.</p>	
	<p><b>Separate Classroom:</b> Students is placed in a full-time Special Education classroom within a general education school.</p>	
	<p><b>Resource Room*:</b> Student placed in general education for the majority of the school day; attends special education resource room for specialized instruction in areas of need.</p>	
	<p><b>General Education with Supplementary Instruction and Services:</b> Student is place in general education; also, the special education teacher and/or paraeducator provide instructional support and related services within the general education classroom (this includes Co-teaching/Inclusion teaching models).</p>	
	<p><b>General Education Classroom with Consultation*:</b> Student is placed in general education; and the general educator receives ongoing consultation from special educator(s) to support student.</p>	
	<p><b>General Education Classroom:</b> Student is placed in general education with no specialized assistance.</p>	

\* Gray sections indicate Mariah’s current placement.

## Mariah's Most Recent Report Card Grades

### Report Card\*

Subject Area	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report Card Comments
Algebra	80	85	70	Low test/quiz grades; should attend extra help
Art	95	97	97	Takes a leadership role; diligent student
English 9	83	87	85	Reading and writing skills needs improvement
Global History	78	80	65	Low test/quiz grades; needs to participate more
Biology	90	93	85	Good work; All labs complete
Physical Education	90	95	93	Active participant
Resource Room	S	S	S	Takes initiative; Working towards goals

\* Passing is 65%

### Progress Report (from January IEP meeting)

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Progress Report Card Comments

Subject Area	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter (January IEP Meeting)
Algebra	Low test/quiz grades; should attend extra help; Mariah is able to do two-step equations very well. She struggles with building an equation when she is presented with a word problem. She should attend extra help after school so that she can obtain more support in this area and do better on tests.
Art	Diligent student; gets along well with others Mariah enjoys art class. All her assignments are completed so far for this quarter. Mariah should submit some of her work to the Winter Art Competition to be displayed in the library.
English 9	Steady improvement; writing skills need improvement; Mariah is actively engaged in class and often takes a leadership role in group activities. Mariah's writing is improving, she continues to need support in spelling and writing with more detail. Mariah is able to use context to define unknown vocabulary.
Global History	Steady improvement; needs to attend mandatory midterm exam review; Mariah's examination scores have been inconsistent this quarter. Her essay writing is steadily improving, using graphic organizers have helped her to become more detailed in her writing.
Biology	Good work; Mariah is an active participant in this class, all her lab and homework assignments are complete.
Physical Education	Good work; participates regularly Mariah participates regularly in class.
Resource Room	Mariah participates in class daily, she works diligently on her goals and classwork.

### **Accommodations (typically provided to students identified with learning disabilities)**

- Listen to audio books while reading text.
- Directions and/or tests to be read aloud to student
- Directions broken down into steps.
- Dictate answers to a scribe or provide answer orally for classroom assignments/assessments.
- Use of spelling dictionary or electronic spell-checker.
- Use of a calculator.
- Test administered in a small setting.
- Extended time (e.g. tests, projects, assignments, etc.).
- Frequent breaks during extended examinations (e.g. state testing) or test administered over a series of days.
- Use of graphic organizers.
- Providing reading materials on a different reading level.
- Provide an electronic device to complete assignments.
- Reteaching of materials.

### **Modifications (typically provided to students identified with learning disabilities).**

- Modified tests (e.g. complete fewer questions, revised examination).
- Write shorter assignments (e.g. essays).
- Complete alternative projects or assignments.
- Using a different rubric to provide feedback to student.
- Provide grades based on progress/effort and completion.

## Appendix C

### Simulation Analysis & Reflection

For this assignment, reflect upon the practices you enacted during your first simulation. In your analysis, attend to the collaborative practices, listed below.

Collaborative Practice	What does this look like in practice?
<p>1. Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student’s academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress.</p>	<p><b><u>Sharing Knowledge of Student</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the tone with openness</li> <li>• Build Reciprocity (I’ll also share)</li> <li>• Convey engagement/emotion through tone</li> <li>• Go in depth in ways that are illustrative</li> <li>• Provide balanced information about student (areas of strengths and areas of improvement/need)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Connecting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge/make reference to information that the parent provides</li> <li>• Connect information that the parent provides with classroom context</li> <li>• In making your recommendation to the team, you:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporate information that the parent provides into <b>academic</b>, behavioral, <b>social</b>, and/or post-secondary-focus of conversation;</li> <li>○ Incorporate the information provided by the special educator (report card, teacher comments);</li> <li>○ Incorporate the information provided in Mariah’s IEP (accommodations, modifications, and goals)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>...in addition to the information that you know about the student (socially, academically).</p>
<p>2. Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child.</p>	<p><b><u>Eliciting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask clear, focused questions</li> <li>• Ask questions in an open-ended way</li> <li>• Ask questions that build off of one another</li> <li>• Capitalize on your genuine interest. If you are interested in something, follow up on that thread of the conversation</li> </ul>
<p>3. Demonstrate active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues.</p>	<p><b><u>Listening</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pause after asking a question</li> <li>• Give time for person to speak/respond/elaborate</li> <li>• Maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate, but be open to variation</li> <li>• Exhibit engagement through posture (lean in) and gaze (nodding)</li> <li>• Exhibit sustained engagement</li> </ul>
<p>4. Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially.</p>	<p><b><u>Contributing</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend appropriate programming (see simulation materials) based on what you know about the student and what was shared at the meeting</li> <li>• Suggest resources you can provide to support student in your classroom</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggest follow-up with parent if more research on specific resources to support student may be necessary</li></ul>
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**STEP 1:** In your Word document, add a note **at each point** that you used any of the following

moves:

1. Greet (at opening and closing)
2. Share knowledge of student
3. Connect
4. Elicit
5. Listen
6. Contribute

**STEP 2:** Label each move. Then use the descriptors of these moves (provided in the table above) to elaborate in 3-4 sentences on how you enacted this move, and how well you feel you did, using specific references to the video as evidence for your evaluation. Indicate also what you might do differently to better improve upon your collaborative practice.

**STEP 3:** Mark and analyze opportunities (whether they were missed or not) where Mrs. Jackson shared information (issue, idea, knowledge about Mariah, etc.) with the team. These may overlap with moves you've already labeled in steps 1-2. Elaborate to explain, what did Mrs. Johnson share, what did you learn, and how did you respond? Indicate also what you might do differently to better improve upon your collaborative practice.

**STEP 4:** In a final note at the end of the simulation, provide one summative paragraph in which you identify *new insights* that were revealed to you as a result of the simulation experience. What broad areas do you plan to work to make progress in? Were there any blind spots that you may initially have had with regard to understanding and learning from Mariah and Mrs. Johnson that you are now more aware of?

Theme	Parent	Explanation
<b>[OTP]</b> <b>Orientation towards student/parent</b>	Initiates with strengths	The PST begins (their portion of the meeting) with strengths when they describe Mariah when the special educator turns the meeting over to them.
	Initiates with area(s) of concern/need	The PST begins (their portion of the meeting) with areas of concern related to Mariah when the special educator turns the meeting over to them.
	Shares area of concern (but does not initiate with area(s) of concern)	The PST shares a concern related to Mariah but shares <b>before</b> being probed by the parent and/or special educator.
	Expresses empathy	Instances where the PST demonstrates concern for what has happened (i.e. to Mariah).
	Begins with opening up conversation to Ms. Johnson (so she can speak first)	The PST begins (their portion of the meeting) with asking Ms. Johnson if she has anything to share.
	Shares Mariah's progress in homeroom (Brian) [Final Sim]	When the PST shares what has transpired in their homeroom related to the incident between Mariah and Brian during the <i>final simulation</i> .
	*Shares action steps taken as a result of the incident with Brian [Final Sim]	When the PST shares <b>specific</b> actions taken in homeroom to support students' understanding of diversity.
	After probing (or further probing) shares Mariah's change of demeanor in homeroom [Initial Sim]	<p>When the PST shares Mariah's change of demeanor in homeroom <b>only after being probed</b> by the parent or special educator during the <i>initial simulation</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>When the PST shares what transpired in their homeroom related to the incident between Mariah and Brian <b>only after being probed</b> by the parent or the special educator during the <i>final simulation</i>.</p>
	Asks question(s) about how Mariah or parent feels (academics, socially, etc.)	Instances when the PST asks how Mrs. Johnson feels about Mariah's academic, social, etc. progress.
	Asset-based comments about Mariah	Instances when the PST shares Mariah's strengths with the IEP team.
Deficit-based comments about Mariah	Instances when the PST shares comments that demonstrate that they do not see Mariah's strengths OR they focus on areas of need without attending to strengths.	

	Asks question(s) about parent or Mariah's background/home life	Instances when the PST asks about Mariah's background or home life (this may be asset or deficit-based).
	Shares personal story/example (to build connection with parent/Mariah)	Instances when the PST share a personal story from their life or an example that is familiar to them to help build a connection of Mariah or Mrs. Johnson.
	Affirms parent's concern	Instances when the PST acknowledges when the parent raises a concern.
	Contextualizes their background/connection to Mariah	Instances when the PST explains their connection to Mariah (i.e. homeroom teacher)
	Greets parent	PST says "hello" or similar greeting when parent enters the room.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>[PMO]</b> <b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child</b>	PST pauses to hear parent's ideas/questions	
	PST asks a question(s) to gather information	
	PST speaks over parent before parent can finish their statement	
<b>[DAL]</b> <b>Demonstrates active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parent and colleagues</b>	PST revoices parent's comment (for clarity)	Instances where the PST repeats what the parent says to make sure that they understood the parent's comment correctly.
	PST revoices parent's comment or request	Instances where the PST repeats parent's statement to demonstrate agreement and/or demonstrate how the parent's comment is informing their thinking.
	PST responds <i>directly</i> to parent's comment/idea/question	Instances where PST's response to the parent's comment/idea/question remains on the topic brought up by the parent.
	PST responds <i>indirectly</i> to parent's comment/idea/question	Instances where PST's response to the parent's comment/idea/question happens in a roundabout way and/or does not completely attend to the parent's idea.
	PST <i>does not respond</i> to parent's comment/idea/question	Instances where the PST's response does not attend to the comment/idea/question stated by the parent.
	PST makes space for special educator's perspective	Instances where the PST opens the conversation to the special educator (without asking the special educator to carry the conversation)
	PST incorporates information from earlier in the conversation	Instances when the PST refers to comments made by the parent and/or special educator to inform their thinking.
PST asks for clarification	Instances when the PST asks the parent to clarify a statement/idea/etc.	

	Reads along	Instances when the PST reads document as the special educator reads through student progress.
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Parent Code</b>	<b>Child Code</b>
<p>[CBC]  Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student's academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress</p>	<b>Provides a <i>recommendation</i> for Mariah's academic placement.</b> [both initial/final]	Recommends that Mariah continues with the same schedule
		Recommends that Mariah is placed in general education for certain classes
		Recommends that Mariah is placed in all general education classes
		Recommends that Mariah be placed in all small special education classes
		Recommends that Mariah be placed in a more racially diverse class
		Defers to special educator
		Lack of clarity in recommendation
		Changes recommendation
		Provides no recommendation
	<b>Provides a <i>rationale</i> for recommendation for Mariah's academic placement.</b> [both]	Uses specific examples (e.g. Mariah's grades, teacher comments)

		Provides general descriptions (e.g. Mariah's leadership ability, work ethic)
		Provides no rationale
		Attempts to provide a rationale but direction of the comment is unclear
	<b>Provides an action plan/ <i>recommendation</i> to attend to racist incident/racialized issue. [both]</b>	Asks parent how they recommend they respond to the event
		Gives a response that does not attend to racialized issue
		Is vague about addressing racialized issue; provides generalizations
		Names ways they will work towards a resolution
		Names ways others can work toward a resolution
		Changes recommendation
		Defers to special educator
	<b>Provides a <i>rationale</i> for action plan/ recommendation to attend to racist incident/racialized issue. [both]</b>	Names ways the solution they provide will support Mariah
		Names ways the solution they provide will support Brian
		Provides no rationale
	<b>Provides a <i>recommendation</i> for providing Mariah accommodations/ modifications. [final]</b>	Explains that if testing in a separate location is written into the IEP then they are required to do this by law
		Suggest modified test for Mariah so that she can complete her test at the same time as the rest of the class
		Suggest that Mariah have a one-on-one aide/paraprofessional
		Suggest (or asks if) Mariah begins her tests in class but complete them in resource room/testing room during her resource room period
		Suggests that Mariah's test are administered over a series of days
		Suggests that the test should be placed in the testing room prior to class so that Mariah can go directly to the testing room (instead of going to class)
		Suggests Mariah completes tests after school.
		Suggests Mariah changes schedule to be in a class with more students that take testing accommodations.
		Spends considerable time talking but there is not solution
		Changes recommendation

		Lack of clarity in recommendation
		Suggests Mariah taking home the tests to complete
	<b>Provides a rationale</b> for providing the recommendation accommodations/ modifications for Mariah. [final]	Uses specific examples (e.g. Mariah has enough time to complete her test)
		Provides general descriptions (e.g. Mariah's work ethic)
		Provides no rationale
<b>[ADV]</b> Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially	Shares (possible) services that could be provided by schools to support Mariah.	
<b>[KNO]</b> Have knowledge of the student's disability category and use that knowledge to provide a support rationale for suggested next steps	Draws on <b>report card</b> . (both)	
	Draws on <b>student background information</b> . (both)	
	Draws on information from <b>IEP excerpt</b> (initial) or <b>IEP</b> (final).	
	Draws on information from the <b>school placement (special education) continuum</b> . (both)	
	Draws on <b>accommodation/modification list</b> . (final)	
	Draws on <b>progress report</b> . (both)	
<b>[GEN]</b> General Codes	Asks a question/statement that seems disconnected from the parent's idea/question/comment (or topic at hand)	
	Awkwardly conveys thoughts to parent	Generalizations about student(s)
		Awkward/off-putting comment
		Euphemism for race
	Lack of familiarity with a particular aspect of the provided materials (e.g. inaccurately describes Mariah, unfamiliarity with Mariah's class schedule)	
	Makes suggestions to parent about how they can support Mariah at home.	
	Expresses disagreement	
	Misses a verbal/non-verbal cue made by parent	
	Affirming response	
	Takes ownership of (racialized issue, supporting Mariah's success, etc.)	
	Asks a clarifying question to special educator	
	Revises (idea, question, explanation, etc.)	
		States unfamiliarity with special education programs as compared to general education programs

Non Verbal Cues	
Parent Code	Sub-Code OR Description
Eye contact	_with special educator _with parent
Affirming sound	i.e. uh huh, mmmm
Smiles	
Laughs	
Looks at parent	Instances when the PST looks at parent but parent is looking away (i.e. down at paper)
Looks at special educator	Instances when the PST looks at special educator but special educator is looking away (i.e. down at paper)
Looks Away	(i.e. at camera, different direction)
Looks down	(i.e. at their documents, parent's doc, table, etc.)
Exasperated sound	
Nods	
Serious expression	
Shakes parent's hand	
Stands	
Writes notes	
Exasperated look	
Concerned look	
Leans forward	
Hand gestures	(i.e. to open up conversation, to demonstrate understanding)

## Appendix D

### Simulation Coding

#### PI Initial Simulation Coding

Time Stamp	Verbal Cues	Non-Verbal Cues
00:13-00:20	<b>Greets Ms. Johnson</b> “Hi, I’m Mr. Garcia. Mariah’s homeroom teacher”	Stands, greets, shakes hand
00:20-00:30 Introduction block; add greeting code	Mrs. Johnson shares that her husband is away on business and she will share everything with him when he return. She speaks directly to David. David responds “Perfect”	(Contextualizes his background, connection to Mariah)  Nods, makes eye contact
00:30-3:37	The special educator begins the meeting. Special educator provides the progress report. Mrs. Johnson mentions that Art is Mariah’s favorite subject, looks up and smiles. Special educator continues reporting progress.  Ms. Johnson states that Biology is Mariah’s second favorite subject and she is glad she is doing well.	Nods, looks at special educator Looks down at the progress report Smiles, looks across from his paper to Mrs. Johnson’s paper Nods, looks down at the paper, looks up at the special educator a few times  Smiles, looks across at Mrs. Johnson’s paper.
3:37-4:36 Same time blocks; same codes	<b>Initiates with strengths</b> <b>Asset-based comments about Mariah</b> Explains the purpose of homeroom to parent. States: enjoy having her in class, has great relationships with peers, she is energized and really involved, contributes, but not only contributes and builds on what her classmates have to say which creates a positive atmosphere. She enjoys expressing her opinions, even it at time is means playing devil’s advocate and “we always need someone to do that right,” “I don’t know about you, but I enjoy students that get the rest of the group talking.” He states his agreement with the other teachers.  Pauses.	Makes eye contact, (shifts body toward parent), smiles  <b>Hand gestures (opens up conversation)</b>  Looks at special educator and down at paper
4:36-5:12 (not aligned here)  Same	<b>After probing (or further probing) shares Mariah’s progress in homeroom</b> Parent probes. Asks if he has noticed anything different about Mariah.  <b>Responds directly to the parent’s question</b> <b>PST asks a question to gather information</b> <b>PST pauses to hear parent’s ideas</b> David responds, recently, she has been late to a few homeroom sessions, he does not know if that is the case with her other classes, she hasn’t been as close to her class makes as usual, asks if there is something potentially triggering that?	Makes eye contact.  Eye contact
5:12-6:29 Same	<b>Pauses to hear parent’s ideas/question</b> Parent shares about racist/ableist incident	Eye contact, nods, <b>non-verbal affirmation (hmmm)</b>

	<p>Parent explains that Mariah’s way of dealing with it...</p> <p>...parent continues that Mariah is trying to avoid Brian. ... they want her to be placed in general education classes.</p>	<p>(PST makes hand motion to signify pull away) Nods, eye contact, <b>non-verbal affirmation (hmmm)</b></p>
<p>6:29-6:55 Same</p>	<p><b>Expresses empathy</b> First he apologizes and says he wish he could tell Mariah that because she is the one who have to deal with it.</p> <p><b>Affirms parent’s concern</b> Tells the parent that she has given them tons of details. The first step would be how to fix it. Find a way to make her feel safe. He said that he cannot control what happened in the past but he can impact what happens going forward.</p>	<p>Eye contact, Nods</p>
<p>6:55-7:49 Same/mostly</p>	<p><b>PST asks a question to gather information</b> <b>PST pauses to hear parent’s ideas</b> He wants to talk to her. Asks parent what she thinks would help reach Mariah and if she would be open about talking about it.</p> <p>Parent responds no, she didn’t want to cause any extra problems or call any extra attention to it. The parents would not want her to be isolated more because they don’t want her to feel like she is being singled out.</p> <p><b>Affirms parent’s concern</b> <b>Revoices parent’s [comment or request]</b> David responds, “I think that is fair, and it is something I will 100% respect”</p>	<p>Eye contact, nods, <b>non-verbal affirmation (hmmm)</b></p>
<p>7:49-8:08</p>	<p><b>Revoices the parent’s concern</b> <b>Names ways the solution they provide will support Mariah</b> We have to make sure she feels safe and included and not singled out.</p>	
<p>8:08-9:01 Same  Agreed on asks parent “how they recommend...” Agreed on the revoicing code</p>	<p><b>PST asks a question to gather information</b> <b>PST pauses to hear parent’s ideas</b> <b>Asks parent how they recommend they respond to the event</b> Do you have any ideas [inaudible]?</p> <p>Parent asks how they can deal with it on a community level...</p> <p><b>[Overlapping talk] [Responds directly to parent]</b> <b>Revoices parent’s [comment or request]</b> <b>Affirms parent’s comment</b> David says it might need to be addressed as a whole</p> <p>...homeroom is a community building space, I would not be surprised if he says that to someone else, doesn’t know that to be fair, just wants to make sure Mariah is not singled out.</p>	<p>Eye contact, nods</p>
<p>9:01-9:10 Agreed on new code</p>	<p><b>Defers to special educator</b> <b>Makes space for special educator’s perspective</b></p>	<p>Looks at the special educator</p>

	He begins to express something that can be done but says to the special educator that she can give her opinion – but does continue to speak to Ms. Johnson.	
9:10-9:55 Agreed on different code	<p><b>Names ways they will work towards a resolution</b>  <b>PST asks a question to gather information</b>  <b>PST pauses to hear parent's ideas</b>  <b>[Demonstrates active listening – not to single out Mariah from group, he is incorporating information from earlier in the conversation]</b></p> <p>Talk to Brian, bring in the administration because it is serious and speak to them again. More generally, make more of an announcement about the need and norms of their community and abiding by them – respecting everyone's background and academics, what do you think about that?</p>	Eye contact, nods
9:55-10:26	<p>Parent says that they are going to see each other in the hallway, it goes to the administration may escalate the situation..</p> <p><b>[Overlapping Talk]</b>  <b>Affirms parent's comment</b>  <b>[Demonstrates active listening – not to single out Mariah from group, he is incorporating information from earlier in the conversation]</b></p> <p>He responds, especially if they are in gen ed classes, that is your goal for her and that is the goal moving forward</p> <p><del>Defers to special educator</del>  <b>Makes space for special educator's perspective</b>  Do you have some thoughts?</p>	Nods, makes eye contact
10:26-10:51	The special educator responds that the conversation has turned to general education – she revoices what she heard, that David is suggesting that he would talk to administration and then reviewing the homeroom norms with the class. Asks parent if she is comfortable with transitioning to talk about general education.	Looks at the special educator, nods, non-verbal affirmation (uh humm)
10:51-11:35	The parent says yes but she wants to make it clear that she is upset about it and she appreciates what he has offered, she is very concerned because we don't want her to feel ashamed of being black or having a disability.	Nods
11:35-12:21 Same	<p><b>Affirms parent's concern</b>  <b>Names ways they will work towards a resolution</b></p> <p>David states that once they engage in the first steps he can be in contact with the parent about how it worked, he wants to give a firm timeline, he states the next week or two, to see if Mariah continues to be upset (whether seen or stated), the “escalate” the response. Choose a week or two weeks whatever the parent finds more reasonable to check back with her.</p> <p>The parent stated in a week, they can be in contact with each other.</p>	Eye contact, turn body toward parent
12:21-14:32 Agrees on new code, agrees on not using rationale code	<p>The parent states that she is ready to discuss Mariah's placement.</p> <p><b>Asset-based comments about Mariah</b>  <b>PST asks a question to gather information</b></p>	Nods, non-verbal affirmation (uh humm)

	<p><b>PST pauses to hear parent's ideas</b>  <b>[draws on progress report]</b>  He celebrates the things that Mariah does well, just because it is a student's favorite subject does not mean that they will do super well, so it is important to celebrate what she does well in and she is doing well good in PE and Art in gen ed. That gives us evidence that he she could do really well in gen ed. His question in terms of algebra, global history, and English is "what are your goals in moving her to general education? Is it social? Academic?"</p> <p>Parent thanks him for asking, she has coming a long way, they are working with her at home, socially it is important, academically she is able to handle the workload. Her small classes have also been rigorous so we don't see moving to gen ed being too much of a difference, wants the team ot be in the same place. We can Mariah to be college ready, small classes do not necessarily mean that she is not college ready but we want Mariah to get new challenges as a student.</p>	<p>Smiles, eye contact</p> <p>Eye contact, nods, non-verbal affirmation (uh humm)</p>
<p>14:32-16:32</p>	<p><b>Affirms parent's comments</b>  <b>[Expresses disagreement]</b>  <b>PST responds <i>directly</i> to parent's comment/idea/question</b>  <del><b>[PST rationale seems misaligned with recommendation]</b></del>  <b>Attempts to provide an rationale but direction of the comment is unclear</b>  <b>[Awkwardly conveys thoughts to a parent] – generalization about students</b>  He says he is hearing what she is saying and all of those thing are really strong reasons to move Mariah into general education, I will share some of my <i>fears</i> with you in terms of doing so. <i>Unfortunately</i>, to get into classes right now and colleges are <i>extremely competitive as you know and they want 4.0 or something really crazy</i>, all of our students have the capacity to do so, to get there, <i>unfortunately</i> not everybody is going to be there yet...</p> <p>(Part tilts her head a bit and nods)</p> <p><b>Uses specific examples (e.g. Mariah's grades, teacher comments)</b>  Draws on <b>report card</b>.  He talks about the classes where she is in small class Mariah has B, B-, and C-, strong, <i>given that she is strong but not very strong</i>, could improve grades, <i>timid</i> in moving her to the gen ed classes right now..</p> <p>(parent's arm are folded and she leans in a bit)</p> <p><b>Recommends that Mariah is placed in all general education classes</b>  <b>[Demonstrates active listening – not to single out Mariah from group, he is incorporating information from earlier in the conversation]</b></p>	<p>Eye contact</p> <p>Looks away (different points, as he is thinking), eye contact</p> <p>Eye contact, looks at documents</p> <p>Eye contact</p>

	<p>One thing that would be a compromise, general education with resource room. She needs additional support, your husband continue to help her, teachers to stay after school and go to additional reviews – comprise, wanted to share his concerns</p>	
<p>16:32-18:32 Agrees on codes; and new codes</p>	<p>Special educator clarifies by stating, that he wants the student to be placed in all general education classes with a resource room.</p> <p><b>[Asks for clarification]</b> He states that he is under the impression that there would have to be a full transfer to general education for the classes, he asks for clarification.</p> <p>The special educator shares that Mariah could have a mixture of general education and special education classes. Mariah would have resource room regardless of her class schedule and that special educator will be in contact with teachers both special and gen educators.</p> <p>The parent asks if he was saying did he mean all general education classes, she says that they will continue to support Mariah, that is a non-negotiable.</p> <p><b>Recommends that Mariah is placed in general education for certain classes</b> <b>Uses specific examples (e.g. Mariah’s grades, teacher comments)</b> <b>Draws on information from the school placement (special education) continuum.</b> [after clarification] Draws on information <b>student background information.</b> <b>[changes recommendation]</b> That or a second option is English is the place of her disability and it impacts all subjects; math – complex word problems, global – longer more complex readings; keep her in English because it has the impact on all subjects, invites the parent to take some time to think about it. He would be comfortable with either of those options.</p> <p>Meeting ends (run out of time)</p>	<p>Looks at the special educator, Nods</p> <p>Laughs, looks at documents</p> <p>Refers to documents, eye contact</p> <p>Smiles, shakes hand, seated</p>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Coder Initial Simulation Coding**

<b>Time Stamp</b>	<b>Verbal Cues</b>	<b>Non-Verbal Cues</b>
00:00-00:32	<p>Introduces self</p> <p>Names which course he teaches/ connection to Mariah</p>	<p>Stands</p> <p>Shakes hand</p>
00:33-03:38		<p>Looking at SE during introduction</p> <p>Looking at progress report during SE review</p> <p>Looking at P (“Art is her favorite subject...”)—responds with smiling and laughing</p>

		Nodding along with SE review Smiling in response to P comment (“Biology is her second favorite subject...”) Looking at SE
03:38-04:34	Introduces homeroom (“Homeroom is a place where students get announcements and get to community build with their classmates”) <b>Orientation to student/parent</b> <i>Initiates with strengths</i> <i>Asset-based comments about Mariah</i> “Mariah is really a joy to have in class. She has really great relationships with all of her classmates. She is really energized... Class discussion... Builds on others... Positive environment in classroom... Sharing her own opinions... Gets other students talking”)	Looking at P Smiling Hand gesturing
04:35-05:11	<b>Orientation to student/parent</b> <i>Begins with opening up conversation to Ms. Johnson (so she can speak first)</i> Describes changes in Mariah’s recent behavior (late to a few homeroom classes, relationships different than we would like them to be) <b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child</b> <i>PST asks a question(s) to gather information</i> Asks P “Is there something that is potentially triggering that?”	Looking at P during questions Body turned toward P
05:12-06:32	<b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child</b> <i>PST pauses to hear parent’s ideas/questions</i>	Nodding in response to P description of Brian incident “Mm hmm” and “Hmm” to description of Brian incident Gesturing to show understanding during P description of Brian incident (hand motion suggesting stepping back?) Nodding and eye contact during P conversation
06:33-07:58	<b>Orientation towards student/parent</b> <i>Expresses empathy</i> <i>After probing (or further proving) shares Mariah’s progress in homeroom</i> <i>Affirms parent’s concern</i> “First I’m really sorry that that happened. And I wish I could tell Mariah that because she’s the one who dealt with it. And I will talk to her more about it.” “You have given us tons of details” “First step forward is how to fix it and how to make her feel safe in this space.” Cannot control what happened before—can happen what happens now  <b>Orientation towards student/parent</b> <i>Asks question(s) about how Mariah or parent feels (academics, socially, etc.)</i> “I would really love to talk to her” “What do you think would help us help her? Is she very open to talking about this situation?”	Looking at P Arm extended Nodding listening to P saying that Mariah and Ps would not be comfortable talking about the incident and drawing more attention

	<p><b>Demonstrates active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues</b>  <i>PST revoices parent's comment (for clarity)</i>  “Okay that’s fair.”  “You wouldn’t like it either. Okay.”  “That is something I will 100% respect.”</p>	
07:59-09:52	<p><b>Demonstrates active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues</b>  <i>PST responds directly to parent's comment/idea/question</i>  “Make her feel safe. Make her feel included. Also make it so that she does not feel that she is being singled out or called on more often than before.”</p> <p><b>Orientation towards student/parent</b>  <i>Asks question(s) about how Mariah or parent feels (academics, socially, etc.)</i>  “Do you have any ideas based on what she has told you?”  Responding to P concern (“community-building” → “it might have to be addressed as a whole”)  “You can always give your opinion Ms. Smith. Obviously.”</p> <p><b>Demonstrates active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parents and colleagues</b>  <i>PST responds directly to parent's comment/idea/question</i>  “The most important thing is to talk to Brian. Bring in the administration... Make more of an announcement about the needs and norms in our community. (not to single out Mariah)”  “What do you think about that?”</p>	<p>Looking at parent  Gesturing  Nodding to P comment (“She’s not the only one in that small biology class”)  Nodding in response to P comment about Brian</p>
09:53—11:34	<p><b>Demonstrates active listening by attending to the suggestions/ideas/questions of parent and colleagues.</b>  <i>PST responds directly to parent's comment/idea/question.</i>  <i>PST revoices parent's comment (for clarity)</i>  Restates P goal of moving Mariah to general education classes (“Especially if they are in gen ed classes. And that is one of your goals for her.”)  Invites Ms. Smith into conversation (“Do you have some thoughts”)  <i>PST responds directly to parent's comment/idea/question.</i>  Responds to P (“We don’t want her to be ashamed of being Black or of having a disability.”) “Of course”</p>	<p>Nodding in response to P concern that Mariah and Brian see each other in hallway—doesn’t want situation to escalate  Looking at SE as she reviews her understanding of the next steps  Nodding in response to P</p>
11:35-12:19	<p><b>Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student’s academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress.</b>  <i>Provides an action plan/recommendation to attend to racist incident/racialized issue.</i>  First steps that we have agreed on are a first start  “I can email you”  “A firm timeline. Maybe a week or two. If Mariah continues to be upset... I think we would have to</p>	

	<p>escalate the situation further... You can decide which is more reasonable to check back.”</p> <p><b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child.</b> <i>PST pauses to hear parent’s ideas/ questions.</i></p>	
12:20-:1438	<p><b>Orientation towards student/parent</b> <i>Asset-based comments about Mariah</i> “Celebrate the things that she has done well” Favorite subject doesn’t always mean you will do well</p> <p><b>Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student’s academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress.</b> <i>Provides a rationale for recommendation for Mariah’s academic placement.</i></p> <p><b>Provide multiple opportunities for parents to share thoughts, ideas, and questions about their child.</b> <i>PST asks a question(s) to gather information.</i></p> <p><b>Misc.</b> <i>Draws on progress report.</i> Evidence of success in gen ed Algebra, global history, English (“what are your goals in moving her to gen ed—is it social reasons or is it academic?”)</p>	<p>Nodding in response to parent-initiated question (“We are looking into moving her into gen ed”) Smiling Nodding in response to P (goals for Mariah) Looking at P Nodding in response to P (college ready goals)</p>
14:39-17:37	<p>“I’m hearing everything that you’re saying. And I think that all of those are strong reasons... I will share some of my fears with you about doing so...” “All of our students have the ability to do so and have the capacity to get there... Unfortunately not everybody is going to be there yet.” For the classes in which</p> <p><b>Contribute to building a collaborative plan for the student’s academic, behavioral, social, and/or post-secondary progress</b> <i>Provides a rationale for recommendation for Mariah’s academic placement.</i> <i>Provides a recommendation for providing Mariah accommodations/ modifications.</i></p> <p><b>Have knowledge of students disability category and use that knowledge to provide a rationale for suggested next steps.</b> <i>Draws on progress report.</i> Mariah is in the small groups—strong grades and show improvement on her behalf—strong but could improve grades—timid to move her into gen ed classes right now Compromise—gen ed classes with resources—resource room continuing with Ms. Smith Still needs additional support and that includes resource room—and your husband continuing to help her of course</p> <p><b>Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially</b> <i>Shares (possible) services that could be provided by schools to support Mariah.</i></p>	<p>Looking at SE as she reviews the “compromise” Nodding as SE describes accommodations Looking at P as SE describes accommodations Laughing (P “Darren and I are going to continue to support her at home. That is non-negotiable.”)</p>

	Compromising on staying after class, resource room, etc. Sharing some concerns about where she is academically Asks SE for clarification “My understanding was that we would have to move all four classes...”	
17:38-18:21	<b>Advocate for resources that would help the student succeed academically and socially</b> <i>Shares (possible) services that could be provided by schools to support Mariah.</i> Second option (English is where her disability impacts her the most. English impacts math with complex word problems. English impacts global history.)—keeping her in resource room for English	
18:22-end	“Thank you so much for taking your time.”	Shakes hand

## Appendix E

### Larry P v. Riles Activity

Excerpted from Larry P. v. Riles (1979)  
<https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=13908>

<p><b>The History of I.Q. Testing (Group 1)</b></p> <p>“The first usable I.Q. tests were developed in France in 1905 by Alfred Binet, who sought to distinguish between “backward” and “normal” children in Paris...Binet insisted that “it was necessary to react against and protest the brutal pessimism of those who regarded the test as measuring some fixed and unchanging quality.” This admonition, however, was not heeded when Binet’s test was transplanted in American soil.</p> <p>The early leaders of the I.Q. testing movement in the United States were quick to assume that the Binet tests measured on innate capacity fixed in the genes. Typical and of particular interest for the California story were the views of Professor Lewis Terman of Stanford, the well-known developer of the Stanford-Binet I.Q. test in 1916. According to Terman, this test could be employed as an objective tool to learn the identity of the “feeble-minded” and “borderline feeble-minded” and hopefully to discourage them from breeding...</p> <p>He concluded further that, since the tests measured a fixed, innate ability, it would be useless to keep the feeble-minded and borderline feeble-minded in class with other, normal children....</p> <p>(Terman stated:) Children of this group should be segregated in special classes and be given instruction which is concrete and practical. They cannot master abstractions, but they can often be made efficient workers, able to look out for themselves.</p> <p>Finally, in what was Terman’s opinion, as well as that of others in the testing movement, that different racial and ethnic groups had different proportions of intellectual subnormal individuals. He declared in 1916 that the borderline feeble-minded “represent the level of intelligence which is very, very common among Spanish-Indian and Mexican-families of the southwest and also among negroes. Their dullness seems to be racial or at least inherent in family stock from which they come.</p>	<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who is in a position of <b>power</b>?</li><li>• Who is <b>advantaged</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by institutional structures) in this situation? How do you know?</li><li>• Who is placed at a <b>disadvantage</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by institutional structures)? How do you know?</li><li>• What are the <b>actual or potential negative impacts</b> on the disadvantaged group?</li></ul> <p>Notes:</p>
<p>Special education and the I.Q. testing that justified its existence thus found an enduring place in California in the 1920’s, and the assumptions brought to the special classes survived long past the presumed “scientific basis” for them.</p> <p><b>I.Q. Testing &amp; E.M.R. Placement in California</b></p> <p>1947 legislation increased the state’s role in special education, but it was not closely regulated. Mentally retarded minors were defined as: “all minors of</p>	<p>What domain(s) of power seem to be operating?</p> <p><b>Interpersonal Domain</b> “...power relations are about people’s lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions.”</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Domain</b></p>

<p>compulsory school age who because of retarded intellectual development as determined by <i>individual psychological examination</i> are incapable of being educated profitably and efficiently through ordinary class room instruction but who may be expected to benefit from special education facilities designed to make them economically useful and socially adjusted.”</p> <p>“California had programs for the “culturally deprived,” the “educationally handicapped,” the “educable mentally retarded,” and the “trainable mentally retarded.” Increased funding for this program “encouraged placement in these classes, and the E.M.R. enrollment peaked...about 27 percent of the E.M.R. children were black, even though black children represented only 9 percent of the California school population.”</p> <p>In 1969 the legislature specified that admission into programs for the mentally retarded “shall be made only on the basis of individual evaluation according to standards established by the State Board of Education and upon individual recommendation of a local admission committee which shall include a teacher, a school nurse or social worker, a school psychologist or other pupil personnel worker authorized to serve as a school psychologist who has individually examined the minor, a principal or supervisor, and a licensed physician.” Annual reviews of placements were required, and consultations were required with parents prior to enrollment into an EMR program.</p> <p>The California Education Code included a statement that there should not be disproportionate enrollment of any socioeconomic, minority, or ethnic group but “no teeth were given to this declaration,” meaning there was no enforcement mechanism to hold districts accountable.</p> <p>“E.M.R. classes were designed to separate students that were incapable of learning in regular education class and placing them in “special classes...developed to provide opportunities for pupils whose mental capabilities make it impossible for them to profit from the regular educational program.” The primary goal of these programs was “physical health and development, personal hygiene and grooming, language and communication skills, social and emotional adjustment, basic home and community living skills, occupational and vocational information and skills, and citizenship.” The classes were considered “dead-end classes.” Student were placed in these classes at eight to ten years of age until they graduated from high school. A survey of one school district in California (Riverside) revealed that less than 20% of students from E.M.R. would be returned to “the regular classroom.”</p> <p>In the 20 districts accounting for 80 percent of the enrollment of black children, black students comprised about 27.5 percent of the student population and 62 percent of the E.M.R. population.”</p>	<p>“when it comes to the organization of power, different people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented.”</p> <p><b>Cultural Domain</b> “when it comes to the organization of power, ideas matter in providing explanation for social inequity and fair play.”</p> <p><b>Structural Domain</b> “The structural domain of power...refers to how (schooling) itself is organized or structured. Because intersectionality embraces complexity, it questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, (etc.) shape the institutionalization and organization of the (schooling).”</p> <p>What additional questions should be asked to provide more clarity?</p>
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<p><b>Key Actors (Group 2)</b></p> <p>“Key officials in the State Department of Education (of California) – the central actors in this story – were well aware of these developments; they knew that the E.M.R. (educable mentally retarded) classes contained a disproportionate enrollment of minority children, and they were equally well aware of the charge that a cultural bias in the I.Q. test caused or contributed to that disproportion. Wilson Riles, then services as the head of California compensatory education programs, even stated in mid-1969 to the President’s Commission on Mental Retardation that, because of the disproportionate number of minorities in the E.M.R. programs, ‘In California, educators are taking a second look at their classification criteria to see if language</p>	<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is in a position of <b>power</b>?</li> <li>• Who is <b>advantaged</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by institutional structures) in this situation? How do you know?</li> <li>• Who is placed at a <b>disadvantage</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by</li> </ul>
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<p>difficulties, deprivation of experiences, and deviation from the majority's culture and value system may be entering into to determination of who is mentally retarded.'</p> <p>...no state officials called to testify for either plaintiffs or defendants could provide a cogent explanation for the original impetus toward mandatory I.Q. testing..."</p> <p>Once I.Q. tests were approved to be a part of the E.M.R placement process, the Department of Education moved very quickly to compile a list of I.Q. tests for use in schools. Fred Hanson, a special consultant to the district, began work to compile a list of I.Q. tests. He spoke to publishers, consulted a standard source book but Mr. Hanson himself was not an expert in I.Q. testing. The primary criterion for choosing the tests that would be placed on the list was the frequency in which it was used in the field of education. The Department failed to consult outside experts and "despite their awareness of the controversy surrounding the disproportionate enrollment of minorities and the cultural bias of I.Q. tests, the Department personnel did not expressly consider or investigate these problems in making their determination..."</p> <p>Evidently, despite the legislative policy suggested by H.R. 444, minority overenrollment was not considered a problem worth of serious attention. Mr. Hanson's testimony is instructive:</p> <p>The Court: You really think that there were, back before the drop, that many mildly mentally retarded people among the Spanish surnamed people? Mr. Hanson: Absolutely.</p> <p>The Court: You do? And you think that there were that many among the blacks? Mr. Hanson: Absolutely.</p> <p>Later in 1970, building on the Board's prior determination of the need for I.Q. testing for E.M.R. placement, the state legislature began to address some of the problems associated with the decision... The legislature in 1970 required that no child be placed in an E.M.R. class unless he or she scored two standard deviations or more below the norm for the test. This enactment lowered the maximum I.Q. score from a range of about 75-85, depending on the school district, to about 70...this change contributed greatly to the decrease in enrollments that took place after 1969...the reduction in enrollment of black children, did not change substantially the percentage of black children in E.M.R. classes.</p> <p>Testimony by Robert Whiteneck, the Director of special Education of the Sonoma County Office of Education and the Director of Special Education from 1965-1975 of the Berkeley schools:</p> <p>Q: Despite requirements in the Education Code that factors such as developmental history, adaptive behavior and medical history be assigned, is it your opinion that I.Q. tests were the primary determinant in E.M.R. placement? A. I feel definitely they were the prime determinant. Q. Can you explain why? A. There is a magic, I think involved with the I.Q. test that has been trained into us in our schools of education, whether we be regular educators or special</p>	<p>institutional structures)? How do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the <b>actual or potential negative impacts</b> on the disadvantaged group?</li> </ul> <p>Notes:</p> <hr/> <p>What domain(s) of power seem to be operating?</p> <p><b>Interpersonal Domain</b> "...power relations are about people's lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions."</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Domain</b> "when it comes to the organization of power, different people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented."</p> <p><b>Cultural Domain</b> "when it comes to the organization of power, ideas matter in providing explanation for social inequity and fair play."</p> <p><b>Structural Domain</b> "The structural domain of power...refers to how (schooling) itself is organized or structured. Because intersectionality embraces complexity, it questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, (etc.) shape the institutionalization and organization of the (schooling)."</p>
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<p>educators, and I think we seem to see that as some sort of a final, solid piece of data that we can use to make judgments.</p> <p>Q. Has it been your judgement that teachers and educators tend to look at the I.Q. scores as objective criteria.</p> <p>A. They do , indeed, and they seem to quote scores and feel that the number has some sort of very definite magic-determining effect on their decisions.</p> <p>The State Department of Education’s only investigation of the E.M.R. placement process revealed:</p> <p>“...16 of 25 districts admitted that they made little or no use of adaptive behavior information in the placement process. The report also revealed that more than one-quarter of the files surveyed revealed no “developmental history. In San Francisco, for example, the study team found that a request for adaptive behavior information was found in 23 of the 47 files sampled, developmental histories were located in 35 of the 47, and records indicated the I.Q. scores of 46 of the 47. The record of the I.Q. score was clearly the most scrupulously kept record, and it appears to have been the most important one. The lure of the singel, seemingly precise and objective measure, is no doubt strong.”</p>	<p>What additional questions should be asked to provide more clarity?</p>
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<p><b>I.Q. Testing: “The Impossibility of Measuring Intelligence” (Group 3)</b></p> <p>“While many think of the I.Q. as an objective measure of innate, fixed intelligence, the testimony of the experts overwhelmingly demonstrated that this conception of I.Q. is erroneous. Defendant’s expert witnesses, even those closely affiliated with the companies that devise and distribute the standardized intelligence tests, agreed, with one exception, that we cannot truly define, much less measure, intelligence. We can measure certain skills but not native intelligence...I.Q. tests, like other ability tests, essentially measure achievement in the skills covered by the examinations...</p> <p>The I.Q. tests must be recognized as artificial tools to rank individuals according to certain skills, not to diagnose a medical condition. The ranking is done in a manner useful for statistical analysis...It cautions us to look very carefully at what the tests do measure and exactly how they were validated for determining mental retardation...</p> <p>Disparities in I.Q. test scores between black and white children can be caused by various factors. One explanation could be that the test itself is inherently discriminatory...If variations in test scores arise, the test may be revised to remove the unwanted bias. An earlier version of at least the Stanford-Binet I.Q. test was modified in this way because the test yielded different scores for boys and girls and the testing experts assumed such difference were unacceptable. No such modification on racial grounds, however, has ever been tried by testing companies according to the testimony at this trial. Rather the experts have from the beginning been willing to tolerate or even encourage tests that portray minorities, especially blacks, as intellectually interior...</p> <p>The genetic argument, stated bluntly, is that natural selection has resulted in black persons having a “gene pool” that dooms them as a group to less intelligence. Of course exceptions are recognized, but the intelligence curve is</p>	<p>Questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is in a position of <b>power</b>?</li> <li>• Who is <b>advantaged</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by institutional structures) in this situation? How do you know?</li> <li>• Who is placed at a <b>disadvantage</b> (e.g. in social interactions, how rules apply, cultural messages, by institutional structures)? How do you know?</li> <li>• What are the <b>actual or potential negative impacts</b> on the disadvantaged group?</li> </ul> <p>Notes:</p>
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<p>lower for blacks as a group. This curve coincides with the bell-shaped curve of I.Q. scores, which as noted before tends to fall one standard deviation lower than that of whites.</p> <p>The first problem with the genetic argument is that defendants are unwilling to admit any reliance on it for policymaking purposes...Thus, even if it may appear that certain decisions were made on the basis of the genetic argument or at least in harmony with that argument the official policy rejected the genetic explanation for mild mental retardation...Indeed, it appears that both assumptions underlying (the defendants) genetic argument are highly suspect. First, it is not at all clear whether “intelligence,” whatever that may be, is inherited rather than the product of the environment, or at least whether the environment can substantially overcome any inherited weaknesses. Second, even if intelligence is inherited, it is not to be assumed that black persons are less intelligent as a group than white persons as a group.</p> <p>Dr. Riles preferred to admit that the I.Q. tests were biased against the poor – black and white alike – not because of inferior genes or divergent cultures but because of their inferior home and neighborhood environments...</p> <p>Dr. Herbert Grossman of U.C.L.A. testified that poverty puts individuals at a “greater risk” for all kinds of diseases, including the “disease” of mild mental retardation. He was unable, however, to specify how this risk operated nor was he able to detail the extent of its asserted effect on intelligence as measured by I.Q. scores. In addition, this kind of analysis fails to explain adequately why more severe mental retardation, such as that consistent with placement into classes for the “trainable mentally retarded” children, also does not occur in greater proportions among the poorer sectors of the population, particularly among blacks...”</p> <p>Dr. Gloria Powell from U.C.L.A., and studies from the Collaborative Research Study of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness have demonstrated “the insufficiency of this “at risk” explanation of low I.Q. scores and increased mental “disease.” The studies she cited demonstrate that unless there is “severe” malnutrition of a kind rare or non-existent in this country, less than ideal nutrition during pregnancy, and the first six months of life “does not affect later performance on I.Q. scores or in cognitive processes.” The relatively low scores of black children do not result from mental disease attributable to the physical risks of poverty even if school performance, as opposed to mental retardation, does vary somewhat according to socio-economic status....</p> <p>Black childrens’ intelligence may be manifested in ways that the tests do not show, so that the existing tests developed on the while population obviously would be inadequate.”</p>	<p>What domain(s) of power seem to be operating?</p> <p><b>Interpersonal Domain</b> “...power relations are about people’s lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions.”</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Domain</b> “when it comes to the organization of power, different people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them and how those rules will be implemented.”</p> <p><b>Cultural Domain</b> “when it comes to the organization of power, ideas matter in providing explanation for social inequity and fair play.”</p> <p><b>Structural Domain</b> “The structural domain of power...refers to how (schooling) itself is organized or structured. Because intersectionality embraces complexity, it questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, (etc.) shape the institutionalization and organization of the (schooling).”</p> <p>What additional questions should be asked to provide more clarity?</p>
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