

Poetic Inquiry as a Tool for Interrogating Mentoring Relationships in Teacher Preparation

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Abstract

In this article the authors, a Mathematics education professor and two English education professors, describe how we used poetic inquiry in peer-led professional development workshops for field supervisors who observe and evaluate teacher candidates. Poetic inquiry was taken up to better understand our shared experiences of mentoring teacher candidates and to deepen our thinking about our own pedagogical practices. The experience of writing and sharing these poems in our monthly workshops highlighted commonalities in our values and approaches to mentoring teacher candidates and allowed us to reflect on our own identities and how they influence our practices.

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Teaching Internship with College Supervision

7 Full-time teachers, 7 coaching visits
7 pre-conferences, wait, "Professor, I am disappointed, can I do another one?"
That makes for 8 observations, on-line and in-person
Why are there only 7 days in a week?

The train is packed at 7am, heading to first in-person observation
7 rings on the phone, my mute button was accidentally on
I missed the phone alert, a fire in school is going on
Hey Professor Cruz, will observation still move on?

7 minutes away from school, the show must go on!

Teaching Internship is theories put to practice
Watching classrooms go, you must be quick like a mantis
Chit-chats here and there, you perform critical analysis
Preparing GLOWs and GROWs, advocating like an artist

Do Now's are too long and sometimes are too short
When will this Do Now ever end?
Teacher Interns have to read "Teach Like a Champion"
Or read a related chapter of "First Days of Schools" by Wong

Lecturing here and there, students' minds wandering off
Teaching is more about what students can do rather than what teachers know
Effective mathematics teaching is about asking good questions

Probing that stimulates thinking and not rhetorical questions

A need to master five practices for orchestrating effective discussions
"Never say anything a kid can say" is the mantra to live on
Purposeful and intentional planning, will never do it all
But teaching with LOVE and LOGIC will complete it after all (Celia Cruz, 2022)

Celia Cruz, a Mathematics education professor, shared this poem in one of our meetings. She insisted that she had never written a poem before, but was on her way to observe one of her teacher interns (a candidate who is a teacher of record working towards initial certification) when she felt compelled to capture the breathless rhythms of her day, traversing the city to coach novice teachers who were navigating the rough waters of learning to become a teacher. Her poem brought out the complex amalgamation of emotions and thoughts associated with her role as a coach alongside the candidates' need for reassurance and guidance. We can feel the overwhelming day she is experiencing through the breathless quality of the first two stanzas, all while getting a glimpse of her perspectives on teaching and learning.

This poem was an impressionistic mixture of a day in the life of a field supervisor, bits of dialogue with teacher candidates, and reflections on the mentoring relationship. The experience of writing a poem opened a door for the faculty member to process and express her thoughts about her work, and share these insights with peers in our professional learning workshops. It is striking that the author of this poem had the poetic instincts to use a hip-hop inflected rhythm and loosely slanted rhyme in part of the poem, like here:

Teaching Internship is theories put to practice
Watching classrooms go, you must be quick like a mantis
Chit-chats here and there, you perform critical analysis
Preparing GLOWs and GROWs, advocating like an artist

As Prendergast (2009) points out, "There are rhythms to the inquiry process as there are rhythms in poetry" (p. xxvii). These rhythms are part of the impressions we absorb when we attend closely to speech and to the ways in which we move through spaces in the course of the work that we are simultaneously doing and observing. By setting her descriptions of interactions with students to a rhythmic beat, our Mathematics professor turned poet is playfully gesturing towards the high school setting in which these interactions are taking place.

Why Poetic Inquiry in Teacher Education?

Poetic inquiry has been used as a way of deepening understanding of others (Davis, 2021; Gulla, 2014; Hansen, 2004). Pithouse-Morgan (2019) discusses how scholars in a range of social science disciplines have explored poetry as a means of professional learning research and practice. Wiebe and Snowber (2011) suggest that the act of poetic inquiry, specifically writing autobiographical poems, "insists on a willingness to be vulnerable...from which we can profess a creative experience of educational practice" (p. 449). Across disciplines, findings indicate that, "poetic professional learning can heighten self-insight,

empathy, and social awareness on the part of professionals such as teachers, social workers, and nurses, as well as offer insights into the individual and collective learning experiences of these professionals” (p. 135).

In teacher education, poetic inquiry has been used as a means for helping candidates “explore how their identities may shape them as teachers” (Gulla, 2014, p. 142). Lyle and Caissie (2021) describe using poetic inquiry to encourage an engagement with self and others, creating a space for more shared and humanizing educational experiences. In *A Poetics of Teaching*, Hansen (2004) describes poetic inquiry as a “process of active response to the world involving a deepening understanding and sensitivity” (p. 122). The process allows teachers the opportunity to know each student as a whole person with strengths, weaknesses, interests, and concerns (Hansen, 2004). Chisanga and colleagues (2014) show that the collective process of creating encourages reflexivity and highlights “that what we know and how we know are interconnected” (p. 24). Taking part in a reflexive practice leads us to look inward and reflect on our own biases, pedagogy, and discipline (Meskin et al., 2014). We began weaving the poetic inquiry experiences into our monthly workshops with field supervisors with the intention of providing them with a strategy that would enable them to reflect upon and articulate in new ways what they were observing in classrooms and in their interactions with teacher candidates.

The scholarship of caring in higher education connects relational pedagogy to active engagement through creative and imaginative work. Maxine Greene (2010) speaks of the social imagination as “a transmutation of good will, what [she] call[s] wide-awakeness in action” (p. 1). Greene cites Freire’s (2005) statement that the poor people of Brazil must be able to “imagine a lovelier world” (p. 30) in order to bring about change. Indeed, we are reminded of Peter Pan’s admonition, “Lovelier thoughts, Michael!” (Barrie, 1911) to young Michael Darling when he attempts his first flight in the nursery. In order to achieve flight, whether literally or metaphorically, the imagination must be engaged.

In a lecture at the Museum of Education, Greene (1998) insists that she wants people to be moved by encounters with works of art—to “not just feel, not just think, but take someone’s hand and act.” She understands how works of art can inspire imaginative thinking which leads to empathy through a sense of connectedness—the ability to walk in another person’s shoes. Parker Palmer (1998) tells us that, “good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves” (p. 11). Palmer envisions classrooms in which teachers and students are engaged in a cooperative inquiry into the subject at hand. Harriet Schwartz (2019) tells us that “we must be present enough to hear the student’s story and notice the student’s affect” (p. 21). This suggests a kind of deliberate deep attentiveness, akin to Greene’s notion of the social imagination. The instructor or field supervisor’s investment in inquiring into their relationships with teacher candidates through the act of writing poems can manifest in greater empathy through reflection.

Hansen (2004) characterizes *poetics* as heightening the senses of appreciation and alertness; it depicts how we interact with the world. Poetic inquiry can be used to “reveal and explore the meaning that people find in the world and to understand their lived experience” (Haggith, 2021, p. 2). Likewise,

Zimmerman and colleagues (2019) claim that poetry has a way of conveying the experience of being in a classroom and what it is like to teach and learn; they see poetry as “a particularly powerful medium through which to explore the realities of teaching” (p. 304). As a culturally relevant methodological tool, poetic inquiry engages learners and encourages sense making (Davis, 2021).

Furthermore, creative writing contributes to developing metaphorical thinking, which is an important component of critical thinking; “[m]etaphors serve the essential cognitive function of bridging from the familiar to the unknown by using descriptive imagery that allows learners to use their prior knowledge to understand new information” (Gulla, 2014, p. 144). Creativity stretches their thinking and promotes the generation of new ideas and the connection to old ones.

The Broader Context

In university-based teacher education programs, the foundational and methodological induction culminates in the clinical practice experience, in which teacher candidates have what is often their first teaching experiences. In one 15-week semester, the candidate learns what it means to get to know their students, their curriculum, and the school culture and expectations. However, there is a considerable cognitive and social-emotional leap from taking classes on a college campus and writing lesson plans and reflection papers, to teaching actual students in a community school. Once candidates reach this culminating step in their preparation programs, they rely on clinical faculty and mentor teachers to guide them through the daily realities of being a teacher. This experience entails a shift in the student’s experience of the degree program in which they are matriculated, as they suddenly move from a student role to being one of the adults in the room in charge of delivering the high school curriculum. This can be challenging regardless of the student teacher’s identity. Some undergraduate students in particular might only be a year or two older than the high school seniors they are supposed to be teaching. For others, there might be wide gaps in age and/or culture that need to be navigated in order for teacher candidates to find their authentic teaching voice.

This article’s three authors are two professors of English education, Tiffany DeJaynes and Amanda Gulla, and a professor of Mathematics education, Rabab Abi-Hanna in the Department of Middle and High School Education at Lehman College, City University of New York. Beginning in the fall of 2021, Amanda Gulla and Tiffany DeJaynes began leading a series of monthly meetings intended to provide support for field supervisors responsible for mentoring teacher candidates in rolling out new requirements for student teaching. Very quickly, those meetings moved onto more substantial discussions about our values and practices. Amanda Gulla, a poet and a practitioner of poetic inquiry, began sharing poems she had written based on observation field notes gathered in schools. This led to incorporating poetic inquiry into the workshops as a way of helping the field supervisors think about their practice in new ways. We also read and discussed two books, *Cultivating Genius* by Gholdy Muhammad (2020) and *We Want to Do More Than Survive* by Bettina Love (2019). These books helped us frame discussions of anti-racist pedagogy and what that could look like in clinical practice spaces. The faculty were specialists in Math, Science, English, and TESOL education, and most did not consider themselves poets or even creative writers. Poetic inquiry was taken up as a professional learning activity to better understand their shared

experiences of mentorship and clinical supervision of teacher candidates and to deepen their own pedagogical practices. Once we began the poetic inquiry work, we wanted to find a way to be able to help the supervisors who had little or no background in creative writing feel comfortable writing poetry. A fortuitous conversation about creativity and art in math led us to invite our Mathematics education colleague Rabab Abi-Hanna to lead a discussion around identifying the mathematical principles at work in Picasso's painting *Guernica*. This discussion led to the creation of the poem, *Talking about Guernica on a Snowy Morning* that appears later in this article.

The clinical faculty who are responsible for evaluating teacher candidates' readiness to become fully certified teachers are seasoned experts in their classroom disciplines. During the past two years, however, as schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher educators have had to recalibrate how we prepare candidates. Furthermore, teacher candidates have entered school buildings where there is a pervasive sense of disorientation. Mentor teachers in whose classrooms teacher candidates are apprenticing have had to make multiple adjustments to changing conditions, so even seasoned veterans are finding themselves in uncharted territory. Furthermore, during the 2021-22 academic year, as both K-12 schools and higher education returned to in-person teaching and learning, teacher candidates who had done all their coursework and fieldwork virtually were having their first experiences of being in classrooms with children and adolescents who had been learning remotely for the previous year and a half. These circumstances were unprecedented for all concerned. Many students had difficulty adjusting to being in school again, and teachers have had to support them in adjusting to the as-yet undefined "new normal."

As part of our work reimagining the structure and assessment of student teaching, we devised a study to explore these questions:

- How do field supervisors coach teacher candidates and decide on which instructional practices (e.g., questioning) they ask candidates to refine?
- How has the shape of our collaborative, shared learning community affected the changes we see in field supervisor practice?

We realized that most clinical faculty focused on specific characteristics that mattered to their discipline. We wanted to offer a new way to see their practice and deepen the conversation and feedback they are giving to students. Amanda Gulla suggested using poetic inquiry as a way to help field supervisors engage in a kind of active listening to teacher candidates, and as a way to articulate their values and concerns related to their practice of guiding teacher candidates through their practicum experience. The poetic form was particularly freeing for field supervisors, as poetry created a space that allowed them to express their own complex and sometimes contradictory emotions as they navigated the shifting landscapes of city schools.

Our Reflective Process: Uncovering Shared Values and Experiences

Our data collection consisted of field notes and transcripts of monthly meetings with all field supervisors, cross-referenced with teaching artifacts such as lesson plans and handouts from teacher candidates, assignments from the student teaching seminar, and feedback from their mentor teachers.

As we proceeded with these monthly professional development sessions, we began to ask ourselves what strategies we might incorporate into these sessions that could help teacher candidates learn from the challenges of a school system under pressure to redefine learning goals in a world still reeling from a global pandemic. As teacher educators, we are engaged in the process of exploring the question: “To what extent can the schools in which the teachers work become institutions in which the teachers learn as well as teach?” (Proefriedt, 1994, p. 121). In other words, we are currently in the process of considering how to make the most of that 15-week semester so that candidates feel truly prepared to be teachers of record by the end of it. In the spirit of John Dewey’s (1934) experiential learning, we consider how creative engagement deepens understanding of an experience. “The point of such activities,” Maxine Greene (1980) tells us, “would be to make people see, to break with compartmentalized viewing, to take new standpoints on the world” (p. 318). In this context, using a poetic lens is consistent with the existing expectation that teacher candidates learn to become reflective practitioners, as “The potential power of poetic inquiry is to do as poetry does, that is to synthesize experience in a direct and affective way” (Prendergast, 2009, pp. xxi–xxii).

As we read and discussed the poems our colleagues had created, two significant themes related to identity emerged. One was simply “Who am I?” or as Parker Palmer (1998) says, “Who is the self that teaches?” Another theme is the shared values and experiences that guide us as we observe and mentor teacher candidates across disciplines. Regardless of subject area, we all expect teacher candidates to use questioning and discussion as “techniques to deepen student understanding rather than serving as recitation or a verbal quiz” (Danielson, 2011, p. 54). We also expect teacher candidates to enact a pedagogy that demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the content of the curriculum and in their interactions with students and school staff.

The practice of poetic inquiry in these monthly meetings has consisted of blackout poems made from transcripts of recorded coaching sessions between field supervisors and teacher candidates, as well as found poems made from recollections of coaching sessions and conversations that were not recorded. The idea was to use these poems to gain insight, to emphasize underlying meanings that are illuminated by analyzing word choice, images, and metaphors used in conversations about their emerging teaching practices. This data reveals what is often not said explicitly or directly. From the poems written by field supervisors, we came to understand that there are many commonalities across disciplines in the ways we evaluate teaching.

We began our modeling of poetic inquiry by creating a found poem based on a recording of a discussion in one of our Zoom meetings with field supervisors. In the previous session, we modeled the practice of an “arc of questions” which Palmer-Wolf (1987) describes as “an investigation in which simple factual inquiries give way to increasingly interpretive questions until new insights emerge” (p. 5). Using Picasso’s

painting *Guernica* as our “text,” we led the supervisors through an arc of questioning aimed at helping them to examine and articulate how Picasso used symbolism and composition to construct a narrative. After this session it occurred to Tiffany and Amanda that we had constructed our questions through an English Language Arts lens, while we were working with faculty across disciplines. For the following session Rabab Abi-Hanna, who is a Mathematics education professor, led the discussion, returning to the same painting but focusing the questions on more mathematically oriented questions about the ways Picasso used lines, shapes, perspective, and dimensionality. While the field supervisors had enjoyed the previous conversation, this time they participated with great enthusiasm. Using the painting as a *Do Now* and the prompt “what are the math concepts that you recognize in the painting?” to bring out prior knowledge proved to be very productive. The idea was to stimulate their thinking and allow them an opportunity to participate in the mathematics conversation. Mathematics teaching in the United States is often criticized for its focus on “lower level skills and tightly controlled and curtailed *question-and-answer* routine called *recitation*” (Hiebert & Grouws, 2007, p. 392); the questions posed tend to be directed and do not challenge students or elicit critical thinking. By approaching the idea in a creative and engaging way, we created a space where all can participate. The contributions were based on participants’ observations. They were discussing concepts of two-dimensional and three-dimensional figures, surface area, volume, geometric shapes, triangles, lines, curves, symmetry, and perspective; participants who were not mathematics educators noticed that they knew more math than they had previously realized. We recorded the session and Amanda Gulla (2022) produced this found poem based on excerpts from the transcript:

Talking about Guernica on a Snowy Morning

How many figures can fit in the room?

How can they all breathe?

There’s just so much math!

The number of things going on in that space...

Volume. Density.

The artist is leading the eye.

Lines, curves, and symmetry.

The shapes construct the narrative--

a preponderance of triangles,
reflections and transformations.

It’s two dimensional.

The artist didn’t paint a third dimension.

The figures are like shadows.

As if they are transparent—

we see all planes at once.

The head of the bull,

looking at you

and away from you.

This poem captured the energy of the moment. Field supervisors were impressed with the synthesis of the ideas that emerged during our meeting. At the end of the discussion one of the seasoned math supervisors commented: "You could talk and talk about all the math in this painting. You wouldn't even have to do any math, just talk about it together and the students would say, 'I understand this.'"

In particular, the math educators participating in the discussion became excited to discover that a painting could be a source of such a rich mathematical discussion. Amanda Gulla, who synthesized this poem from our recorded discussion, described her writing process as "gathering what stood out to my ear, and organizing it to capture the energy and the flow of our discussion" (informal communication, 2022).

After this session we invited the field supervisors to write their own poems. The following poem was written by Rabab Abi-Hanna:

Revealing Questions

Questioning and discussion
Central to teachers' practice

*Decompose a number and use distributive property to multiply. Brilliant!
6 times 73, 6 times 70 is 420, 6 times 3 is 18; 420 and 18: 438.*

Important techniques to deepen understanding
Divergent, convergent questions

*I can multiply fractions across, why can't I do the same when dividing
fractions?*

Make connections, challenge views
Students valued

*Confusion on students' faces. Of course! They don't know a decimal point - they use comma
instead*

Effective teachers pose questions
Promote student thinking

A square is a special case of a rectangle?! How? Why?

Foundation of logical reasoning, critical skill

How does understanding the decimal numerical system help you understand any other base?

(Rabab Abi-Hanna, 2022)

In this poem, the author integrates mathematical language as a modality of sensemaking, which viscerally brings the reader into the mathematics classroom. Over the years, Rabab realized that questioning is vital to her teaching and understanding where her students are. Questioning gives students the opportunity to articulate their thought process and, in turn, it gives her insight into their understanding. For example, the distributive property is taught in elementary school without any understanding of its importance and its role in mental mathematics (one of the standards students are expected to master). Asking intentional questions revealed that the teacher did not see the connection between the distributive property and being able to use it to multiply, and neither did the students. Rabab recalls a conversation with an elementary teacher who did not see the value in teaching her second-grade students the distributive property. After a series of purposeful questions, and pointing out how the numeral is decomposed to make the multiplication simpler, the teacher enthusiastically exclaimed, "That's brilliant! I did not know that!" Purposeful questioning opens the door for mathematical discourse and the flow of thoughts, and sometimes, it heightens the looks of confusion on students' faces. Addressing the difference in the decimal notation used in Europe and other countries legitimized the uncertainty students felt. They knew their perspectives were valued. Planning deliberate questions is a powerful strategy that creates an inclusive classroom, and everyone has something to contribute to the conversation. And more often than not, it lays the foundation for a deeper discussion.

The act of writing this poem required that Rabab revisit moments in her teaching where the right questions significantly moved students' understanding forward. Reliving and reflecting on those teaching moments made her more aware of the dynamics of teaching through questioning. Intentional questions aimed at unveiling doubts and understandings (or misunderstandings) and required having the sensitivity to "read the room." Reading this poetic reflection makes those teaching moments vividly present, providing insight into not just what she did, how she did it, and how the students responded, but also to the palpable energy of a dynamic teaching and learning relationship.

The Selves That Teach: Unearthing the Values That Shape Our Identities

The outcome of our meetings unveiled the commonalities of what we were all experiencing as clinical faculty. We all encountered a disequilibrium when faced with the uncertainties the COVID-19 pandemic brought about, and the social awakening against racism our communities were experiencing. Suddenly we were confronted with the inequities that were daily realities for our students, such as uneven access to broadband and safe, quiet spaces that would allow them to work and study from home. We needed to adapt to this new virtual situation we confronted. Our teacher candidates looked to us for guidance, and we had to relearn ways of interacting with and supporting them during this unpredictable time imposed on us. In addition to maneuvering the obstacles of the pandemic, we were confronting our own identities against the backdrop of nationwide protests against racist policing during the summer of 2020. In order for us to find the commonalities shared within our disciplines, we needed to look within ourselves and find out who we were as individuals. After reading Bettina Love's *We Want to Do More Than Survive* (2019), Amanda Moody, one of the participants who is a TESOL Lecturer, led the discussion related to the reading and produced her poem that is a meditation on Love's description of what it means to be a "coconspirator," rather than merely an "ally" (p. 115).

Below is her original “black out poem,” where she marked out various words, leaving only those that spoke to her in some way.

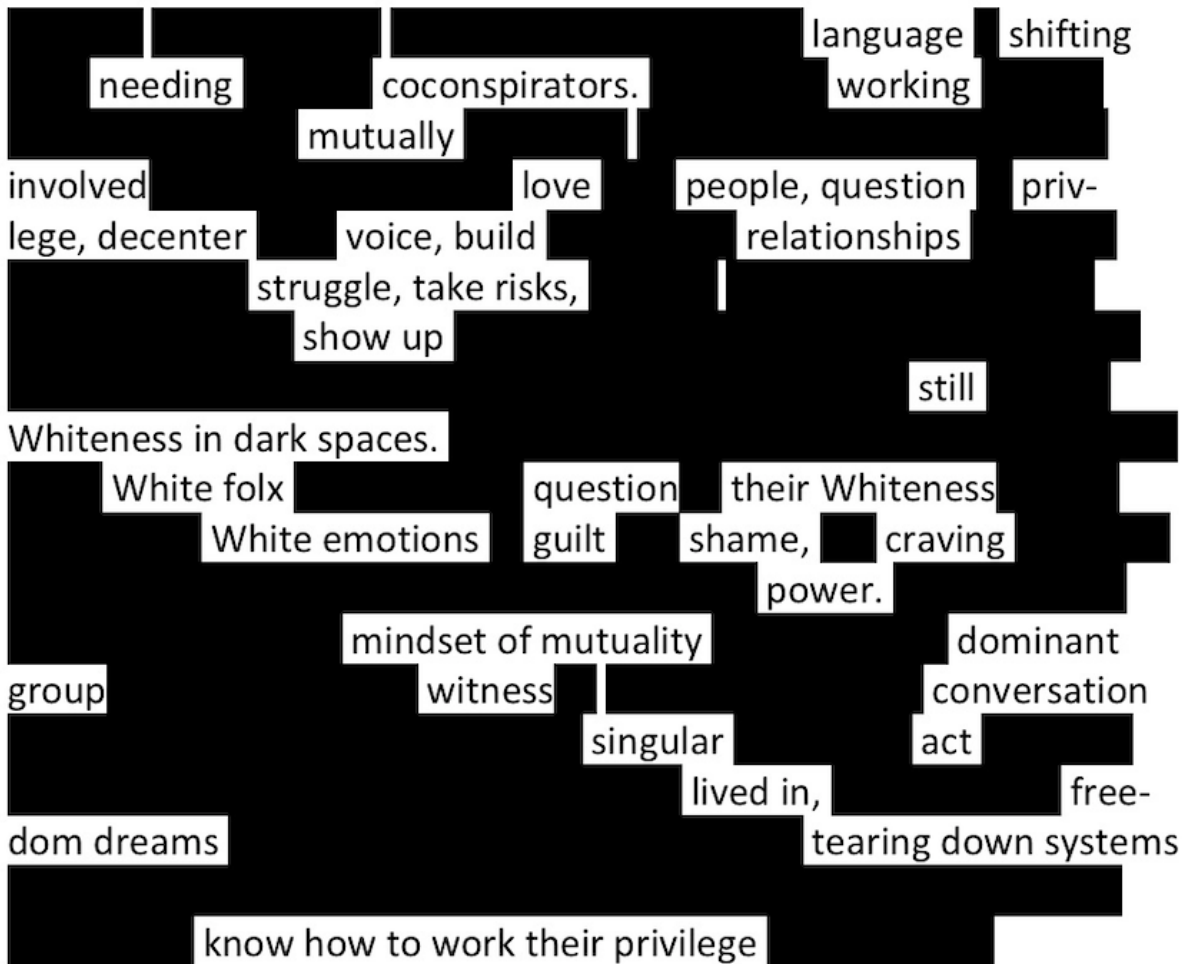


Fig. 1: Black out poem.

Amanda Moody’s (2022) poem below reimagines her blackout poem (above) into a found poem. She leans into Love’s original language, but reshapes the ideas by playing with word order and spacing. Her poem, which opened one of our sessions, became a de/re-construction of Love’s critique of ally-ship and eager White folk.

To Wake up White

Language-shifting,
Needing coconspirators.
Working
Mutually involved
Love people
Question privilege
Decenter voice
Build relationships

Struggle
Take risks
Show up.

Still Whiteness in dark spaces.
White folk:
Question their Whiteness
White emotions –
Guilt
Shame
Craving
Power
Mindset of mutuality.

Dominant group:
Witness conversation –
Singular acts
Live in
Freedom dreams
Tearing down systems
Know how to work
Their privilege.

In our meeting Moody shared,

I believe in her call for us White people to start waking up, confront ourselves as racialized beings, and dismantle oppression in our lifework. We must descend the staircases we have built, see under ourselves, read between the lines and excavate the dark spaces in what we say and do.

Her poem visually represents this staircase, and makes visual the ways in which “White folk” must work their way down the stairs moving from “white guilt” (a personal response) to doing the endless work of “tearing down systems” of oppression. In speaking to how she is intentionally trying to do this work in teacher education, supervision, and mentoring practices, she invited us (her peers) to be collaborators who are doing (or wish to do) the same. A participant who had objected to Bettina Love’s work a semester prior, nodded, “Beautiful, thank you.” It was a small moment of being called in through poetry. Moody’s vulnerability and close engagement with anti-racist ideas through poetry had helped our colleague see the text anew. In transparently discussing her own process of moving toward being anti-racist and designing pro-Black learning spaces, she shared, “I’m not there yet, I’m working on it.” The path toward becoming a “coconspirator” is deeply personal and she invited us on that journey with her.

Another workshop participant, Iain Coggins (2022), an English education field supervisor, wrote an extended metaphor, imaging his subway commute to schools across the city to observe student teachers as a contemporary embodiment of 19th Century English poet and schools inspector Matthew Arnold:

Ruminations of a Field Supervisor

Glum Matthew Arnold comes to mind
traversing Midlands,
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools,
lamenting diminishment
of poetic life, trundling
each milestone of the moors;
Trundling out a mission, road-fill for
Highway-builder father, yearning
to be "Free from sick fatigue,
the languid doubt." And out
the door I go across the Bronx, trundling
each station of the Number Two, the Four;
trundling out my mission, through one door,
then another in hill-stacked boxes,
up, down steep staircases, high
ceilinged rooms, and therein
finding poetic life perhaps
not in students, nor in teachers
but in eyes I bring to see
the nectar in a fleeting smile;
relief of a day finished;
spark of last minute idea;
contentment that comes
from a plan put off
for a few days more;
And voice I bring to praise.
Not what I see, but what
I am determined that I will

In our conversation, Rabab noted Iain's hope amidst the slogging along. Iain reflected on how fellow educators often express, implicitly and explicitly, that field supervision is "peripheral if not drudge work rather than 'mission driven'" as he sees it. His comparison to Arnold helped him consider how work in schools can be of service without romanticizing it. He noted,

[Arnold's] work as a school inspector was not his calling. Rather, he wanted to be a major poet, like Wordsworth, with whom he and his family were acquainted. Instead, he had to obtain steady employment to win the hand of his bride, and so he became a civil servant. Yet at the same time, he was a major voice for education reform, and he was mission-driven. I'm wondering about the quality of tension between one's work and one's passion, how they fuel each other, or don't; and where, when, and how their intersection shifts, like a new road laid temporarily alongside an old road until the latter is plowed under or built over.

Iain's poem recalled Celia's poem from the introduction, the frenetic and sometimes disjointed nature of our slogging through our urban environment to "inspect" classrooms and teachers' practice. Our cohort of intrepid field supervisors saw themselves in his poem—the peripatetic, perambulatory nature of our work. His metaphor of "trundling" served as a sort of rumination on field supervision, joining the pragmatism of the work with fantasy. "Iain the inspector," as Amanda Gulla quipped, brought together a

clear sense of purpose, values, and a sense of honoring the small things. Iain's jotting of poems on the corners of lesson plans during his commute between schools was reminiscent of William Carlos Williams penning poems on prescription pads as he traveled between house calls to visit patients: passion and mission intersecting.

Conclusions

Poetic inquiry is a discovery process, a way to explore challenges and reveal unarticulated concerns. It gives us the space and time to look inward and reflect. It puts into perspective the importance of developing social awareness, empathy, and self-insight. Davis (2021) refers to poetic inquiry as an inductive process of poetic analysis and writes, "poetic writing is an introspective, interpretive act of critical thinking" (p. 115). Just as mathematics educators draw on inductive reasoning—looking for specific examples and observations to make generalizations and find patterns—clinical faculty, regardless of specialization, leveraged poetic writing to locate common challenges and shared sensibilities. Although the inductive process looks different across our disciplines, engaging in poetic inquiry together allowed us to highlight the power of creativity and reflexivity, and revealed our shared goals and vision for our students.

As clinical faculty gained insights through the poetic inquiry process, they shared both the process and the product with teacher candidates to help them to process the extraordinary and sometimes ineffable experiences of their apprenticeships. By incorporating this arts-based qualitative methodology, our intention is to provide a tool that will allow clinical faculty to articulate their observations about the complexities of the teaching and learning relationship.

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