(Re)framing vulnerability as social justice work: Lessons from hacking our teacher education practices

Carey E. Andrzejewski, Kira J. Baker-Doyle, Jocelyn A. Glazier & Kristin E. Reimer

Published online: 04 Dec 2019.

Submit your article to this journal ⎘

View related articles ⎘

View Crossmark data ⎘

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

(Re)framing vulnerability as social justice work: Lessons from hacking our teacher education practices

Carey E. Andrzejewski (iD), Kira J. Baker-Doyle (iD), Jocelyn A. Glazier, and Kristin E. Reimer (iD)

Introduction

Critical, collaborative learning activities in teacher education programs prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to work collectively with a social justice stance in their work (Lieberman & Pointer-Mace, 2010; Picower, 2011). However, at the university-level, this kind of collaboration is rare among teacher educators, as education professors are often siloed into their content areas, focused on meeting research criteria for tenure or promotion, or in precarious positions without the protection or promise of tenure (Hartung et al., 2017; Miller & Stayton, 1999; Zhang & Amundsen, 2015). Yet, some research shows that collaborative work in teacher education can also have a transformative effect on practice (Hug & Möller, 2005; Nevin, Thousand, & Villa, 2009). Furthermore, the field of teacher education is in need of transformation; it has long been criticized for under-preparing future teachers for working with diverse populations, and for challenges in supporting teachers of color through the pipeline (Mawhinney & Rinke, 2019; Sleeter, 2001). Therefore, models of critical collaboration among teacher educators, and the outcomes of this work, are important for fostering transformation and innovation in the field.

One opportunity for teacher educators to collaborate critically is the Transformative Teacher Educator Fellowship (TTEF). In TTEF, teacher educators identify an aspect of teacher education that they would like to transform in a way that promotes social justice and equity, and work together over a year to support each other's work. We, the authors, were participants in the 2018–2019 cohort. The four of us sought to take a collective, critical look at how we address issues of social justice and power in our teaching. Through using hacking as a method of collective action and inquiry (Baker-Doyle, 2017), we came to recognize a central theme around which all of our narratives distilled: As we stepped into and cataloged our equity work at our individual institutions, we recognized that we were all

experiencing different sorts of vulnerability. Fuzing practitioner inquiry with dialectic conversation among authors (Mawhinney & Petchauer, 2013) as a form of deeper analysis of our personal inquiries, we came to make sense of this main theme of vulnerability.

Vulnerability emerged as a theme rife with complexity, possibility, and contradiction in our study. Through dialogue and practitioner inquiry, we explored how being vulnerable and modeling vulnerability in our teaching played a role in hacking and transforming our practice to center social justice. We also examined the challenges we faced in being vulnerable, leading often to more questions than answers about the potential role of collective vulnerability in social justice work. We take up some of these questions at the end of the article.

Vulnerability

In the social and ideological "system" of teaching, one of the most influential elements is the teacher, and therefore our (i.e., teachers') personal vulnerabilities are a crucial aspect to consider in our equity pedagogies. Generally speaking, emotions in education take a back seat to cognition (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009; Zembylas, 2003), and research on emotions of PK-12 teachers in particular tends to prioritize efforts to meet systemic expectations to "control" or regulate those emotions (Sutton, 2004; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). This is particularly true when it comes to teachers' sense of vulnerability, which is perceived in the broader social context where cognition reigns supreme, as an emotion PK-12 teachers should avoid, manage, and minimize (Bullough, 2005; Kelchtermans, 1996). After all, it is defined as "the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally" (Oxford English Dictionary). We want to keep our students—and ourselves—out of harm's way. Thus the avoidance of vulnerability occurs in higher education as well as in K-12 contexts. Here, being vulnerable can mean losing one's status and, ultimately, losing one's job.

We argue, though, as do others, that vulnerability is a "structural condition" (Kelchtermans, 2005); it exists no matter how much we might want to avoid it. And those structural conditions—framed by institutional racism, gender inequities, and hegemonic histories—impact some more than others. Furthermore, within the university context, some disciplines are more vulnerable than others. Teacher education, as a field, is vulnerable, subject to divestment in higher education, growing neoliberal accountability structures, negative narration, and deprofessionalization. Also on the vulnerable border is teaching for and about social justice; one need only look to professor watchlists and instances of cyberbullying to see how

centering social justice renders faculty vulnerable to scrutiny and attack (Ferber, 2018; Kerr, 2018; Lloro-Bidart, 2018; Massanari, 2018).

What would it mean to intentionally step into the vulnerability, to essentially make ourselves explicitly vulnerable in our classrooms and institutions in the service of equity? Can embracing and reframing this vulnerability, shifting it from a deficit to a strength, lead to a more empowering outcome for ourselves and our students? Researchers have begun to consider different ways of framing vulnerability, particularly as "academic environments have become more stressful and anxious spaces for academics" (Jackson, 2018, p. 232). This reframing considers vulnerability as a space of "courage, authenticity, and connection leading to the creation of communities and relationships as safe spaces … even in the midst of disagreement" (Loveless et al., 2016, p. 15). Our study builds on these more robust, hopeful, and necessary conceptions of vulnerability. Specifically, we consider the concept of "epistemic vulnerability" (Gilson, 2014) in our work, where vulnerability is an openness to being wrong and to stepping into spaces of unknowing. Further, epistemic vulnerability is:

> … a readiness to put oneself in a situation in which one is not knowledgeable, becoming the Other (Gilson, 2011, p. 325). Furthermore, it is becoming aware of the ambivalence of emotional and bodily responses in the process of being rendered vulnerable. For example, knowledge of racial discrimination and the continuing after effects of colonialism as reflected in a coloniality of being, coloniality of power, and a coloniality of knowledge need to sink into our bodies, into our emotional responses, into a more basic interpretation of the world and ourselves. (Snyman, 2015, pp. 286–287)

This vulnerability is "more appropriately demanded of those who are relatively privileged precisely because they have likely not already found themselves in situations in which they are the unknowing, uncomfortable, and nondominant party" (Gilson, 2014, p. 311). In these vulnerable spaces, we embrace our own limitations, our own lack of understanding, our own complicitness in the hegemonic structures in which we work. This vulnerability is shared; it is "relational, communal and even institutional" (Jackson, 2018, p. 238) as we come to understand what it would be like to embrace vulnerability in our scholarly lives.

A note on positionality

We embarked on this work understanding that as straight, cis women, three of whom were tenured at our institutions, and three of whom identify as White, many of our vulnerabilities were taken on rather than imposed. As teacher educators committed to equity, we work to engage in humanizing pedagogies, to meet our students with empathy and a developmental perspective. We also work to render hegemonic structures (e.g., white

supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy, ableism, colonialism) visible so that we, along with our students, can participate in dismantling them. What we've documented here are our explicit efforts to bring these commitments to the fore of our teaching and to interrogate those efforts. We recognize that there are bound to be blindspots in our interrogations, given the privileges we collectively and individually embody. That is, in part, why it was so essential that our interrogations be collaborative, so that we can hold each other accountable and point out when those blindspots were obscuring our failings, when they were blinding us to the ways in which our own privilege was a barrier to enacting our espoused commitments. We also want to acknowledge, however, that our collective blindspots, rooted in shared and intersectional privilege, likely remain.

Modes of inquiry

Hacking as a method

We entered into this research through a collective agreement to "hack" our teacher education practice in an effort to realize new possibilities for equity work in our teaching. Hacking was essentially our *method* for collectively recognizing and then transforming our practices. While the term "hacking" is used in a variety of contexts, from computer programing (e.g., Coleman, 2012), to art and design (e.g., Hillgren, 2013), to rhetoric and communications (e.g., Clover & Williamson, 2019), to curriculum (e.g., Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015), we draw our definition of hacking specifically from Baker-Doyle's (2017) framing of teachers' hacking practices, which come from her study of contemporary teacher leadership and learning.

According to Baker-Doyle (2017), teacher hacking focuses on systematic transformation of curricula, practices, spaces, institutions, and broader educational systems towards greater equity and justice. Hacking requires a critical understanding of how social power operates in a system, whether that system be a curriculum or physical space, so as to be able to then transform it. In any context, hacking is signified by five key characteristics: (1) collective work, (2) open and public engagement, (3) an intentional and systematic approach, (4) a producer orientation, and (5) the use of agentive tools.

In teacher hacking, *collective work* is not always a group of people all doing the same specific task, but the group does share the same overall goal of improving a particular "system." In this case, we came together as practitioners with issues to address in our individual practices, yet worked collectively toward the shared goal of transforming our practices in ways that would reconfigure the social power structures in which we were

situated (e.g., the university)—or the system—towards more socially just and culturally sustaining practices.

Open and public engagement means that the public is invited to engage in and provide feedback to the ongoing work of the hack via social media or other platforms and in other public contexts. As we hacked our individual practices, we opened our work first to and with one another. Then, in an effort to broaden the conversation, we sought public engagement with the ideas we were identifying in our collective work. In our case, we engaged in open and public engagement when we presented our initial work at the 2018 annual American Educational Research Association conference, a public forum. The publication of our work in this journal is a further step towards open public engagement with our own efforts of transformation.

Intentional, systemic work involves the careful attention to the hierarchies and dynamics of social power at play in a system, and intentional work to transform hierarchies in ways that create greater equity. Practitioners must therefore understand how ideologies are embedded into curricula/practices, and how these curricula/practices support or transform social hierarchies. During our hack, we took a closer look at the assumptions and ideologies that our practices or the systems in which we worked reflected, and used what we learned from these inquiries to generate new alternatives. Our collective approach was critical to this work, in that the feedback we gave one another often revealed insights that we wouldn't have had individually.

A *producer orientation* means that hackers seek to be contributors and creators through their work. This counters the notion that hackers disrupt and destroy. Instead, teacher hackers work collectively to transform systems in aims to offer new possibilities and pathways. In our case, we sought to hack our practices in order to remake and create new ways of teaching, designing our curriculum, and working with colleagues. While each of us made unique contributions through our hacks, our greater contribution from our hacking was the insight we gained, particularly about vulnerability, which we share in this article.

Finally, an *agentive tool* is a practice or discourse that supports agency for change (Baker-Doyle & Gustavson, 2016). In many cases, agentive tools are protocols used by teachers to work through a process or a set of shared discursive practices. In our case, our primary agentive tool was our practitioner inquiry process, described in greater detail below.

Practitioner inquiry

We designed our practitioner inquiry process in response to Kitchen, Tidwell, and Fitzgerald's (2016) call for autobiographical and collaborative

research regarding the social-justice-oriented practices of teacher educators. As such, we drew on notions of self-study and practitioner inquiry as collective: "The experience of an individual is the focus of the study but the individual need not be, and should not be, the sole participant in the process" (Loughran & Northfield, 1998, p. 7). Therefore, we individually studied our transformed practices as teacher educators working to make our teaching more social justice- and equity-focused, but also turned to each other as critical friends and colleagues for support in making sense of our experiences (Moore & Carter-Hicks, 2014). In this way our self-studies served as both a means to our own reflective practice and an ends for promoting reflection in teacher education as a field (Dinkelman, 2003).

At the conclusion of the TTEF summer institute in June 2018 and returning to our home institutions, we committed to individual inquiry focused on revised course documents such as syllabi, proposals, and assignments and written or recorded reflective memos about the planning and implementation of the courses we had begun to (re)imagine during the institute. We also committed to collective efforts of mutual support and analysis of data. We met monthly on-line to share and discuss our new and revised course documents, teaching practices, and reflective memos. These monthly check-ins featured individual narratives about salient events in preparing for and teaching our new and/or newly revised classes and initial analyses about what it means to engage in individual and collective hacking of our teaching practices. Over time, we honed in on the role and nature of vulnerability in this work and the framing of vulnerabilities as openings for change and growth. Ultimately guided by this question: *What does hacking our practice for equity and justice reveal about vulnerability in teaching?*, we persisted in collective reflective work (Nissilä, 2005; Schuck, Aubusson, & Buchanan, 2008), thereby embedding within- and cross-case analyses in our ongoing dialogue and collective practitioner inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The inquiry processes we used during our hack resulted in our identification of four themes across our self-studies: enduring and embracing vulnerability, vulnerability in confronting injustice, vulnerability as relational and institutional, and networks that cultivate a social practice of ease with vulnerability. These themes are explored below, drawing on one case from each of our self-studies.

Theme/case 1: enduring and embracing vulnerability (Kira)

In my early days of teaching, I believed I could shield myself from critique by playing the invincible, always-right teacher. This only served to build walls and distrust between my students and I. It shut down critical conversations. It made my human mistakes more glaring, and set up a fear in

students to shield themselves as well—from failure, and ultimately, from learning. As a person who identifies as interracial, yet appears to most as White, this kind of shielding of my true self to students took an even deeper inner toll on my identity exploration and development. In fact, it took a "rock-bottom" year of teaching to realize that what I needed to do was the opposite: embrace and endure vulnerability. Show students who I really am, faults, questions, uncertainties, idenit(ies), loves, and dislikes. To be open, show my own humanity, in an invitation to reveal their own.

This idea of exposing myself, sharing my questions, taking a risk and asking students, "Is what I am teaching meaningful to you?" and, more specifically, "Is what I'm teaching about justice or equity meaningful to you?" has guided my practice since that rock-bottom year. And each year since, I have come to believe more in the truth of it. Yet, each year, I must also sit with the pain of it. Of listening to critique, and of realizing if I intentionally, or unintentionally caused hurt. Deborah Augsburger (1998) once wrote of the "agony and the ecstasy" involved in the process of writing, particularly in the vulnerability of exposing your writings to the world. Teaching, to me, is much the same. There is a kind of agony that one must bear through vulnerability in order to reach the ecstasy of truly connecting with learners. As a person that has had to grapple with vulnerability in how I talk about about my identity, I would argue that this pain feels similar to the pain that bell hooks (2000) and Cornel West (2015) speak of when they talk of fostering "radical love," in which one lovingly challenges others to be their best selves; in the pain of the challenge (done lovingly), comes the transformation.

In the last year I decided to hack my old syllabus for a writing methods course. In looking closely at the readings and activities, I noticed that the literacies of communities that have been traditionally marginalized were not centered in the curriculum. This was a hole, a vulnerable opening, that offered me the opportunity to transform my practice to foster a more inclusive, humanistic, and critical pedagogy of literacies for my teacher education students. Yet, as I set to attend to this opening, I discovered a deeper concern about how students might be able to connect critical theory with their practice in the field. As such, the vulnerable opening in the curriculum translated into a more personal sense of vulnerability because this practice was coming not just from my head, but from my heart and soul, and I was putting it out there, hoping students found legitimacy in it, and in their everyday lives. Throughout the course, I engaged in cycles of working in this openness, both curricular and personal by questioning my practice, asking students about their experience with the course, and re-thinking assumptions and approaches.

For the purposes of this research, I kept weekly memos, made after each class, in which I reflected on my feelings and thoughts about that

night's class. My class was made up of secondary English education graduate students that had not taken a methods course before, and began student teaching one day a week in the field about mid-semester. In the first week, I was surprised to find that students were not at all resistant to the critical concepts driving the course (as had happened in the past), but I wondered if they could translate these ideas into the design and enactment of curricula. It seeded my concern about connecting theory to practice. In my first memo, I noted this concern:

> I don't want them to walk out of the class and think well, we thought of some really wonderful kind of in theory things but we didn't kind of, she didn't teach us about how to make this work in our classrooms. So, that's kind of my main worry or struggle and the nice thing is that, the students are really thoughtful and they're very critical thinkers and they're really willing to kind of jump in and think through these complex ideas.

In the following weeks, students engaged in projects that pushed them to more directly confront the link between theory and practice, such as a mini-ethnography of the literacies practices of a particular community. Some of the concerns I had in the beginning became more pronounced, as students had to articulate their own findings and understandings within the critical frameworks. After one class, I observed, "they still really were struggling with thinking of seeing themselves as creators of curriculum. They're thinking of themselves more as consumers…" This sparked a moment in which I had to be vulnerable in order to learn more about what was going on for students. I described this event, and the questions that opened up for me in the following memo excerpt:

> …I took a moment in class last week and I asked everyone what were some of the things that they still wanted to explore and what are some things I should make sure to build into the curriculum, and it did seem like they're really starting to think about, they're really still kind of trying to figure out how to make sense of this within the context where they are in and actually make something, design something that's applicable. Am I stuck on this issue of practical use? Am I making it bigger than it is?

The discussion I had with students made it clear to me that, while they had some understanding of the critical theories and ideas we had studied, something was halting their *imagination* to create something themselves. It made me consider if I had offered enough modeling and embodied experiences for students to understand how to translate their understandings of critical literacies and social justice into a praxis that empowered them to design their own curricula for their students. I took a risk and created a sample writing unit on Science Fiction and Fantasy writing and shared it with students. It centered explicitly on social justice in the "big ideas," "learning objectives," and activities. For example: one of the "big ideas"

driving the unit was, "*Fantasy and science fiction writers have a message about society that they want readers to consider, and they can have a big impact on real world decisions;*" one key "learning objective" was, "*understanding how the work of a good science fiction and fantasy writer is to re-imagine/frame social identities/communities to get at injustice;*" and one activity was to interrogate a sample text (from Toni Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone*) to see how the author attends to issues of humanization/dehumanization and social justice in the text.

I told them it probably wasn't perfect, but it embodied the theories that we had studied. This gave them permission to explore it as a professional might; to examine, critique, and unpack, and hack it. I still recall the feeling of fear, and some agony, when a student said "this would take twice as long to do in my classroom!" I worried, and questioned myself, "Am I out of touch?" However, that moment opened up an opportunity for us to discuss the reality of their classrooms, and their experiences as teachers, and proved a fruitful moment for the students to begin imagining what would work in their own classroom.

As students began to design their own units, the earlier moments of vulnerable "agony" begat moments of pedagogical joy. After one class, I noted,

> It was really gratifying to see the ways in which they wove together much of what we were doing in the course and how they really feel like these unit plans that they've designed is something that is going to be useful to them, that they're excited to use. They all said, "They can't wait."

This joy, however, had come after many weeks of questioning, challenging, and changing *out in the open*. At the end of the semester, I also reflected upon the amount of patience, and trust that this process required:

> … Part of me thinks a little bit about how, in some ways, it's frustrating that this only came at the end, but maybe that's just what has to happen, that this is a culminating moment of a lot of smaller moments.

My willingness to be patient with the process, be open with myself and the curriculum, opened up newer opportunities for me to transform with my students and live out the principles of critical pedagogy in my practice.

Theme/case 2: vulnerability in confronting injustice (Jocelyn)

My teaching is about justice and equity. It is about foregrounding equity and challenging inequity, injustice. The hidden curriculum is far from hidden in my classroom: it's on the syllabus, it's apparent in how I act, in the questions I ask, in the articles we read, in the speakers I invite in, in the assignments my students write. In my classroom, no matter the topic, I work to push equity center stage.

If I'm really honest, I don't often feel really, truly vulnerable in my teaching. I've been teaching for what seems like forever. It's like shifting sands—I don't know what to expect often. But I have a sense of the whole, of the constellations my teaching might take, the ways my students—who look an awful lot like me in their whiteness and upper middle-classness— might respond, where the course readings and activities might take them, how they might struggle with certain concepts and ideas around equity. I enjoy my teaching—I feel like in my teaching, I am fully present … mostly. I can't help myself. I am animated, I step in, I make a mess—I say the wrong things sometimes, my lessons fall flat sometimes, but I go back again and again. I have enough successes in my teaching that I can wipe myself off and step back into it. I come back again and again. But I recognized this semester that one of the reasons I can come back again and again is because I keep vulnerability at arm's length. What happens when I am truly vulnerable in my teaching?

First day of school. It was the first day of my undergraduate class on young adult and children's literature. The students, many of whom seek to be elementary school teachers, were busy filling in a chart on a shared google document with the names and authors of the books they remembered reading in middle school. One goal was to make explicit to students the stubbornness of the middle school English literature canon. I have done this activity so many times that I can anticipate which books will appear on the list: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Giver*, *Lord of the Flies* … more recently, books like *Hunger Games* and the Percy Jackson series have appeared, reflective of the rise of dystopian literature for young adults. The authors are primarily White men and White women. The stories often reflect "traditional" storylines, "mainstream" characters and hegemonic outcomes. The lesson is my way of reminding students where we have begun so that we can then mix that up a bit, stir the pot by (a) questioning why these are books that lie on classroom shelves and (b) pushing to decenter those books and stories. Critical literacy and social justice pedagogy are central tenets of the class, of the work we will together do this semester.

Per usual, students are filling out the chart anonymously. I have used this approach in many classes for us to do some shared thinking. Providing the students with the editable link to the shared document is simple—and does not require students to have a Gmail account. Instead of logging in as themselves, the students appear on the page as anonymous rat, anonymous weasel, anonymous kangaroo …

Things move along per usual at 12:58 as reflected in Figure 1:

Title	Author	Your Name	Check here if you also read this book:
The Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
One Crazy Summer	Rita Williams-Garcia	---	
The Outsiders	S.E. Hinton	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Catch Me If You Can	Frank Abagnale	---	x
The Witch of Blackbird Pond	Elizabeth George Speare	---	xxxx
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Hunger Games	Suzanne Collins	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Figure 1. 12:58 document.

Stargirl	Jerry Spinelli	---	xxxxxxx
The Cay	Theodore Taylor	---	xx
The Giver		---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Twits	Roald Dahl	---	xx
White Fang	Jack London	---	xxx
The Pearl	John Steinbeck	---	xxxxxx
Holes	Lois Lowry	---	xxxxxxxx

Figure 2. 1:06 Document.

The list continues to grow. At 1:06, it looks like all of the anonymous tigers and anteaters have finished typing. Per usual, I project the list on the screen at the front of the room and begin with the usual questions: What do you notice about this list? What are some observations about authors and texts? I begin to take notes on the Google doc, at the bottom, under the table for all to see (see Figure 2).

Our observations.
- *Coming of age books*
- *There are lots of common books*
- *"Classics"*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *A number of dystopian books on the list*
- *Hunger Games*
- *Popular books on the list were made into movies*
- *Most books listed are fiction*

As we share observations, I scroll up and down the table so we can see its contents as we think aloud. As I scroll up at 1:07, I noticed someone inserted "poop" in the author column in place of Anne Frank as author of the *Diary of Anne Frank* (see Figure 3).

I proceed to say aloud to the 45 students in class: "Hmmm … not sure what that's about. Let's delete that." And then I erase the "poop," replace it with Anne Frank as author, and we continue on with our list of observations. I then endure 38 more minutes of class, sticking to my lesson plan, moving us to look at some picture books to critically examine who/whose stories are present and who/whose stories are absent in these books.

Reflecting back. At 1:45, class ends. And, thanks to the power of Google Docs, in the quiet of my office, I recreate the first fifteen minutes of my class. Come to find out that "poop" had been there as imagined author of Anne Frank from nearly the very beginning of the list development. Except it had been stretched out to cover more space over the course of (see Figure 4) the first 8 minutes of class.

Only after we had begun debriefing for one minute, did "poop" transform to an even larger version of the word, its imposing font taking up much of the page (see Figure 5).

Observations I make in this moment in my office, with my heart beating fast and my palms sweating, are these:

1. There are other books on this list without authors listed—if students forgot the author, they could leave the space blank.
2. The book with the author listed as poop is about—and by—a Jewish young woman. This, perhaps ironically, is the very first moment I realize this.
3. There are at least 18 other students who checked the box to say that they too had read Anne Frank in middle school. Not one of the students changed the author box, though must have seen "poop" written there.

Title	Author	Name	Check here if you also read this book
The Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
One Crazy Summer	Rita Williams-Garcia	---	
The Outsiders	S.E. Hinton	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Catch Me If You Can	Frank Abagnale	---	x
The Witch of Blackbird Pond	Elizabeth George Speare	---	xxxx
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Hunger Games	Suzanne Collins	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Little Women	Louisa May Alcott	---	xxxxxxx
The Giver +	Lois Lowry	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Forged By Fire	Sharon M. Draper	---	xxx
Lord of the Flies	William Golding	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Book Thief	Markus Zusak	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Diary of Anne Frank	p o o p	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Alchemist	Paulo Coelho	---	xxxxx

Figure 3. 1:07 document.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	C.S. Lewis	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Graveyard Book	Neil Gaiman	---	
Anne of Green Gables	Lucy Maud Montgomery	---	xxxxxx
A Series of Unfortunate Events	Daniel Handler	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Raven	Edgar Allen Poe	---	xxxxxx
Hang a Thousand Trees With Ribbons	Ann Rinaldi	---	
Shiver	Maggie Stiefvater	---	xx
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	C. S. Lewis	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Lord of the Flies		---	xxxxxxxxxxxx
The Outsiders	S.E. Hinton	---	xxxxxxxxxx
The Lightning Thief	Rick Riordan	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Among the Hidden	Margaret Peterson Haddix	---	xx
To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Beloved	Toni Morrison	---	xxxx
Hoot	Carl Hiaasen	---	xxxxxxxxxx

Figure 3. Continued.

Marcel in the Real World	Francisco X Stork	---	
The Giver	Lois Lowry	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Stargirl	Jerry Spinelli	---	xxxxxxx
The Cay	Theodore Taylor	---	xx
The Giver		---	xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Twits	Roald Dahl	---	xx
White Fang	Jack London	---	xxx
The Pearl	John Steinbeck	---	xxxxxx
The Giver	Lois Lowry	---	xxxxxxxx

Figure 3. Continued.

4. There were 45 students with access to Google docs during this activity—not one of them changed the poop line.
5. I have absolutely no idea which student wrote poop in that box. I do not know my students yet—this, again, is the very first day of class.
6. I have to teach these students next week. I have to wait to see them again for 5 days. I have to hold this in my hand for 5 days.

In this moment of recognition, I am at once angry with myself. "Hmm ….'not sure what to say about that …' I said and then erased it??!! What sort of non-response was that?! I know better."

I am also mortified. How did I not realize that poop was written next to the *Diary of Anne Frank*, one of the few books on the list that reflect an author who is a member of a religious minority, not to mention one of the only books with an author who was persecuted, and murdered, for their identity. Most of the authors listed walked through the world in privileged bodies.

I am also physically ill—my stomach turns. I am Jewish. It is a deep part of my identity. Was this an attack on me? What the hell do I do now? This was perhaps one of the few times in my university teaching that I suddenly felt completely and utterly vulnerable.

Lord of the Flies	William Golding		xxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Book Thief	Markus Zusak		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Diary of Anne Frank	poop		xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
The Alchemist	Paulo Coelho		xxxxx
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	C.S. Lewis		Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Figure 4. Document revisited.

| The Diary of Anne Frank | p o o p | | xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx |

Figure 5. Document revisited one minute later.

The second day of school. The next week, as I stood in front of my students to take on the "poop" incident, I could feel vulnerability oozing from all of my pores. I can tuck my Judaism into my pocket and bring it out if I want to. What a privilege to have. On this day, I took it out. I wore my Judaism as part of my reckoning with my students. It did not feel much like a choice, frankly, although I recognize it was one.

I returned to the Google Doc with my students on this day. I walked them through the images that I had captured through Google revision history across the 10 minutes of last week's class. I asked them what they noticed—again. I scrolled through the list just like I had done the week prior. No one said anything. I flipped to the image when the word poop is shouted, rather than whispered, on the page. "What do you notice?" I asked again. Silence. And then a slow set of staccato responses. Then,

impatience rising, I reflected for them what I felt—as their instructor and, more important, as a Jewish woman whose own history stretches back to the Russian programs and the Holocaust. I talked with them about microaggressions and about bystanders. I talked at them rather than with them, though the latter format is where I am most at ease and what my practice generally entails. This shift, though, felt necessary as a way for me to talk front and center in and through my own experience. In an ironic turn, I hacked my nontraditional pedagogy in very traditional ways: by reverting for the moment to didactic teaching. As I spoke, I could feel the dryness in my throat, I could feel my heart beating in my chest, I could feel the heat rising to my face, I could sense the tears welling at the back of my eyes. I spoke through it all. Then, in the name of establishing some structure, some way of moving forward, I asked the students to consider what they wanted to be as a classroom community. How do we want to be with each other? I asked. We collectively established some group norms that are now front and center on the syllabus.

At the end of class, I asked students to write a quick exit ticket: what are you thinking about right now? Responses included:

> Thank you for having that conversation at the beginning of class. It is so important to understand that microaggressions are a large cause of why people still house unconscious biases and prejudices as those help to perpetuate stereotypes and hate for people of different backgrounds, which must stop. I'm so sorry I didn't delete it or start a conversation when I saw it, but I'm glad there was a conversation eventually.

to

> I appreciate the discussion at the start of class. My family is also Jewish and I was also hurt and confused by it. Thank you for turning it into a teaching moment and not just brushing past it.

to

> Thank you for standing in your truth and being bold. We need more like you.

On being vulnerable. This pedagogical moment forced open a new space of vulnerability in my teaching: my own. What does it mean to be vulnerable in teaching? Prior to this day of teaching, I would have said that I am vulnerable with and for my students regularly. However, I think that vulnerability was a "safe" vulnerability in a sense—an arm's length sort of vulnerability. This particular incident, though, took vulnerability to a new level entirely. There was a rawness that I had not experienced before. It is a rawness that I am so often cloaked from because of my white skin, my upper middle-class bank account, my English-speaking tongue. This new

feeling of vulnerability erupted from my feeling of being attacked. Vulnerability has a continuum. I have stood on that continuum—but have never felt as though I was buried by it. I recognized then and there that I had a choice to be—or not be—vulnerable, to "out" my Judaism or choose not to. I recognized that in and through that vulnerability was an opportunity for student learning. So I chose to be vulnerable, to essentially hack the pedagogical trajectory in university settings wherein professors are asked—like K-12 teachers—to regulate our emotions so as to "avoid" any discomfort. The conversations with my colleagues in TTEF buoyed my response in part. Their stories of moving into the vulnerability in their practices became a touchstone of sorts for me.

What became abundantly clear from a number of the exit slips as well as from the sorts of conversations which followed across the semester was the way that my own vulnerability opened potential spaces for student learning in this class, beyond the sort of learning students may have experienced in earlier classes I have taught. Perhaps I should not have been surprised. As hooks (1994) reminded us more than twenty years ago: Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. […] (p. 21). Hacking the business-as-usual structure of teaching and learning—whereby teachers' own biographies are absent in the conversation—had powerful outcomes for me and my students as a way to confront injustice in the moment and beyond.

Theme/case 3: vulnerability is relational and institutional (Kristin)

> Regardless of whether one sees a case of vulnerability as beneficial or harmful—as an instance of positive learning openness, or as a sign of potential injustice or harm—it is not just an individual characteristic, but is better recognized as relational, communal and even institutional. (Jackson, 2018, p. 238)

Vulnerability does not sit alone, fully formed, within me, a feeling that swells or recedes of its own accord. Vulnerability does not barrel forward, head down, paying no heed to the surrounding sights, smells, feelings, sounds, rushing to its destination.

Just the opposite. Vulnerability is found in the spaces in-between, hyper-attuned to its surroundings, shape-shifting to fit, liquid and malleable. Vulnerability languishes in the journey, always becoming, never quite arriving.

Vulnerability becomes realized in the context, named within and through relationship.

My context is as a new, pre-tenured academic, in Australia, a new-to-me country. I am committed to teaching in ways that humanize my students

and their students, while also attempting to disrupt the hegemonic, status quo structures within which we live and work. It is within this particular context, in these particular moments, within the particular relationships into which I enter, that I come to know this particular strain of vulnerability.

When I first arrived, I was highly aware of the presence of vulnerability, noticing how it looked, felt and moved. In this new place, for me, vulnerability flowed quickly, threatening to knock me off my feet at any corner.

Although, to be honest, not every corner. In the corners of my classrooms, in the Faculty of Education, vulnerability unfolds and spreads itself comfortably across the floor. As I sit in circle with the students, we rest our feet on it, buoyed by its gentle and subtle movements. This comfort with vulnerability does not exist, in a collective sense, in the first classes and, admittedly, even in later classes, it is felt more by some students than others. Vulnerability leaps up from time to time, in between students, in between me and students, in the center of the room, keeping us (mostly) pleasantly on edge. We become accustomed to it, sometimes even explicitly inviting it into our circle conversations. It is part of our educational relationships.

In the corners of my office, in the hallways, swirling around my computer, it's more unpredictable. Depending upon the email, the policy, the lilt of a person's voice, the words not spoken, the laughter, the generous offer, the cutting remark, vulnerability continuously changes and takes its shape.

As much as vulnerability occurs in context and in relationship, as much as it is a communal experience, however, it is still what it does to me—as an individual—and what I do with it—as an individual—that matters.

As an individual, as me, in this role, in this space, in this context, I have found that at least two possibilities exist: vulnerability both deadens and animates.

The vulnerability that deadens is the one that rises out of external measurement and judgement. I am vulnerable as I fail to meet the Faculty's metrics; I am also vulnerable as I meet them. I am vulnerable in that I might: lose my job; catch the ire of someone in a position of authority; have my worth questioned; become distracted from the big picture; be called to take on more than I can physically, emotionally and mentally handle; become less than what I want to be.

The vulnerability that animates rises out of the internal desire to make what I do matter, to make what I do actually move someone/something along in the journey toward more just and equitable relations and structures. I am vulnerable as I question myself and grow; I am vulnerable as I

choose to open up to others and listen deeply. I am vulnerable in that I might: see my own blind spots; be called to question long-held assumptions; be uncertain about the path forward; need to work harder and longer to understand; admit to my failings and my weaknesses; try without knowing the outcome.

Vulnerability does something to me as an individual; but it is not an individual characteristic. All of this happens relationally, communally, institutionally.

For six months last year, I worked on an application to introduce a restorative justice course in teacher education. My understanding of restorative justice is as an approach that forefronts the building and nurturing of relationships that are meaningful, just, and humanizing. In a restorative approach, the inherent worth of individuals is recognized and we work to strengthen the essential ties that bind us together in a classroom, in a school, in broader society, and in the world. I see restorative justice in schools as opening up conversations of justice and equity, and positioning the school and educators within a collective resistance to all forms of oppression. I wanted to hack the institutional system by introducing a nontraditional course to sit within the traditional programing.

My passion for what I envisioned this course to look like, to make it matter, invited vulnerability. As I worked to prepare the submission to have the restorative justice course approved, I experienced both types of vulnerability: the one that deadens and the one that animates.

I felt deadened by vulnerability as I filled in the neat boxes on the application form: How do my ideas support the Faculty's operational and strategic plans? What is the market for my course?

I wrote to fit the expectations, to meet the standards, to pass the test.

I felt deadened by vulnerability as the application passed through five different levels of approval, with five different committees commenting on my ideas without my presence: Where is the evidence for ….? How do you plan to ….? How can you claim ….? How will you know if …?

I wrote to reassure, to maintain the standards, to obtain approval.

I felt animated by vulnerability as I crafted the syllabus, re-thinking old ideas, immersed in conversations with colleagues who supported and challenged: What might you do differently? What are you hoping might happen? Whose voices might you be privileging and whose voices might you be silencing? What do you think is missing?

I wrote to create, to imagine, to trouble.

I felt animated by vulnerability as I started to plan, wondering about student needs, interactions, and possibilities: Who else can I draw into this

space? How can I build relationships of rigor, honesty, and support? How far can I push? How far can I be pushed? What is the hope, in the end?

I wrote to open space, to connect, to risk.

The deadening came from the vulnerability of generalizations, anonymity, standardization; the animating came from the vulnerability of the particular, relationships, conversations, creativity.

The system that I set out to hack was an institutional one: a deadening system of neat tick boxes that tried to align courses with marketized and standardized objectives. I provided the necessary information and used the appropriate language and terms so as to be honest while also fitting the needs of the institution. The opening this process presented was that the reality of a class, however, cannot be fit within such a form. Thus, the narrowness of the form provided space for the animating to occur. Once hacked, how I saw myself positioned within the system changed. I was no longer constrained by the impenetrable system; I was enabled to find the cracks to do what I felt mattered.

My course was approved and plans carried forward for the first iteration.

Then life got in the way. My father went in to the hospital. I wasn't coping well. The creative energy I needed to move things forward simply was not there. I needed to, at the very least, postpone any movement on the course.

I made a time to meet with one of the administrators, a woman fairly anonymous to me, one who had been tasked with the standardization and marketization side of the application process. I entered the meeting shaky; vulnerability—the deadening kind—filled the room, stretching to all corners and pressing down on me from above. I admitted my personal failures to cope and requested, after all the work that had been done by the various committees and departments, that we cancel the class.

I feared for what this might mean for my reputation at work; I was disappointed that I was walking away from an opportunity to do something meaningful; I worried that such an opportunity would not present itself again. I felt tired and broken.

The vulnerability in the space in-between myself and the administrator, that felt so crushing, so impenetrable, held still for a moment. And then suddenly opened up, lightened, bubbled. The administrator reached across the table and hugged me fiercely, with genuine care.

Transforming that particular moment of vulnerability with one relational—and institutional—gesture. The institution is full of relational cracks; the fact that it possesses them means that we can leverage those cracks, those relationships, for change.

Theme/case 4: networks that cultivate a social practice of ease with vulnerability (Carey)

The task I take on in my social foundations course that serves all of the teacher education programs at my university is to model humanizing pedagogy while pushing students to interrogate, and make plans to address, oppressive systems. I'm hopeful the conversations I begin in my course are taken up by my colleagues in students' subsequent coursework, but it's certainly not guaranteed. For many aspiring teachers, mine is the only class that will push them to think about the production of (in)justice and (in)equity, privilege and oppression, in society and in schools.

I've taught the class more than 35 times, and I've revised the pedagogies, assignments, and texts many times such that syllabus 35 and syllabus one bear very little resemblance. What all of the versions did share, however, is the same fundamental structure—a parade-like approach to the various identity markers that render us "diverse": one week on race, another on gender, yet another on religion. If the number of textbooks I've found organized this way are any indication, this is a common structure adopted by many faculty teaching similar courses. It's also a structure I've questioned as it set me up to struggle to help students make sense of the intersectional nature of identity and marginalization; I knew intuitively that this structure was hackable, and I knew what I was doing wasn't working, but I didn't have a clear idea about how to reformat the content: How could I cover all that was required by the college and the state-defined expectations for certification with a different structure? Repeatedly, over 10 years, I invited colleagues to take up this revision project with me; I had no takers.

Then, I was invited to join TTEF.

During our week-long summer institute, I focused my attention on this social foundations course. I took all our workshops and conversations as an opportunity to hack the structure towards transforming the course in ways that also met all of the state—and program-mandated expectations attached to it. During the institute, in that shared space, I found collaborators and coconspirators—other teacher educators who wanted to disrupt and question. We had a shared ethos and project. We all cared about preparing teachers in just ways. We were all seeking to support our students in efforts to become social justice- and equity-oriented teachers. We were all committed to an ethic of care with each other, with our teacher candidates, and with their future students. In that space, I felt I could do no wrong as long as I kept that ethos and that project at the helm. It was easy to be professionally vulnerable in that space. It didn't feel threatening. The humanizing love I experienced from the other fellows and the facilitators served as a safety net. I could play with ideas, get feedback, give feedback,
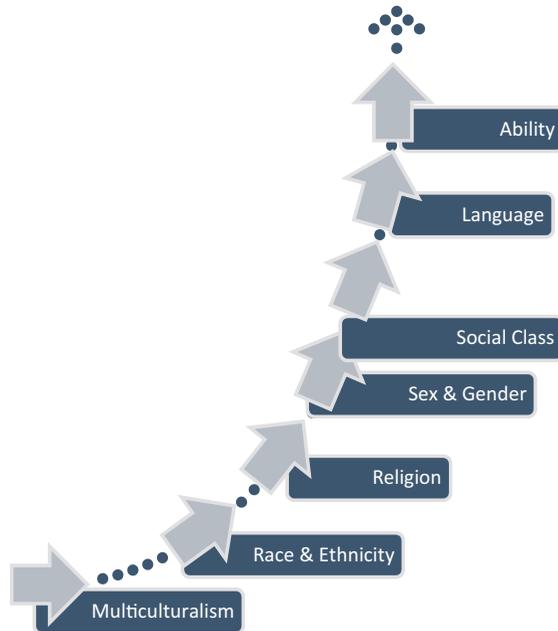
Figure 6. "Parade" curriculum structure.

admit that my work and identity are wrapped up in whiteness, have ah-has, feel excited without fear. I was encouraged and received with grace.

In that space, I had an ah-ha about how I wanted to transform my course—in concentric circles, rather than as a parade (see Figures 6 and 7). I'd focus first on self and then widen out the content to broadening spheres of influence: others, schools, policy landscape. This felt good. This felt like a framework that would allow me to scaffold my students' interrogation of oppressive systems. This guiding framework aligned with Teaching Tolerance's social justice standards (2016). It also made sense alongside the service-learning requirement in the course. I would push students to think about their placements in analogous ways: Who am I here? With whom am I working? What is happening in this space? And, how does this work fit into the broader community?

I was eager to implement the changes I'd planned for my course, and I had the rest of the summer and the fall semester to iron out the details (an unforeseen change in my work load meant I wouldn't teach the course until the spring). I kept at it, and I was able to find some spaces back at my home institution that shared a similar ecology to the one I found at the summer institute. I talked with trusted colleagues. Notably none of them also teach this course, but they were receptive and excited for me and my students. They saw how beginning with understanding ourselves might better position us not to reject the experiences of others and the roles of systems and structures in those experiences.

Figure 7. Concentric curriculum structure.

Then, I chose to share my plans with other program faculty, colleagues who also teach this course. They responded differently—critically and skeptically—and I was so surprised by their reactions: "We stomp louder when we stomp together." "Students will prefer it, but that doesn't mean it's better." "Aren't you just letting them off the hook?" "How will you be sure to cover all of the identity markers that shape students' experiences in schools? How will you do that, if you don't explicitly talk about each one?" "This isn't really novel. [This scholar's] book is organized this way. You should look at it"—a recommendation I took only to discover that the suggested text isn't aligned with my transformed vision for my teaching.

At the conclusion of this meeting, I felt as though we were a team in name only, and I realized it did not feel easy to be professionally vulnerable with those who were ostensibly my closest colleagues. To be clear, I recognize that I what I experienced as professional vulnerability is quite different from the more general vulnerability experienced by my colleagues who embody oppressed identities, whose physical safety may be compromised, and my pre-tenure and non-tenure-track colleagues, whose livelihoods may be at stake. Although bearing my work and excitement to my colleagues was unpleasant and deflating, what I actually risked was minimal, and the academic freedom to which I was entitled created the vulnerability in the system, curriculum in higher education, that meant I could hack my practice and restructure my course. That said, none of my teammates was excited for me or eager to see how transforming the class would go, and no one was willing to take this journey with me. I'd been vulnerable, put myself and my ideas out there, with my colleagues who share one of my areas of expertise, and it felt brutal. Not to be histrionic, but I felt I'd shown my neck, and they'd opted to cut off my head.

I've wondered why the vulnerability I leaned into over the summer with people I'd never met before felt so different than doing so in my home department with colleagues I've worked with for a year or more. Is it because there's no competition for resources with the former? Does sharing space and a student body and a course number mean that vulnerability is riskier or more threatening—for me, for them? Perhaps part of what makes my TTEF colleagues different is that students won't directly compare us,

our students aren't going to talk to each other about their experiences in the same course, so our reputations aren't in contrast to one another. There is pressure—personal, professional, and institutional—to be the professor everyone wants and avoid being the professor students steer clear of; the more similar our individuals sections of the course, the more difficult it is for that hierarchy to emerge and solidify.

Dismissing that concern, I implemented this transformed course structure during the spring semester. We began, as I planned, by talking about identity, and I saw my students making sense of times when they'd experienced discrimination and times when they'd had unearned advantages. They told me and each other about who they were, where they came from, and what they cared about. I did the same, making efforts to model that vulnerability and to do so intentionally, in ways that highlighted both the personal and the systemic nature of oppression.

For example, while we were discussing cisheteropatriachy as a system that others and oppresses during a lesson on marginalization and its relationship to violence (part of the unit on others, diversity, and empathy), I elected to share that my son had been publicly criticized by a school bus driver for having his nails painted. He'd proudly worn a rainbow of nail color to school one day. He'd, predictably, been teased by classmates for his violation of long-held and unquestioned gender norms, and he'd responded thoughtfully: "You're missing out. It's fun." He felt good about his choice until he got on the bus to come home. For the first time all day, an adult commented negatively on his nail color: "There are things only girls should do and things only boys should do. Painting your nails is a thing only girls should do." My son was deflated and wanted immediately to remove the nail polish when he got home. I explained to my students that I tried to help him understand that his parents truly wanted him to make his own authentic choices about how he looks, that we were his allies and the bus driver was a silly person with outdated ideas. I explained to my students that I also tried to help him understand that the judgement he felt from his bus driver was felt by many people—queer people, people of color, poor people, disabled people—much of the time. I then tried to help my students understand that my son was hurt by a bus driver, that oppression and marginalization are personal. He was also hurt by the system of cisheteropatriarchy that gave rise and validity to her critique, that oppression and marginalization are systemic. What is personal is also political.

I engaged in this disclosure knowing, from years of experience and some of the writing my students had already done, that many of them, having internalized cisheteropatriarchy, would (silently) align themselves with the bus driver. Many of them would judge me as a bad parent who shouldn't have allowed my son to paint his nails in the first

place; they would see me as a mother who'd set her son up for a deserved criticism. I also knew that most of those who didn't judge me were likely only refraining from doing so because they were unsure; they'd not yet disavowed cisheteropatriachy but they were beginning to question it. Only a small number would share my outrage. Even fewer, only one, would voice it publicly.

This was the kind of vulnerability I wanted to have and model in my teaching.

Some of my students followed my lead, sharing about transgressions, assaults, unearned victories, undeserved losses. Undoubtedly doing so put them in a vulnerable position with me and their peers, few of whom they knew before the start of the semester. Yet, having been vulnerable, they seemed better able to empathize; "I believe that LGBT students are the most underserved group within the school …. [they] are constantly told that their existence is unnatural and sinful." Once they began to empathize with the clients in their service learning placements and their future students, they seemed more willing to invest in understanding how systems and structures, even those like schooling that they'd previously thought to be unambiguously good, reinforce oppression; "Eliminating ethnic studies is white supremacy at work." Having done that work, they seemed more willing to imagine themselves as and make explicit plans to be advocates and activists; "I took a look at how my [long-held] feminist beliefs didn't go far enough in establishing social justice. I have work to do," and "I must be fully committed to building a movement, [a] movement built solely on the premise of learning other people's histories on [my] own time."

The same course transformation that was met with doubt and resistance from my institutional colleagues, leaving me feeling isolated in my home institution, has also led to a softness for others and a clarity of purpose in my students I haven't generally seen from any of my students in past semesters. I am wholly convinced this transformation was worth making, that it's better for my students and for their future students. I will keep working to more fully invest in this curricular and pedagogical change in the hopes that it's transformational for the aspiring teachers who come through my class.

I'm also wholly convinced that the support of friends and colleagues in TTEF was essential to making this transformation in my teaching, that TTEF became a network that helped to cultivate a shared social practice of ease with vulnerability. They gave me the support I needed over the summer when I was formalizing and documenting the overarching change I needed to make. And, perhaps more importantly, they shared my vulnerability remotely as we checked in monthly through the fall. When I felt

discouraged by the lack of support I felt from institutional colleagues or when I felt exposed because of what had transpired in my class, it was their encouragement, their sharing of my vulnerability, that made continuing with the transformation doable. They offered me what I needed to lean into a social, and shared, practice of (trying to feel at) ease with vulnerability.

Discussion—hacking and (re)framing vulnerability as social justice work

Our research project was focused on confronting and hacking our own teacher education practice—in some ways an individual inquiry into our individual practices. And yet hacking is collective work. We cannot identify and leverage vulnerabilities in order to bring about transformation in isolation. Or, at least, we cannot do this in any sustainable and deeply effective manner on our own. Working through the layers of vulnerability present in our lives, work, and in systems requires that we find ways to engage that are collective, open, and systematic (Baker-Doyle, 2017).

This collective hacking began, as Carey writes in her case, during our week together with TTEF, when we joined with other "collaborators and coconspirators" open to disrupting the status quo of teacher education. As we opened up our practice, identifying the status quo, to ourselves and one another, vulnerabilities started to become apparent. As a smaller group, meeting remotely throughout the year, we began by naming those vulnerabilities—in ourselves, in our work, in our institutions, in our practice, in our relationships, in the system—and sitting with them. Collectively.

The collective hacking continued during a symposium presentation at American Educational Research Association's (AERA) annual conference in which we publicly offered our understandings of our vulnerabilities. We recognize that presenting at a conference such as AERA is a form of professional legitimization, where we choose to ascend with the system at the same time as hacking it. Although this presentation meant that we benefited from the systems we critique, it also afforded an opportunity for exchange with audience participants, who were invited to join a collective "inquiry tree" activity at the conclusion of the presentations (see Figure 8)—one way to attempt to hack the traditional delivery-model of conference presentations. Those interested in exploring the concept of vulnerability joined with us to think through the barriers to being vulnerable in our work—whether as educators or colleagues. Together we identified the *root* causes for our inability to be vulnerable, the *fruits* of this inability, and possible *responses* to the barriers. It became clear in this collective inquiry, how racialized our experiences and understandings were
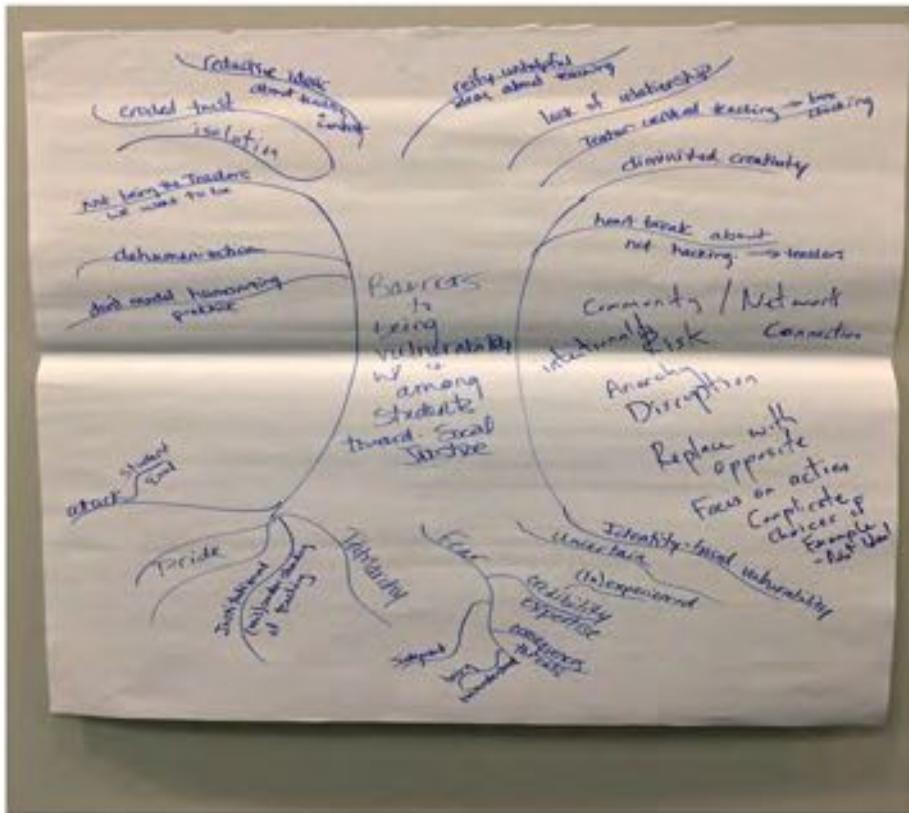
Figure 8. Inquiry tree.

as well—the fruits and responses differed, often dramatically, depending on whether we identified as white scholars or scholars of color. The roots are deep: patriarchy, pride, fear, identity-based vulnerability. The fruits are distasteful: isolation, dehumanization, lack of relationship, diminished creativity. The responses are bold: anarchy, intentionality, disruption, community, and connection.

And so, in order to intentionally disrupt, to build community and connection so as to identify and leverage our vulnerabilities, to continue the collective hacking, we propose a rather open-ended approach to this discussion: have a messy, real discussion, one that leads to more questions, perhaps, than answers. Here, in light of our individual narratives of vulnerability, we collectively consider the potential of vulnerability as a site of community and disruption. Our objective for what we take up below is to open up the discussion—to "hack" traditional academic discourse, in a sense, to encourage others to do the same.

Kristin begins our think aloud: Jackson (2018) introduces the notion of redistributing vulnerability, that some groups/individuals have too much and some have "insufficient" vulnerability (p. 238). Do you find that

concept helpful? How do you understand it? And how do you see yourself along that continuum?

Jocelyn: Thanks for asking us to consider this, Kristin. I love the way Jackson pulls on vulnerability as a construct that needs to be engaged collectively. Vulnerability feels like a very individual endeavor—it feels very lonely. What does it mean for us to consider vulnerability as something to be shared, as a collective? I feel like that gives strength to vulnerability. In the case I share, it means that I don't stand alone in front of my classroom. I stand alongside others. However, too often, we, at least those of us who embody privilege, don't make these stories of personal vulnerability public (whereas for queer scholars and scholars of color, they are always already public). And so vulnerability continues to be a singular endeavor. What would it mean to stretch vulnerability across people? What would it mean for everyone to take on some of the vulnerability so the burden isn't left to the few? And these questions make me think again about the privilege I have of essentially choosing to step into that vulnerability … or not. I continue to be so conscious that not all have that choice. How do we make vulnerability powerful? How do we transform it from a perceived weakness to a strength?

Carey: Jocelyn, that really is *the* question; thank you for stating it so clearly. Part of the answer, especially if our work is to be just and serve equity, has to be stepping into vulnerability, even when our privileges mean we can opt out. Thinking about my own experiences in and after the TTEF institute, it's so clear to me that I became strong, or at least acknowledged and lived into my strength, when my vulnerability was shared with others, when we committed *together* to this work of transforming teacher education.

Perhaps a second part of the answer is to do just what we've attempted to do here—to publicize our vulnerability, to unpack it for a wider audience. Committing to paper what occurred with my institutional colleagues and my students feels a bit scary, a bit naked. But, having done so in the company and collaboration of colleagues feels bold. Laying bare our struggles and accomplishments in ways that are indicative of the messiness and emotionality inherent in doing this work feels both empowering and honest. Surely, we cannot transform teacher education without honest scholarship. Publicly naming the vulnerability has simultaneously left me feeling more vulnerable *and* more powerful. What would it look like to continue to model public vulnerability in our scholarship and in our teaching? How might doing so remake the landscape for other teacher educators and for teachers?

Kira: Carey, my answers to your questions became clear to me when we made our work public at the AERA symposium. In creating the "inquiry

tree" together, we began to see how avoiding vulnerability in our own teaching had a ripple effect, in which the very un-human stance of guarded perfection led to a kind of dehumanization and demoralization of practice, which in turn blocked the development of meaningful relationships and social justice in education. Therefore, the exercise revealed vulnerability as a critical catalyst for transforming teacher education, with the potential to not only affect us on individual levels, but also system-wide. I imagine a future teacher education in which, through recognizing the humanity of our own teaching and learning, we are reminded of and celebrate the humanity of our students. Yet, I turn back to your original question, Kristin, in this complex web of causes and effects, how do we recognize that deeply rooted societal inequities also matter in this dynamic? How can we ensure that "vulnerability" does not become another "grit" (see, for example, Gorski, 2016; Love, 2019); a characteristic that becomes used by those in power to reify oppressive social structures instead of trans-form them?

   Kristin: I love this question, Kira. It speaks to both what we encountered as we began this exploration, as well as some of our hoped-for outcomes. I think that currently vulnerability is, in many ways, already another "grit" as you put it. Vulnerability has become something else "to do" on the road to success: intentionally embrace your vulnerability in order to show how strong you truly are. Vulnerability as individual endeavor absolves our social structures, those of us with privilege, our systems, from any self-critique and from any collective need to change. Part—though not all—of the answer may lie in the critical examination of vulnerability, of not taking individual credit for being vulnerable in any given moment, but asking what has enabled or constrained me from being vulnerable in this particu-lar context and how might this same context enable or constrain others, especially those who may walk through the world differently than we do. And as with any issue, we need to pay attention to the fruits of our inabil-ity to be vulnerable and the inability of others to opt out of vulnerability, in order to get to the roots. And attend, collectively, to both.

Leveraging our vulnerabilities: discussion conclusion

Our exploration of vulnerabilities is timely. Currently, there are many in the field of teacher education who are in precarious and tenuous employ-ment; others whose practice and research run counter to the values espoused by market-driven institutions; some who experience their identity being dismissed or devalued by policies, practices, and people in higher education. As Giroux (2014) writes about the neoliberal university, "resistance is no longer an option, it is a necessity" (p. 57).

Our resistance, we found, both individually and collectively, was through an embracing and re-framing of vulnerabilities, particularly with the tool of hacking. With this tool in hand, we were able to identify and begin to poke at the vulnerabilities that are possessed by the systems that surround us—supported by one another in TTEF—in order to change the way that we and others are positioned as vulnerable.

Conclusion

In this article, we sought to explore the idea of vulnerability as social justice work in teaching and to initiate a dialogue about this concept through discussion on the page about our own practices. Our "hacking" method forced us to focus in on locating vulnerabilities as a starting point for transformation, and what we discovered was that the starting point was us, our personal vulnerabilities. Yet vulnerability is particular to the people involved, the relationships, the subject positions, the structures, the context. We recognize that many—though not all—instances of vulnerability reported here were of our own choosing—as we chose to raise issues with students, colleagues, and supervisors.

Drawing from our stories, we begin to come to a clearer understanding of how to frame vulnerability in terms of social justice work. If we understand that vulnerability is a part of all complex systems, and hacking is identifying vulnerability, then, to take a social justice lens on vulnerability is to think specifically about how power and positionality operate in social and ideological systems, and how we can seek to hack the system (through our own moves) to move the dial on oppression/privilege. We also understand that this requires that we work more to make our own vulnerability visible, in the ways that the vulnerability of oppressed people is often already visible, and critically examine it. If we do not, we run the risk of reinforcing oppressive systems with our silence and compliance. When we do choose to be vulnerable, and perhaps we should always choose to be vulnerable as part of our work as social justice-oriented scholars, we recognize that it is crucial to seek collegial support in spaces outside the systems in which we work so that we can maintain our critical perspectives and feel supported.

In recognition that vulnerability is distributed unequally—and is not within everyone's choosing—what does it mean to view vulnerability as hopeful? To consider vulnerability as a space of "courage, authenticity, and connection" (Loveless et al., 2016, p. 15)? We would contend that to examine vulnerability with a critical stance is to examine teaching and learning simultaneously at the human and systemic levels, understanding the work of teaching as the quintessential human endeavor, that requires a humanizing approach, and as a larger public endeavor, that requires an

understanding of social power, equity, and justice. With this article we not only explore vulnerability as social justice work from a theoretical perspective, we also make our own vulnerabilities visible within a more public sphere. In the reading of this article, you are joining in the relational, communal experience, adding one more layer of vulnerability. We hope that this dialogue continues beyond this article, into classrooms, scholarly interrogations, and discussions among educators.

Notes on contributors

Carey E. Andrzejewski is an Associate Professor of Social Foundations of Education and Research Methods at Auburn University. Carey's scholarship focuses on equitable practices in schools and the development of critical consciousness in students, pre-service teachers, and school-based practitioners. Her research has appeared most recently in journals such as *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education, Critical Questions in Education,* and *Whiteness and Education.*

Kira J. Baker-Doyle is an Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She founded the Transformative Teacher Educator Fellowship.

Jocelyn A. Glazier is an Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research and teaching focus on supporting teacher expansion of innovative and empowering pedagogies to support all students, particularly those most marginalized in schools. Her qualitative work raises important questions about the potential of transformative, experiential teaching practices at all levels of education and across multiple contexts in support of equity and justice. Her research has appeared most recently in journals such as *The New Educator*, the *Journal of Experiential Education and Teaching Education*. Prior to her work in higher education, she was a high school English teacher.

Kristin E. Reimer is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Kristin's teaching and research focus broadly on humanizing and relational approaches in education. Kristin is particularly interested in the potential of approaches - such as restorative justice - to facilitate educational spaces characterized by connection and coherence. Kristin's first book, *Adult Intentions, Student Perceptions: How Restorative Justice is used in Schools to Control and to Engage*, was published in 2019.

ORCID

Carey E. Andrzejewski 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9168-795X
Kira J. Baker-Doyle 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3239-3537
Kristin E. Reimer 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2627-3598

References

Augsburger, D. J. (1998). Teacher as writer: Remembering the agony, sharing the ecstasy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41(7), 548–552.

Baker-Doyle, K. (2017). *Transformative teachers: Teacher leadership and learning in a connected world*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

Baker-Doyle, K. J., & Gustavson, L. (2016). Permission-seeking as an agentive tool for transgressive teaching: An ethnographic study of teachers organizing for curricular change. *Journal of Educational Change*, *17*(1), 51–84. doi:10.1007/s10833-015-9251-7

Bullough, R. V. (2005). Teacher vulnerability and teachability: A case study of a mentor and two interns. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *32*(2), 23–39.

Clover, D. E., & Williamson, S. (2019). The Feminist Museum Hack as an aesthetic practice of possibility. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, *10*(2), 143–159. doi:10.3384/rela.2000-7426.RELA9142

Coleman, E. G. (2012). *Coding freedom: The ethics and aesthetics of hacking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Dinkelman, T. (2003). Self-study in teacher education: A means and ends tool for promoting reflective teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *54*(1), 6–18. doi:10.1177/0022487102238654

Ferber, A. L. (2018). "Are you willing to die for this work?" Public targeted online harassment in higher education: SWS presidential address. *Gender & Society*, *32*(3), 301–320. doi:10.1177/0891243218766831

Garcia, A., & O'Donnell-Allen, C. (2015). *Pose, wobble, flow: A culturally proactive approach to literacy instruction*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gilson, E. C. (2011). Vulnerability, ignorance, and oppression. *Hypatia*, *26*(2), 308–332. doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01158.x

Gilson, E. C. (2014). *The ethics of vulnerability: A feminist analysis of social life and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Giroux, H. (2014). Public intellectuals against the neoliberal university. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry outside the academy* (pp. 35–60). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast.

Gorski, P. C. (2016). Poverty and the ideological imperative: A call to unhook from deficit and grit ideology and to strive for structural ideology in teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *42*(4), 378–386. doi:10.1080/02607476.2016.1215546

Hartung, C., Barnes, N., Welch, R., O'Flynn, G., Uptin, J., & McMahon, S. (2017). Beyond the academic precariat: A collective biography of poetic subjectivities in the neoliberal university. *Sport, Education and Society*, *22*(1), 40–57. doi:10.1080/13573322.2016.1202227

Hillgren, P. A. (2013). Participatory design for social and public innovation: Living Labs as spaces for agonistic experiments and friendly hacking. In E. Manzini & E. Staszowski (Eds.), *Public and collaborative: Exploring the intersection of design, social innovation and public policy* (pp. 75–88). United States: DESIS Network.

hooks, b. (2000). *All about love: New visions*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

Hug, B., & Möller, K. J. (2005). Collaboration and connectedness in two teacher educators' shared self-study. *Studying Teacher Education*, *1*(2), 123–140. doi:10.1080/17425960500288309

Jackson, L. (2018). Reconsidering vulnerability in higher education. *Tertiary Education and Management*, *24*(3), 232–241.

Kelchtermans, G. (1996). Teacher vulnerability: Understanding its moral and political roots. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *26*(3), 307–323. doi:10.1080/0305764960260302

Kelchtermans, G. (2005). Teachers' emotions in educational reforms: Self-understanding, vulnerable commitment and micropolitical literacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *21*(8), 995–1006. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.009

Kerr, E. (2018, February 11). For scholars of women's studies, it's been a dangerous year. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/For-Scholars-of-Women-s/242521

Kitchen, J., Tidwell, D., & Fitzgerald, L. (2016). Self study and diversity: Looking back, looking forward. In J. Kitchen, D. Tidwell, & L. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Self-study and diversity II: Inclusive teacher education for a diverse world* (pp. 1–10). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Lieberman, A., & Pointer-Mace, D. (2010). Making practice public: Teacher learning in the 21st century. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1–2), 77–88. doi:10.1177/0022487109347319

Lloro-Bidart, T. (2018). An ecofeminist account of cyberbullying: Implications for environmental and social justice scholar-educator-activists. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, *49*(4), 276–285. doi:10.1080/00958964.2017.1400513

Loughran, J., & Northfield, J. (1998). A framework for the development of self-study practice. In M. L. Hamilton (Ed.) *Reconceptualizing teaching practice: Self-study in teacher education* (pp. 7–17). Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.

Love, B. L. (2019, February 12). "Grit is in our DNA": Why teaching grit is inherently anti-black. *Education Week*. Retrieved from https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/02/13/grit-is-in-our-dna-why-teaching.html

Loveless, D. J., Beverly, C. L., Bodle, A., Dredger, K. S., Foucar-Szocki, D., Harris, T., … Wishon, P. (2016). *The vulnerability of teaching and learning in a selfie society*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Massanari, A. L. (2018). Rethinking research ethics, power, and the risk of visibility in the era of the "alt-right" gaze. *Social Media + Society*, *4*(2), 2056305118768302. doi:10.1177/2056305118768302

Mawhinney, L., & Petchauer, E. M. (2013). Coping with the crickets: A fusion autoethnography of silence, schooling, and the continuum of biracial identity formation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *26*(10), 1309–1329.

Mawhinney, L., & Rinke, C. R. (2019). *There has to be a better way: Lessons from former urban teachers*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, P. S., & Stayton, V. D. (1999). Higher education culture—A fit or misfit with reform in teacher education? *Journal of Teacher Education*, *50*(4), 290–302.

Moore, J. A., & Carter-Hicks, J. (2014). Let's talk! Facilitating a faculty learning community using a critical friends group approach. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *8*(2), 9–25.

Nevin, A. I., Thousand, J. S., & Villa, R. A. (2009). Collaborative teaching for teacher educators—What does the research say? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*(4), 569–574.

Nissilä, S. P. (2005). Individual and collective reflection: How to meet the needs of development in teaching. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *28*(2), 209–219. doi:10.1080/02619760500093354

Picower, B. (2011). Learning to teach and teaching to learn: Supporting the development of new social justice educators. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *38*(4), 7–24.

Schuck, S., Aubusson, P., & Buchanan, J. (2008). Enhancing teacher education practice through professional learning conversations. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *31*(2), 215–227.

Schutz, P. A., & Zembylas, M. (2009). *Advances in teacher emotion research: The impact on teachers' lives*. New York, NY: Springer.

Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *52*(2), 94–106. doi: 10.1177/0022487101052002002

Snyman, G. (2015). Responding to the decolonial turn: Epistemic vulnerability. *Missionalia*, *43*(3), 266–291. doi:10.7832/43-3-77

Sutton, R. E. (2004). Emotion regulation goals and strategies of teachers. *Social Psychology of Education*, *7*(4), 379–398. doi:10.1007/s11218-004-4229-y

Sutton, R. E., & Wheatley, K. F. (2003). Teachers' emotions and teaching: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Educational Psychology Review*, *15*(4), 327–358.

Teaching Tolerance. (2016). *Social justice standards: The Teaching Tolerance anti-bias framework*. Retrieved from https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/TT_Social_Justice_Standards_0.pdf

West, C. (2015). Introduction: Radical love. In C. West (Ed.), *The radical king: Martin Luther King Jr* (pp. 3–4). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Zembylas, M. (2003). Interrogating "teacher identity": Emotion, resistance and self-formation. *Educational Theory*, *53*(1), 107–127. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5446.2003.00107.x

Zhang, Q., & Amundsen, C. (2015). Exploring the experiences of faculty-led teams in conducting action research. *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *6*(1), 8.