

COMPLEXITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

VIGNETTES FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES



**Branch Alliance
for Educator Diversity**

REDEFINING QUALITY EDUCATOR PREPARATION

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Complexities in the Classroom: Vignettes for Teacher Candidates -- December 2021

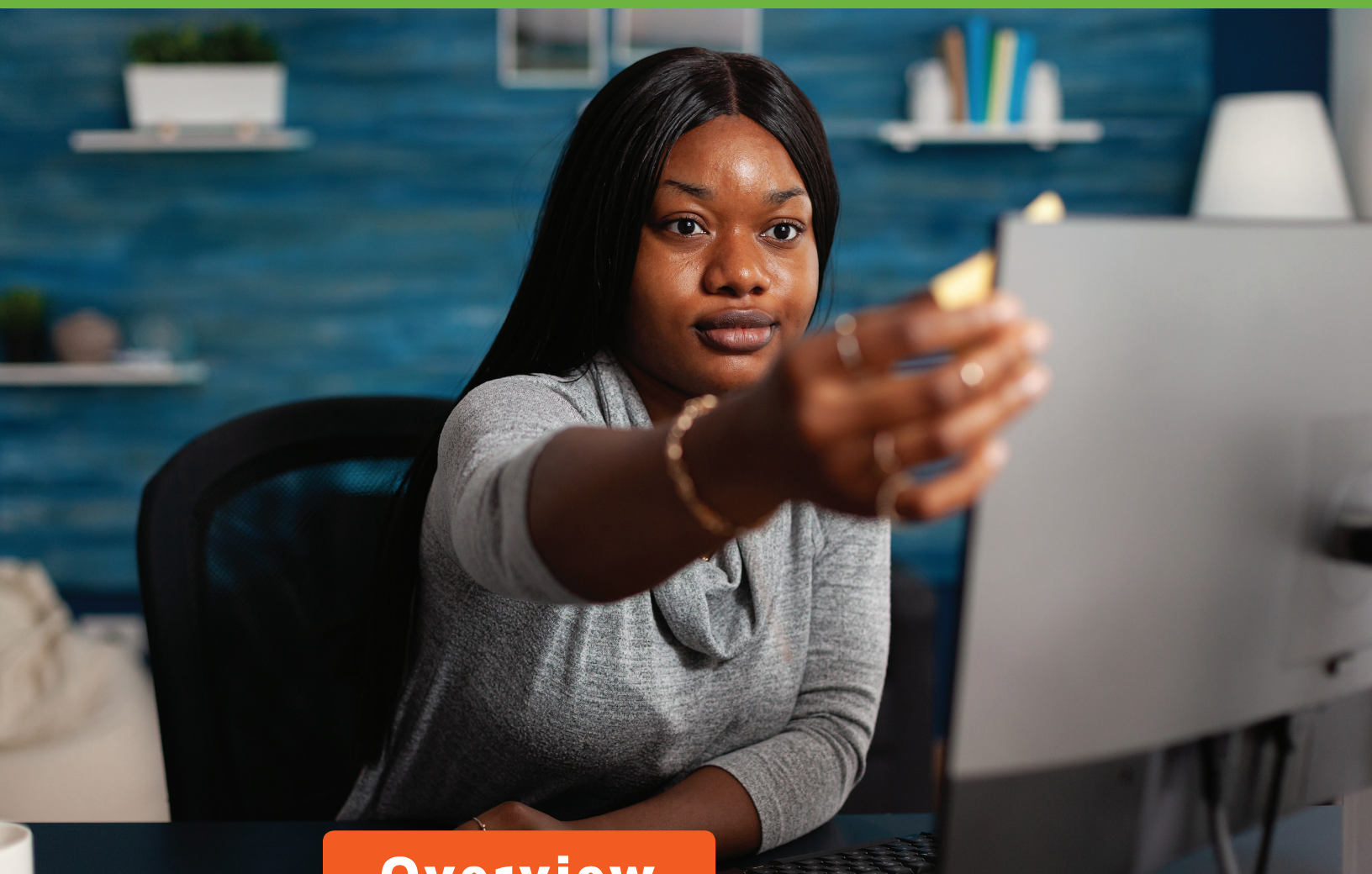
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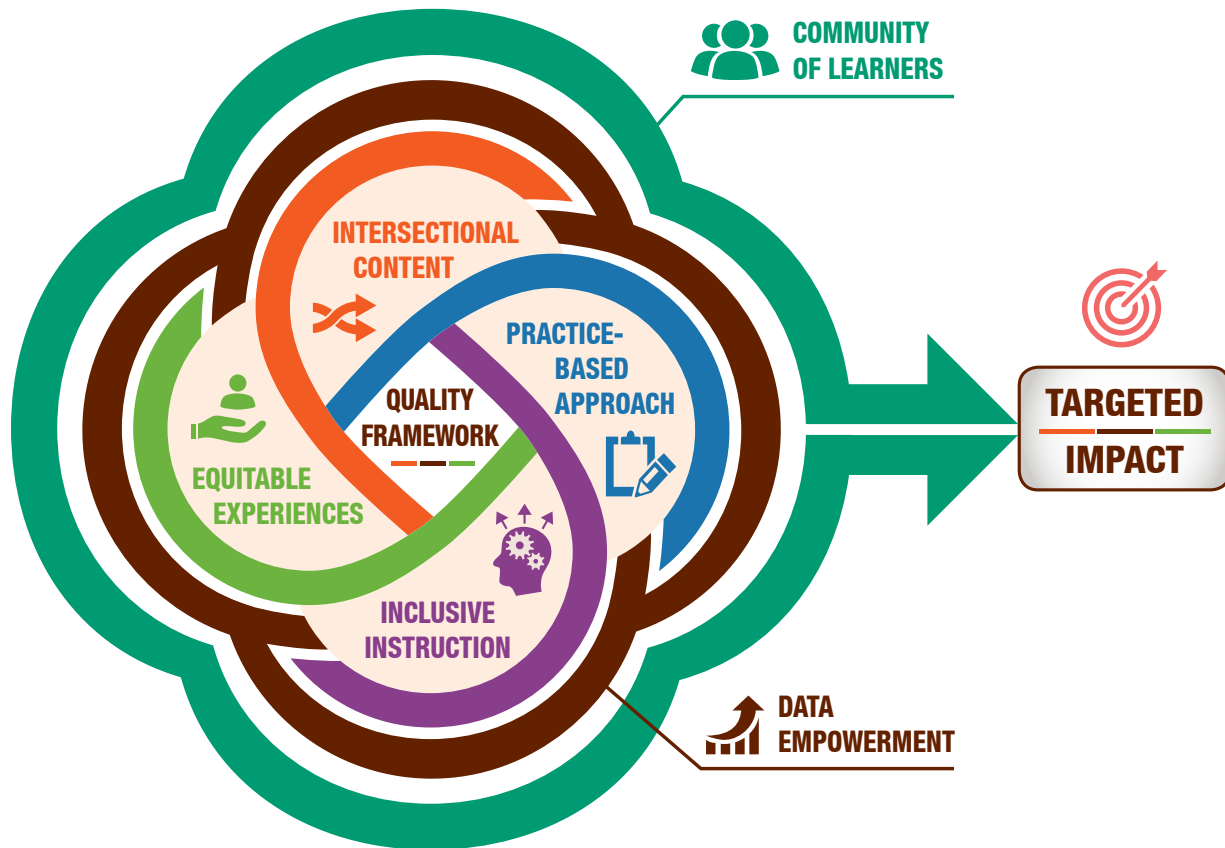


Overview

Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED) is the only non-profit organization in the country that prioritizes strengthening, growing, and amplifying the impact of educator preparation programs at minority serving institutions (MSIs). Our stance is that “Quality is Diversity,” meaning that high-quality educator preparation embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamental (not tangential) to the preparation of all educators. We believe that race-blind, culture-blind, language-blind, and economics-blind teacher preparation is obsolete. It does not adequately prepare teachers to engage with the diversity of the schoolchildren in their classrooms—diversity is as an asset and lever to enhance learning and the academic achievement of all students.

BranchED seeks to support individual educator preparation programs (EPPs) and the field at large in reimagining and redefining “quality” preparation programs such that attention to issues of diversity and equity are explicit, embedded, and inextricably linked to high-quality performance. Our goals include diversifying the

BranchED Framework for the Quality Preparation of Educators



teaching profession and intentionally championing educational equity for all students. Our vision is for all students to access diverse, highly effective educators.

Ensuring highly effective educators is accomplished through application of our Framework for the Quality Preparation of Educators. The Framework outlines a roadmap to create teacher preparation programs that meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. It seeks to build equity-oriented EPPs that prepare educators to reflect, respect, and reify the value of the diversity of America's PK-12 school children.

The Framework identifies six critical focus areas that teacher preparation providers can leverage to redesign their programs. This project focuses on educator preparation that is experiential and practice-based. EPPs purposefully engage candidates in direct experience of teaching (practice) and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop the capacity to contribute to diverse communities.

Introduction

Rationale

An important data point in educator preparation is the extent to which teacher candidates feel confident, efficacious, and/or ready to effectively work with diverse learners and address challenging situations within the classroom. This information is often captured through self-reported data, such as surveys. There are several benefits to using self-reported data. It is easy to obtain, inexpensive, and can be completed relatively quickly. There are also several challenges. Self-reported data are subject to biases and limitations, responses may reflect social desirability, and they do not allow for follow-up queries. Most importantly, individuals tend to overestimate their skills; thus, it is likely that the data reveal a higher sense of confidence than participant behavior may reveal. For this reason, BranchED convened a work group comprised of teacher educators from EPPs at MSIs and their PK-12 partners to develop context-based vignettes that reflect authentic classroom situations for teacher candidates to grapple with. This handbook is the result of that work.

Overview of the Handbook

This handbook consists of two parts that contain the following resources and information:

Part 1:

- ◆ Background information on the use of vignettes in education in general and teacher preparation in particular
- ◆ A list of vignettes, developed by teacher educators from higher education and PK-12 settings, illustrating the complexities of the classroom and reflecting the lived reality of teaching today
- ◆ Protocols that provide guidance and structure for using vignettes in teacher education preparation and in-service teacher professional development
- ◆ Possible responses to the questions posed in the protocols about the issues presented in the vignettes

Part 2:

- ◆ Materials for sharing how to use vignettes in teacher preparation

Intended Users

This handbook is designed for teacher educators who prepare pre-service teachers. The vignettes and protocols shared here can be used in teacher preparation courses. They can also be used in professional development of in-service teachers at any point in their careers.



Vignettes in Education

Vignettes are short stories without an ending about hypothetical characters in specific circumstances or situations that arise in classrooms.¹ Campbell² describes a vignette as:

“

...short, but not too short to present an issue. It is detailed, but not so detailed that the underlying issue gets lost. A vignette presents an issue, such as the under-representation of girls in advanced math courses, in a context with which individuals can identify. A good vignette:

- has fewer complexities and personalities than real life.
- sets up a situation in which there is no one “right” answer.
- is flexible enough that individuals from different groups can identify with the story and bring their perspective forward in discussions of solutions.

According to Hughes and Huby,³ vignettes can provide a useful focus and stimulus for discussion of difficult-to-explore and sensitive topics. Additionally, their ability to simulate elements of reality makes vignettes effective tools for unraveling complexities and conflicts presented in real-life contexts and situations. As such, vignettes have been used in social sciences and the health sciences as well as within the field of education for promoting critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving skills, and to a lesser extent, for assessing knowledge.

Implementing Vignettes in Teacher Preparation

In this handbook, we present three ways vignettes can be used in teacher preparation:

1. as diagnostic tools to gain information regarding teacher candidates' prior knowledge, misconceptions, and self-efficacy in responding to complex, real-life situations;
2. as instructional tools for teacher candidates to explore the complexities teachers encounter in the classroom—situations for which there is not necessarily a single right answer (although there are definitely wrong ones); and
3. as assessment tools to evaluate teacher candidates' learning or content mastery.

Descriptions and example protocols for each purpose are provided below.

Vignettes as a Diagnostic Tool

As a diagnostic tool, vignettes can be introduced to teacher candidates prior to presenting any content pertaining to the event(s) described in the vignette. When used as a diagnostic tool, vignettes provide teacher educators an opportunity to gain information regarding teacher candidates' prior knowledge, misconceptions, and self-efficacy in responding to the situations described in the vignettes. One way to use vignettes as a diagnostic tool is to provide teacher candidates an example of a completed vignette protocol so they get a sense of the decision-making process in responding to the vignette and corresponding questions/prompts. They are then asked to read a series of vignettes and rate themselves as to their level of confidence in responding to the situation described in the vignette. From there, they are asked to identify the one vignette they feel most confident to respond to

and why and the one they feel least confident to respond to and why. This provides teacher educators an individual and collective snapshot of the teacher candidates' sense of efficacy in responding to certain situations. It also provides guidance on what topic areas within the course need particular emphasis.

Vignettes for Exploring the Complexities of the Classroom

Vignettes can be embedded at key junctures in a class/course to engage students in facilitated conversations around exploring and identifying how they would respond to complex classroom situations. Use of vignettes as tools for exploring the complexities of the classroom can take several forms.

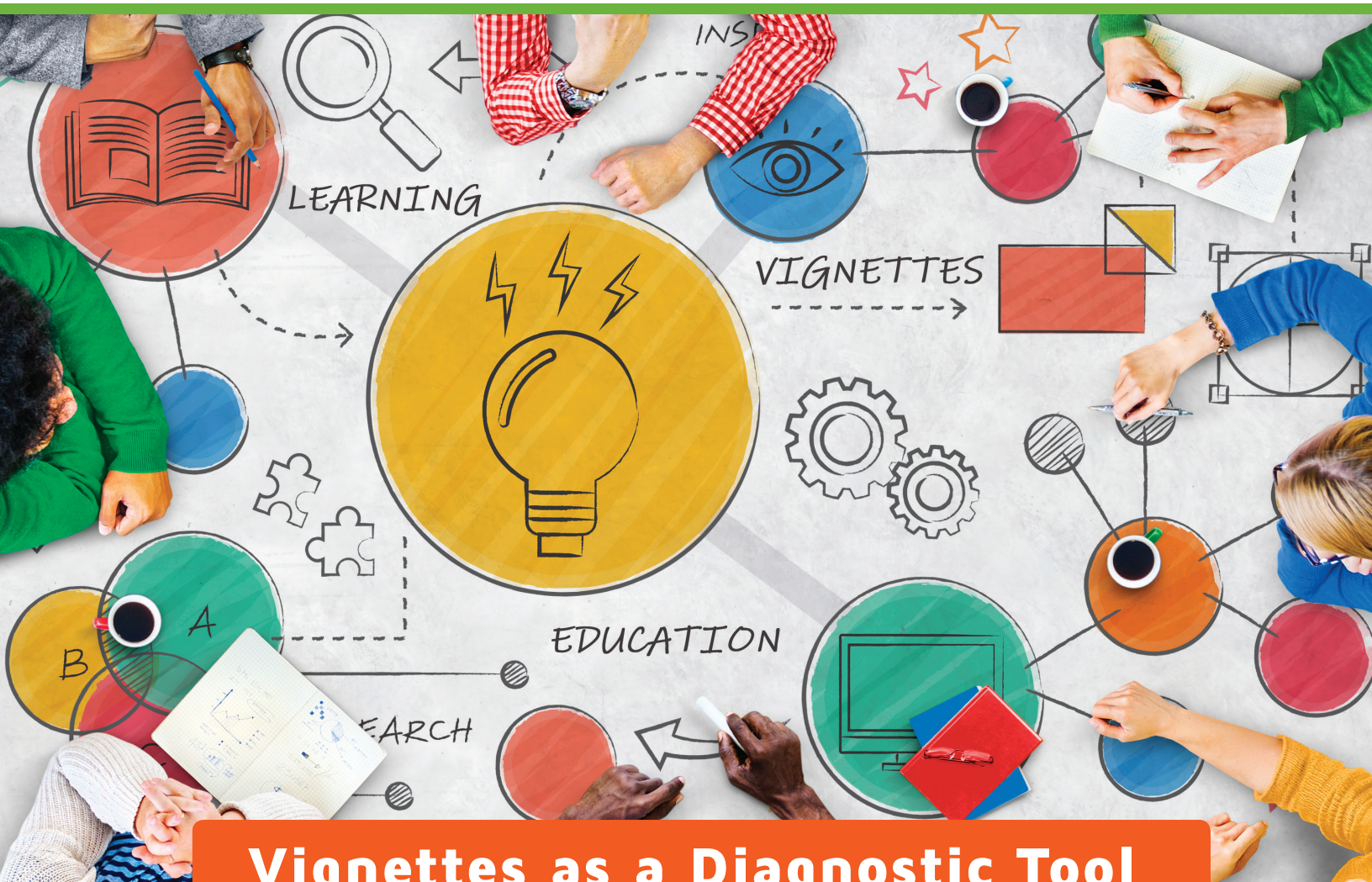
- ◆ Teacher candidates independently respond to one vignette. In small groups, they share their responses and reach consensus on a final response. Each group shares and obtains feedback from peers and instructor.
- ◆ In small groups, teacher candidates collectively respond to one vignette and then share to the whole group for feedback from peers and instructor.
- ◆ Teacher candidates are placed in small groups and assigned a vignette; these would differ for each group. The groups are charged with researching the issue presented in the vignette, identifying appropriate practices, and presenting their findings to the whole class.
- ◆ Teacher candidates respond to one vignette individually. Instructor engages the whole class in group discussion through guiding questions.

Vignettes as Tools for Assessing Learning

Vignettes can be used as tools to assess student learning at the conclusion of a unit of study or course as an evaluation of content mastery. When used this way, the issues presented in the vignettes would be aligned to specific standards, competencies, or benchmarks. Teacher candidate responses would be scored accordingly.

A note of caution:

Because vignettes can invite brave conversations about race, color, religion, gender, disabilities, loss, and more—topics that may be triggering for teachers as well as students—we recommend providing a trigger warning to students before presentation of vignettes.



Vignettes as a Diagnostic Tool

Note to the Teacher Educator:

Below we provide an example protocol for using vignettes as a diagnostic tool. Note that variations of this protocol are possible.

Instructions for the Teacher Candidate:

This protocol was designed to give you an opportunity to critically analyze complex situations that may occur in the classroom and rate your confidence in your ability to appropriately respond to those situations. There is not necessarily a single right answer (though there are definitely wrong ones) and there are multiple perspectives from which a vignette can be considered. These are all real situations that teachers have encountered.

Your Assignment:

- ◆ Read the sample vignette and corresponding responses, which will provide you an understanding of how to think through the vignettes.
- ◆ Review all [insert number] vignettes with confidence ratings.
- ◆ Rank your level of confidence for responding to each situation. The response is on a 4-point Likert scale from *Very Confident* to *Not Confident*.
- ◆ Select two vignettes—one of your highest rankings (*most confident*) and one of your lowest rankings (*least confident*) vignettes.

Trigger Warning:

These vignettes are based on real-life situations. They invite brave conversations about race, ethnicity, culture, color, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation disabilities, loss, and more topics that may be triggering for teachers as well as students.

Triggers are sudden emotional reactions. Triggers can be positive or negative but are usually used to describe a negative stimulus that sets off sadness, anger, fear, shame, or hurt. Every teacher will experience triggering and stressful moments in their classroom. These strategies can help you manage triggers:

- ◆ **Relax** – breathe and release the tension
- ◆ **Detach** – clear your mind of all thoughts
- ◆ **Center** – drop your awareness to the center of your body
- ◆ **Shift** – from sadness, anger, fear, or hurt to curiosity and compassion

Sample Vignette with Sample Responses**VIGNETTE**

You notice that one of your students is holding a baggie of white powder. The student admits that it's their bag of "Dance Fever" (fentanyl). He asks you to please not report him. He's already on probation and another offense could have dire consequences. This student has exceptional needs.

How confident are you that you can address the situation effectively?

☒ **Very Confident**
☒ **Confident**
☒ **Somewhat Confident**
☒ **Not Confident**

Presenting Facts:

- ◆ The student has exceptional needs
- ◆ The student is in possession of a controlled substance
- ◆ The student is on probation
- ◆ Drugs are illegal and potentially dangerous
- ◆ Drug possession is an automatic suspension

Considerations:

- ◆ Did the student ingest the drug? Do they need medical care?
- ◆ Drug possession might be an arrestable or suspendable act
- ◆ Does the student's IEP indicate that they have impaired judgement or impulsivity?
- ◆ Do the drugs belong to this student or were they 'holding' them for someone else?
- ◆ If the student received the drugs from a family member, is this reportable to child protective services?

Personal response:

I rated myself as Not Confident on this vignette. Even though the student was in possession of drugs, there might be more to the story. I don't know if having an IEP would have any bearing on the consequences. Personally, I struggle with the criminalization of youth and would be reluctant to report a student to law enforcement even if they did break the law.

Possible responses:

- ◆ I can interview the student to get more information, then decide what to do.
- ◆ I could report it to my principal.
- ◆ I could call the parents.

Possible outcomes of my responses (positive and negative):

- ◆ If I decide not to report, I have shown the student that they can trust me. But am I violating any legal mandates? If the student is distributing drugs on behalf of a family member, that might be considered child abuse. I am a mandated reporter. If I decide to report to the principal, that may destroy the student's trust in me. If it ends up being reported to law enforcement, it could be very detrimental to the student's future, and have I played into a system that hurts children?
- ◆ However, I can't look the other way if drugs are being distributed on campus. We must be proactive in ensuring that all students are safe. If I don't report, would I be considered complicit and be held legally responsible—maybe even lose my job?

Vignettes with Confidence Ratings

Note to teacher educator:

Below is an example of how you can present vignettes with confidence ratings. Insert additional vignettes for teacher candidates to respond to; we recommend a minimum of eight vignettes spanning a variety of topics. You can draw from the bank of vignettes included in this handbook or you can develop your own vignettes based on your contextual factors. Note that the question that starts with the stem “How confident are you...” is a vignette-dependent question. Each vignette requires its specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question that frames the issue for the candidate to respond to.

VIGNETTE: CURRICULUM COMPLAINT

You and most of the students and staff at your school are of Mexican heritage. You strive for cultural relevance by including images and content that students can relate to in your classroom and in your curriculum. One of your parents who is from El Salvador complains to you that your classroom is too Mexican-focused.

How confident are you that in response to the parent’s needs, you can create a learning environment where all students/families feel represented?

☒ **Very
Confident**

☒ **Confident**

☒ **Somewhat
Confident**

☒ **Not
Confident**

Select Two Vignettes

- 1.** Cut and paste the vignette for which you ranked yourself as most confident here:
 - a.** What are the presenting issues in this vignette?
 - b.** Explain why you ranked your confidence as high on this vignette.
 - c.** Write 3 possible responses to this vignette.
 - d.** What are possible positive and/or negative outcomes from your responses?
- 2.** Cut and paste the vignette for which you ranked yourself least confident here:
 - a.** What are the presenting issues in this vignette?
 - b.** Explain why you ranked your confidence as low on this vignette.
 - c.** Write 3 possible responses to this vignette.
 - d.** What are possible positive and/or negative outcomes from your responses?



Vignettes as Tools for Exploring the Complexities of the Classroom

Note to the Teacher Educator:

Depending on how you want to engage your teacher candidates with the vignettes (e.g., small group or whole class discussion, research assignment, or case study), you can use any one of the protocols (Protocol A and Protocol B) presented below with varying instructions to the teacher candidates, as shown in examples below. We encourage you to enhance these instructions based on your context and intentions. It is important to note that the interactions described below should include opportunities for feedback to candidates. In other words, they should be used as a means of gauging where teacher candidates are in their progress toward a learning goal related to the topic/content of the vignettes, and where teaching and learning needs to be adjusted to help them achieve that goal.

Sample instructions for small group and whole class discussion:

Example 1:

- ◆ Read the vignette that is presented and think about how you will respond to the accompanying questions. You may use any blank space provided in the protocol to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response.
- ◆ After formulating your own individual response to the vignette, share your response with your group members. Your task as a group is to reach a consensus on a final response.
- ◆ When prompted, you will share your group's final response with the whole class and obtain feedback from peers and instructor.

Example 2:

- ◆ Read the vignette that is presented and collectively respond to the accompanying questions.
- ◆ When prompted, you will share your group's response with the whole class and obtain feedback from peers and instructor.

Sample instructions for a research or case study assignment:

- ◆ For this assignment, as a group, you are to prepare responses to the questions accompanying the vignette that is provided. Before preparing your responses, research the issue presented in the vignette and identify proven practices. Be prepared to present your findings to the whole class.

Sample instructions for a whole class discussion (online or face to face):

- ◆ For this whole-class discussion, read the vignette that is presented and jot down any thoughts you had about the accompanying questions. Your open-minded, honest, and respectful participation is critical to creating a classroom in which we all feel comfortable sharing our views, experiences, and knowledge such that we can all learn from each other.

You may want to ask teacher candidates to revisit their level of confidence in responding to the situation after direct instruction and/or classroom discussion of the vignette(s).

Protocol A: Short Version

VIGNETTE

[Teacher educator enter selected vignette here]

How confident are you that you can address the situation effectively?

☒ **Very
Confident**

☒ **Confident**

☒ **Somewhat
Confident**

☒ **Not
Confident**

1. What issue(s) is/are presented in this vignette?

2. How might you respond? Provide 3–5 examples of the actions you would take to address the situation.

Protocol B: Expanded Version

Reflection on Identity

Critically reflect on your own identity and role in society and discuss how this may inform your teacher identity.

VIGNETTE

[Teacher educator enter selected vignette here]

How confident are you that you can address the situation effectively?

☒ **Very
Confident**

☒ **Confident**

☒ **Somewhat
Confident**

☒ **Not
Confident**

1. What issue(s) is/are presented in this vignette?

2. How might you respond? Provide 3–5 examples of the actions you would take to address the situation.

A. Think about the actions you selected through the lenses below and describe possible intended or unintended consequences (positive and/or negative) related to the actions you listed above:

- a.** Consider how your identity/role in society may impact your response and your actions
 - b.** Consider how these actions might impact the social-emotional wellness of the child
 - c.** Consider how the parent/community might respond
 - d.** Consider any relevant legal/policy considerations
 - e.** Consider your professional responsibilities
-

B. What resources would be of help to you in responding to the situation described in the vignette?

C. What more would you like to know in order to respond to the situation?



Depending on the teaching context and goals, the protocols above can be enhanced with any one or more of the considerations listed below:

1. Teacher identity

- a. Are you having a *personal* reaction to this scenario?
- b. How might that influence your response?
- c. What are your cultural blind spots or biases?
- d. How does your own identity/roles in society frame your perception?
- e. Do you have a shared identity with the student/parent?
- f. How might the student/parent receive your response?

2. Student social emotional needs

- a. Have you considered the student's possible cultural perspectives/ understandings of the issue?
- b. Recognize intersecting identities of our students?
- c. Consider the emotional well-being of the child?

- d. Prioritize student needs over the comfort of the adults?
- e. Consider short *and* long-term costs/benefits
- f. Advance or counter bias?
- g. Advantage one group's or one individual's interest over another?

3. Parent/community response

- a. How might the parent or community respond to the proposed response?
- b. How might potential cultural differences be impacting your perspective and the family's perspective on the issue?
- c. How can the teacher explain their proposed response to the parent/community?
- d. How does the teacher navigate diverging perspectives within the community?
- e. How can the teacher bridge student and parent/community interests and education code or school policies?

4. Legal implications and authority

- a. Are there any legal implications in the teacher's response?
- b. Is the response supported by education code?
- c. Are there relevant school-based policies that must be considered?
- d. Is this scenario within the authority of the teacher?
- e. Should administration be consulted or advised of the situation?
- f. Are there components of this scenario that should be reported to child protective services or law enforcement?
- g. Does the response honor federal regulations regarding confidentiality?

5. Professionalism

- a. Are there professional boundaries that need to be considered?
- b. Does the proposed response exemplify the kind and respectful treatment of all individuals?
- c. Has the teacher considered the scope of their experience and expertise? Should they seek consultation before making a decision?
- d. What unintended consequences may occur?



Vignettes as Tools for Assessing Learning

The protocols above can also be used as tools for assessing candidates' learning at the completion of an educational experience (e.g., at the end of a course, unit) to make judgments about teacher candidates' accomplishment or attainment of instructional goals. They can be done in any format (e.g., oral questioning, performance tasks, portfolio, etc.).

Vignettes

This section includes 27 vignettes that can be used with the protocols described above. Users should feel free to add context and make modifications to the vignettes as needed.

The presentation of the vignettes is organized as follows:

- ◆ *Vignettes*: Each vignette presents complex circumstances or situations that teachers may encounter in real classrooms. A small number of the vignettes pertain to educational leadership.
- ◆ *"How confident are you..." questions*: After each vignette is a vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question that frames the issue for the candidate to respond to and prompts self-assessment of confidence in ability to appropriately respond to that issue.
- ◆ *How we see it*: This is where the developers of the vignettes provided possible responses to the issues presented in each vignette.

Category Tags

Each of the vignettes are tagged using the categories below. These tags may be helpful in deciding which vignettes you want to use based on the focus of your course, your teacher candidates' content area or grade band focus, and the teacher candidates that are in your course. If no level is provided, allow teacher candidates to apply the vignette to the grade band in which they currently teach.

Category	Tags	
Grade Band	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Elementary • Late Elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle School • High School
Content Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Language Arts (ELA) • Math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Studies • Science
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation in Curriculum 	
Occurrence of Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Process • During Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Class
Type of Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to Student • Teacher to Student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to Teacher • Teacher Explanation to Parent
Teacher Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Reaction • Cultural Blind Spots or Biases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Identity with Students
Student Social Emotional Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student's Cultural Perspective • Student's Intersecting Identities • Racial/Ethnic/Cultural Identity • Religious Identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Identity/Expression/Orientation • Student's Emotional Well-Being • Neurodiversity
Parent/Community Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/Response • Cultural Differences between Teacher and Parent • Teacher Explanation to Parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating Diverging Perspectives • Bridging Student and Parent/Community Interests
Legal Implications and Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Implications to Teacher Response • Relevant School-Based Policies • Within Teacher Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator Involvement • Reported to Child Protective Services • Federal Regulations Abided
Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Boundaries Considered • Seek Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindness and Respectful Treatment of All Individuals

In the vignettes presented below, we capitalized race: Black and White. Additionally, recognizing the evolving nature as well as usage variations of the terms Latino, Latina, and Latinx, we made the choice to use Latino or Latina when the gender of individuals is identified in the vignettes and use Latinx for groups as a whole. Lastly, whenever possible, we use the actual country of origin to describe heritage or identity (as in “Mexican American,” “Nigerian American,” etc.).

VIGNETTE 1



TAGS

[Middle School, Math, During Class, Student to Student, Student Emotional Well-Being]

It is Wednesday, and you are facilitating a whole-group math lesson, where sixth-grade students complete a math word problem. You overhear Noe who identifies as Mexican American tell Phi, a Vietnamese American peer, “You’re supposed to be good at math. Why are you slow? You make all the other Asians look bad. How about trying to open your eyes bigger to read the problem?” Other peers around Phi, most of whom identify as White, giggle and laugh. Phi is silent and looks down at his math book, as tears well up in his eyes. Phi raises his hand and asks for permission to visit the nurse’s office. Phi indicates his stomach hurts. Phi has asked to go to the nurse’s office every day this week.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can guide students in discussing race-based stereotypes and how they are harmful?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Guide Noe and the class in recognizing the stereotypes (Asians good at math, slanted eyes) in his comment and how they are harmful or hurtful. Your goal is to both educate about stereotypes and to point out commonalities students share. After class, make sure you find time to speak with Phi privately to acknowledge the hurtful comments and to offer your encouragement, support, and allyship. Additionally, as time permits, you may find it helpful to engage the class in discussion on the Model Minority Myth (MMM). Lastly, check your own biases: are you also looking at Phi through an MMM lens, although less explicitly than Noe? Asian American students are underrepresented in special education in part because of the stereotype that they are smart. Is it possible Phi would benefit from more support?

VIGNETTE 2



[Late Elementary, Social Studies, During Class, Student to Student, Student's Cultural Perspective, Students Emotional Well-Being]

You are conducting a small-group, fifth-grade history lesson, where students discuss *Brown v. Board of Education* and its impact on integration. Joie who identifies as Nigerian American says, "If it were not for *Brown v. Board of Education*, then people of color like me wouldn't be able to go to school with resources like the White students, at the White schools. Separate is not equal." Kelly, a peer who identifies as White, responds to Joie, "White people gave you guys permission to have stuff that we have. But because you guys do bad things, like crime and stuff, you make your schools bad." Joie looks at Kelly in disbelief, as the peers in the small-group who are predominately Latinx quietly watch the tension between Kelly and Joie unfold.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can appropriately respond to Kelly's white supremacist values to create an inclusive environment for the rest of your students?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

Step into the conversation without calling out particular students (e.g., rather than saying, "I heard Kelly say XXX," try, "We've heard two different perspectives here: XXX and YYY") then invite the rest of the class into the discussion by asking for additional points of view (e.g., "What are some other ways to think about this?"). You can also ask questions such as, "Why might some people disagree or feel disrespected by XXX perspective?" Together as a class, take time to develop ground rules for discussions of sensitive topics. In the future, consider developing these ground rules at the beginning of the school year in order to have expectations and norms set before discussing potentially charged topics. Post these norms and revisit, as necessary. Take time to prepare for these discussions by learning different strategies for facilitating difficult conversations so that next time, you will be prepared to handle it when tensions arise.

VIGNETTE 3**TAGS**

[High School, Social Studies, During and After Class, Cultural Blind spots or Bias, Parent Response, Navigating Diverging Perspectives, Teacher Explanation to Parent, Administrator Involvement]

As a first-year AP U.S. History teacher to high school sophomores, you prepare a lesson that addresses the causes of slavery, the Civil War, and its aftermath on the country. As you build your lesson to include empathy, compassion, and acknowledgment of varied perspectives, you start to get phone calls and emails from parents saying they don't want their children to be exposed to critical race theory. You insist that you are preparing your students for the AP exam at the end of the year, as well as giving them opportunities to think critically about American history, economics, and politics, not teaching critical race theory. Your principal starts to drop in to visit your class regularly and you are starting to feel targeted, insecure, and worried about your position. Your students, however (for the most part), seem engaged, interested in having lively debates, and most are turning in quality work based on the rich discussions they've had in cooperative learning groups.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can manage issues or questions from concerned groups related to what they perceive as the inclusion of critical race theory in classes?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Remember that you are not alone in this work! It may be helpful for you to find other like-minded educators who can support you. It may be helpful to share with your principal and families what critical race theory is and isn't, as well as the importance of discussing race in the classroom. It may also be helpful to invite parents in (for example, an Open House) to see the quality work the students have been producing/having students present their work, as well as to demonstrate how it is connected to the AP exam (or consider demonstrating how state standards are aligned with the assignments). Sometimes parents are just scared of the unknown! Lastly, take time to engage in self-care so that you do not burn out.

VIGNETTE 4**TAGS**

[High School, ELA, During Class, Student to Student, Personal Reaction, Student Cultural Perspective, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

As a relatively new 10th grade English teacher, you are preparing to have your students read a text (for example, Steinbeck's 1930s classic *Of Mice and Men*) that deals with sensitive topics around racial diversity and inclusion. Your demographics comprise a large Latinx and Black student group as well as a relatively smaller White and Asian or Pacific Islander group. Your students seem to enjoy the text you've chosen for them, but as you walk around the room to listen in on the structured academic conversations your students are having, you notice some issues that you have yet to address. Some of your Black students object to the use of the N-word in the text; in the same group a Latina student asks why Black people are offended when they use the word themselves. They continue the conversation in hushed, yet heated tones as you stand nearby listening for a break in the conversation. You also hear a student toss out the word "racist."

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can use the conversations students are having to cultivate their critical awareness and sensitivity to difference?

☐ **Very Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat Confident**

☐ **Not Confident**

How we see it:

The students are raising legitimate concerns, and these concerns should be addressed head-on (tiptoeing around it indicates to students that they should not ask difficult questions or should not talk about race). Return to whole group discussion and address the use of the N-word in the text. Acknowledge the difficult and complex history of the word, how some find it vulgar and offensive, while others are comfortable with it, as well as how positionality matters in this situation. Before the next class session, locate YouTube clips or other resources that demonstrate the wide range of opinions on this topic (preferably from the Black community—for example Maya Angelou or other respected individuals). Or you may consider inviting someone from your school community who can provide their perspective to the conversation.

VIGNETTE 5



TAGS

[High School, Neurodiverse, During Class, Student's Intersecting Identities, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

During free time, on Friday afternoon, you allow your ninth grade students to play a board game of their choice. Aron, a student with cerebral palsy, who struggles with fine and gross motor difficulties, scans the classroom for a board game he can play with peers. He moves about the classroom and tests out various board games. Because many of the board games in the classroom have small movable pieces, Aron struggles to hold and maneuver the pieces. Aron sighs, moves back toward his seat, and sinks into his chair. He lays his head on the desk and watches peers around him play their board games without any observed difficulties.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can embed activities/games in the classroom that honor and recognize diverse abilities like Aron's?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Approach Aron and let him know that you'd like to expand your set of classroom board games. Ask him which games he likes to play. Find something Aron can participate in on this Friday (e.g., art or another "fun" activity) until you are able to get new board games. Then, research Aron's suggestions, as well as a few other games you can add to your collection that would accommodate current and future students with mobility issues. You may also consider expanding your Friday "fun" activities to more than board games: computer time, art, puzzles, etc., as well as considering your classroom layout and if there may be other barriers that make it difficult for students with mobility or visual impairments. Remedy those barriers so that your classroom is accessible to all.

VIGNETTE 6

[Middle School, Math, Neurodiverse, Student's Intersecting Identities, Seek Consultation]

You are a new teacher eager to employ in your teaching some strategies you learned in your teacher education program. In your middle school math class of 28 students, with over half of the group being neurodiverse, you decide that starting the year with a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) focus is the best way to engage your students and get to know them better. Your initial lessons seem to be making a difference; some students begin to share deeply and thoughtfully about the emotions and feelings high-stress situations trigger for them and you are pleased with the progress your students are making in becoming more self-aware of those triggers and managing them. When you begin to add more math content to your daily instruction, you notice several students become withdrawn, so you add games to your math lessons; you employ cooperative learning structures, and you offer tutoring after school. Still, you notice a sharp decline in participation and strikingly low scores on your formative assessments. You approach your department chair who tells you to abandon your strategies and return to a traditional teaching model of lecture and handouts. Her class average is higher than yours and you begin to consider her advice.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can develop supports and activities to help neurodiverse learners in your classroom thrive both emotionally and academically?

☐ **Very Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat Confident**

☐ **Not Confident**

How we see it:

Be encouraged that research demonstrates that there are academic and social benefits to including SEL in the classroom. Consider other ways to “Maslow before Bloom,” such as Brain Breaks or mindfulness activities. Lastly, consider other possible reasons for low scores on formative assessments—do you need to incorporate more UDL strategies? Is there a particular concept that needs to be reviewed or retaught?

VIGNETTE 7**TAGS****[High School, During Class, Student to Student, Student's Intersecting Identities, Relevant School-Based Policies]**

A transgender student in your 11th grade classroom is undergoing a social transition—one in which the pronouns “she/her” will be used as well as the name “Shondra.” A male-identifying peer in the class accidentally calls Shondra her old name and apologizes. Shondra responds, “It’s okay. Mistakes happen. Don’t worry.” Another peer who identifies as female, however, says, “You’re weird. You’re not normal. Boys are born boys, and girls are born girls. It’s not right. You have a problem, and your parents need to take you to a doctor to fix your head.” Shondra freezes in shock. Her male peer tries to stand up for her, but the female peer interjects and says, “Shut up, you f*****t-lover.”

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can address the student's transphobic comments to ensure that all students are treated with equal dignity and respect?

**Very
Confident****Confident****Somewhat
Confident****Not
Confident*****How we see it:***

Immediately de-escalate the situation by asking students to stop and take a breath. Address the use of slurs (of any kind) in the classroom, explaining that they are not tolerated. Remind your class about the classroom norms and how to express differences in opinions without using derogatory language or put downs. Find time to privately speak with Shondra to provide your support. Research suggests that LGBTQ+ students feel more supported and safer when teachers intervene and respond to harassment, when the school has strong anti-harassment policies and supports for students, and when there is positive representation of LGBTQ+ issues in the curriculum, so you may also consider proactive steps you/your school can engage in order to prevent similar situations in the future.

VIGNETTE 8



[Middle School, Math, Neurodiverse, Student's Intersecting Identities, Seek Consultation]

One of the students in your class is a self-proclaimed Satanist. One day during a science lab, you are walking around the classroom. You notice that student is cutting himself with an X-acto knife and collecting his blood in a test tube. You ask him what he's doing, and he says that he is collecting blood for one of his rituals. He says that he is allowed to do this because it is his American right to practice religion. You explain that students are not allowed to work with bodily fluids: it is against school policy, and that he can collect his blood at home. He replies that he needs the blood immediately because the ceremony has to be celebrated in 20 minutes. He proceeds to become very angry and starts yelling that it is his right to practice religion and that his religious freedom is at stake.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can de-escalate this situation to keep this student, your other students, and yourself safe?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

Remain calm (or appear calm on the outside) and non-confrontational. Because the student has a potential weapon, your only goal is to keep the student, the other students, and yourself safe. This is not the time to argue or to attempt to reason with the student who is escalating. Give the student his space and acknowledge his feelings, while moving other students to a safe space. Call for help. At a later time, set a meeting with the student's parents, along with all other appropriate personnel (teachers, counselor, administrator, etc.) to discuss both the student's emotional well-being, if further interventions/supports are required, and guidelines around bodily fluids at school.

VIGNETTE 9



TAGS

[High School, During Class, Racial Identity, Teacher to Student, Teacher Reaction, Student's Cultural Perspective, Relevant School-Based Policies]

A high school teacher works in a suburban Christian school where most students are upper middle class. The students are predominately White, Latinx, or exchange students from Korea and China. Most students plan to attend college, many at faith-based institutions. During Black History Month, the teacher chooses to wear her "Black Lives Matter" shirt. As she walks into class, she hears some students snicker as she walks past. She ignores this common high school occurrence. Later, while students are working on independent work, she walks past the same boys who laughed earlier and notices that others too are giggling. Finally, one of the braver boys blurts out, "So do you hate the police or something?" She says, "Excuse me?" He responds, "Well...your shirt. I mean, it seems like you're saying you hate the police."

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can leverage teachable moments from uncomfortable situations in order to help students learn more about systemic racism?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Take a breath and try not to take the student's comment as an attack on you personally, but rather as an example of the student needing more instruction about race. Try to discern if the student genuinely thinks you hate the police, or if the student is deliberately trying to get a rise out of you. Use the student's comment as a teachable moment to help students to learn more about systemic racism by discussing the context, origins, and goals of the movement. You can explore the myths and criticisms surrounding the movement.

VIGNETTE 10



[Middle School, ELA, During Class, Teacher to Student, Teacher Reaction, Student's Cultural Perspective, Student's Intersecting Identities, Representation in Curriculum]

You are teaching a diverse eighth grade language arts class where the majority of the class is White. You have selected a series of books to teach the standards this semester and all grades will come from assignments pertaining to these books. During the introduction to the first book, Blake, a Black student yells out "This book is stupid, and this is not real life." Furthermore, Blake refuses to read these books because the characters do not look like him or his friends and he says, "We never get to read anything about our people."

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can create a learning environment that includes a curriculum that represents historically marginalized populations?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

This is an opportunity to learn more about your student's interests. While there is a need for the student to understand there are certain required reading that we are mandated to teach, Blake can be assured that there will be a diverse reading list. The teacher can implement a survey to gain insight into the students' reading interests and/or favorite genres or authors and use this to diversify course materials to be more inclusive of all.

VIGNETTE 11



[Late Elementary, Social Studies, During Class, Student to Student, Student's Cultural Perspective, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

You are teaching a diverse fifth grade Social Studies class, which is comprised predominantly of Latinx students. During a discussion about previous presidential policy,

Sebastian, a White student, says to Antonio, a Latino student in his group, “My grandpa says if our old president was still in office, you and your family would have to go back to Mexico where you all belong.” Antonio begins to cry hysterically and has to leave school early for the day.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can build a safe classroom community that integrates constructive conversations about diversity and immigration?

☐ **Very Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat Confident**

☐ **Not Confident**

How we see it:

This is a teachable moment. First, students need to be reminded that the class is a safe space. No form of intimidation, bullying, etc. is allowed at any point. (In some cases, the parents may need to be contacted to offset any potential backlash from the class episode.) Then, the students could be reminded that the US is known as a nation of greatly diverse people, ethnicities, religions, etc. This would be a great time to discuss the different groups of immigrants that entered the nation, the circumstances that caused them to leave their country of origin, and the contributions they make to the U.S. culture and economy on every front. The class could be educated on the U.S. branches of government and the checks and balances we have in place to protect citizens.

VIGNETTE 12



[After Class, Teacher Reaction, Kindness and Respectful Treatment of All Individuals, Seek Consultation]

During a Professional Learning Community meeting, your department lead teacher, Susan, a White veteran teacher, says that she doesn't even bother to teach a particular group of students (all Black) in her class because they are “dumb as a box of rocks” and will not get the content anyway. She goes on to say that they are going to be pushed through school

and will get a check for the rest of their lives, which is all their families want and care about.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you in your ability as a novice teacher (3 years or less teaching experience) to respond to this situation while maintaining professional dignity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Confident
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How we see it:

This teacher lacks insight into the accomplishments of the Black community. This would be an opportunity to teach her about the history of Ben Carson. Most people know him as a famous neurosurgeon, but his teachers felt he too was “dumb as a box of rocks” and labeled him as intellectually disabled. His mother made him read the encyclopedia every day and changed the course of his trajectory. Bottom line: not all students end where they begin. This teacher needs to also be educated on the disproportionate number of students placed in special education and challenged to confront her own potential biases.

VIGNETTE 13



[Parent Response, Navigating Diverging Perspectives, Cultural Differences Between Teacher and Parent]

You are the first Black principal of a high school in an upper echelon suburban area in the South. In the wake of what is happening in the news with unarmed Black people being killed by police, some of the students (none of the White students) decide to wear “Black Lives Matter” t-shirts to school to show support for the movement. A parent of one of the White students complains to you, the principal, about the shirts and states that her husband is a police officer, the shirts are offensive, and demands something be done or she will report this to the superintendent, a White man, her neighbor and close personal friend.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you in advocating for a school culture wherein students are free to express themselves and support causes that are important to them and their community?

☐ **Very
Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat
Confident**

☐ **Not
Confident**

How we see it:

As the principal, you need to have a strong knowledge of the policy. If there is nothing in the policy against the wearing of the shirts, then you cannot ban them. Instead, use this time to help build rapport between the students and the police department. As a principal, you can shape your students' views on racism if you acknowledge there is a problem. You could hold a forum where students can ask questions of the police. The police could become part of the fabric of the school and foster relationships that extend beyond the school.

VIGNETTE 14



TAGS

[Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Shared Teacher Identity with Students, Parent Response Cultural Differences between Teacher and Parent, Teacher Explanation to Parent, Navigating Diverging Perspectives, Representation in Curriculum]

You and most of the students and staff at your school are of Mexican heritage. You strive for cultural relevance by including images and content that students can relate to in your classroom and in your curriculum. One of your parents who is from El Salvador complains to you that your classroom is too Mexican-focused.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can respond to the parent's complaint in an appropriate manner?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

This family doesn't feel seen in your curriculum. Thank the parent for bringing this to your attention. Do your research and consult with your colleagues and families on expanding the visibility of other identities in school activities and in the curriculum. Start a committee at your school that examines how inclusive their activities are. Let the family know the progress you are making in your committee, so they continue to feel their needs are being taken seriously.

VIGNETTE 15



[High School, During Class, Teacher to Student, Teacher Reaction, Student's Cultural Perspective]

Your high school student asks if your recent absence was due to illness. You explain that you had taken off work in honor of Eid-al-Fitr, a Muslim holiday associated with Ramadan. Another student blurts out, "Are you a terrorist?" The class bursts into laughter.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can appropriately respond to the student's comment to establish your classroom as a place where all religions are treated with equal dignity and respect?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

Take a breath. Students will laugh out of nervousness. This is a teachable moment. Consider this as a response, "Your question makes me think that you don't know anyone

who is Muslim...or at least not that you know of. Religion is an invisible identity—you can't tell someone's religion just by looking at them. There are about 3.5 million Muslims in the US. You may even have friends who are Muslim, and you don't even know it. I know you wouldn't want to insult your friend with a rude or insensitive comment. As for engaging in terrorism, that's a stereotype. Stereotypes occur when we apply the behavior of a few to the population at large. Yes, there have been Muslims who engage in terrorism, but there have been many more Christians and non-Muslims who have engaged in terrorism. Terrorism is wrong regardless of who does it. We don't want to perpetuate harmful stereotypes that are not true."

VIGNETTE 16



TAGS

[Parent Response, Navigating Diverging Perspectives]

You have a small number of Black students in your class. One of the Black parents asks you to skip your Afro-centric lessons during February's Black History Month because your lessons make their child feel self-conscious.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can respond to the parent effectively?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Ask the parent for feedback as to how you may have created that situation with your curriculum. Take responsibility for your actions as you accept their feedback and recommendations and reflect on the learning environment. Consult with a trusted colleague on how you can improve your teaching practice and teach African American history from a culturally responsive strengths-based approach.

VIGNETTE 17



TAGS

[Early Elementary, During Class, Student to Teacher, Gender Identity and Expression, Student's Emotional Well-Being, Parent/Community Response]

You teach in an elementary school. You invite your students to draw self-portraits to display during back-to-school night. One of your students, who was assigned male at birth, draws himself in a pink dress with long hair. He is very proud of this picture because it's the "real me." He asks you not to show it to his family.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you in how you should respond to your student?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Students have the legally protected right to privacy at school, which means that the teacher must honor the student's request that their drawing not be shared. The teacher must create a classroom that is affirming of gender expression. It's important to recognize that gender identity (one's internal sense of self) and gender expression (outward expression) are independent of one another and may not always align in a way that recognizes societal norms. Regardless, federal non-discrimination laws require gender neutrality. This child is legally entitled to wear a dress if he wished. If the child identifies as female, the school must accommodate her and ensure that her asserted gender identity is recognized in all settings.

VIGNETTE 18



TAGS

[During Class, Teacher to Student, Teacher Reaction, Student's Intersecting Identities, Neurodiversity, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

Your school district believes that students with exceptional needs should be educated alongside their non-disabled peers. One of your new students has autism. He has a few strategies to self-regulate when he gets over stimulated that have proven to be fairly

successful. He has several fidget toys that he may use as needed. Also, he may sit in the beanbag chair in the back of the room if needed. One of the other students calls out, "Why does he get to have toys and sit in the beanbag chair, and we can't? Why does he get special privileges? No fair!" Your student with autism runs out of the room.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can address the situation effectively?

☐ **Very
Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat
Confident**

☐ **Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Safety first. Ensure the safety of the student who ran out. Call the principal to get assistance with locating the student. The student's diagnosis as a person with autism is considered confidential information that cannot be shared. A class lesson on autism could feel stigmatizing to the student. Have a private conversation with the student who made the comment. Focus specifically on the comment regarding fairness. Ask if there has ever been a time they wished someone had supported them with something they were working on. We are all working on something. How would they like you, the teacher, to help them?

Encourage the offending student to consider ways that their comment may have impacted their classmate and how they can make it right. The frustration, after all, was not with their classmate with autism, but with you, their teacher for ostensibly giving preferential treatment to the student with autism. Ask the student to reflect on how to make amends with the student who they embarrassed.

Sample restorative questions:

- ◆ "What happened?"
- ◆ "What were you thinking at the time of the incident?"
- ◆ "What have you thought about since?"
- ◆ "Who has been affected by what happened, and how?"
- ◆ "What about this has been the hardest for you?"
- ◆ "What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?"

Have a private conversation with the student with autism. Explain that the other student should never have disrespected him. The real issue was that the other student wanted the same considerations but did not ask for them properly. Ideally, the offending student can join in to make amends.

Hold a Community Building Circle with the class on:

- ◆ Situations that they find frustrating
- ◆ Strategies that they use to self-regulate
- ◆ How each of them would want their peers to help them if they were having a difficult time

VIGNETTE 19



[During Class, Student to Student, Student's Cultural Perspective, Student's Intersection Identities, Student's Emotional Well-Being, Teacher Reaction]

Several of your students lost family members to COVID-19. One of your students is particularly mournful because it is the anniversary of their parent's death. They turn to one of their Asian classmates and say, "It's your fault! You brought the China Virus here!" She responds by saying, "It's not my fault...thousands of people died because ignorant people like you refuse to wear a mask!" (Her parent was a doctor who contracted COVID while caring for others and also died).

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can effectively address the conflict?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

Take a breath and consider how your own emotions around grief and loss and the pandemic may be triggered. Arrange to have a private conversation with the two students. Prepare by studying the resources on supporting grieving students. Begin with expressing your concern and empathy to both of them for having lost a parent. The pandemic was a terrible tragedy, and we were all impacted by it in different ways. Let them know that your intention in meeting with them is to offer your support and hear how you can help them both and perhaps how they can help each other. Invite them to share about their parents who died. Listen more, talk less. When the conversation comes to a natural close, ask for some agreements—that they turn toward each other not against each other as they mourn their losses.

VIGNETTE 20



TAGS

[Student to Student, Teacher Reaction, Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Student's Cultural Perspective, Student's Intersection Identities, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

You overhear a White student directing the N-word at a Black classmate. When another student, who was nearby and heard the comment, confronts him, he claims that he was using it as a term of endearment—a claim that is not explicitly contested by the “friend” to whom he's directing it.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can respond to this situation in a manner that cultivates students' critical awareness and sensitivity?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

Address the situation with the two students involved. Offer the opportunity to research the history of the N-word, its complexity, and the negative effects it has had since its inception. Have an open dialog with the two students on what they found and be open to hearing their opinions based on their new knowledge. Make it clear that it is a term that should not be tolerated in a public setting, including the classroom. And set the rule.

VIGNETTE 21



TAGS

[Teacher Reaction, Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Student's Cultural Perspective, Student's Emotional Well-Being]

You randomly assigned groups at the beginning of the semester, intended to remain in place for the semester, to work on a number of group projects. After the first group meeting Chris, a Latinx student, asks to speak to you after class requesting to be moved into another group. After asking for clarification on why, Chris responds “I don't feel

comfortable with the other group members.” After you look into the group make-up (two Black students, two Asian students, and one White student), you suspect this may be a case of clashing cultures rather than an issue with group dynamics.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you in having a conversation with Chris about the root cause of his request?

<input type="checkbox"/> Very Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Confident
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How we see it:

Suspecting that this may be a case of clashing cultures rather than an issue with group dynamics is possibly a sign that the teacher may have cultural issues. Simply dig deeper with the student and have the student give a clear, confidential rationale for their desire to change groups. Explain to the student that only a clear, confidential rationale is going to allow the teacher to make the best choice for the student.

If upon discovery, the student is having a cultural difference issue, dig deeper with the student as to why they feel the way they do. This can be an opportunity for the concerned student to look deeper (research) into the root causes of the stereotypes that are probably causing the concern/opinion.

Hopefully, this learning moment will offer the student an opportunity to grow out of their ignorance to make more informed decisions in the future and maybe this student will want to give the group a chance to work.

VIGNETTE 22



[During Class, Teacher Reaction, Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Student’s Cultural Perspective, Student’s Intersecting Identities, Student’s Emotional Well-Being, Gender Identity]

Since the first day of class, you have encouraged your students to ask questions and participate during your lectures. During one of your lectures, you ask a series of questions. A male student continues to respond aloud to your questions interrupting the female

students on a continuous basis. Furthermore, when Melissa, a female student, raises her hand and waits for you to call on her, the same male student shouts out the answer.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you in addressing gendered inequities in classroom talk?

☐ **Very Confident**

☐ **Confident**

☐ **Somewhat Confident**

☐ **Not Confident**

How we see it:

The teacher can look at this issue from two perspectives, which both allow for a teachable moment. The first perspective is that this is simply a behavioral issue that may possibly be alleviated with consistent adherence to classroom management expectations, involving rewards and consequences.

The second perspective is that the student feels the opinions of women are irrelevant and carry no purpose. This opinion is not uncommon in certain areas of society. The teacher can ask the student in private to explain his behavior with rationale. If upon explanation he expresses his behavior is a manifestation of this opinion, then the opportunity to have the student respond to a research project on a successful woman in modern society might begin to shed some of the ignorance and bias the student has obviously acquired over time. This can be offered as an opportunity for a free way to add points to his grade in the course.

VIGNETTE 23



[During Class, Teacher Reaction, Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Student’s Cultural Perspective, Student’s Intersecting Identities, Student’s Emotional Well-Being]

You assign students to complete a project about their family tree. Of the 30 students in your class, seven of them explain they do not know any information beyond their grandparents, three explain that they do not know any information about one parent, and one student explains that they currently have a strained relationship with their parent.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you in adjusting the project requirements based on your students' reactions?

☐ **Very Confident**
☐ **Confident**
☐ **Somewhat Confident**
☐ **Not Confident**
How we see it:

The key to this is the learning goal. The teacher must examine the true learning objective behind this project/unit. For those students that are facing roadblocks to acquisition of necessary information, they can be offered an alternative option to fulfill the learning objective (i.e., if the learning objective was for students to share out different or similar cultural and/or ethnic norms in their family history, then these students may simply use their present prior knowledge to effectively have enough information to facilitate the learning goal). Additionally, it is important to get to know students before assigning particular activities to avoid this kind of situation or at least be proactive and provide choices prior to the task.

VIGNETTE 24

[After Class, Student to Student, Teacher Reaction, Teacher Cultural Blind Spots or Biases, Student’s Intersecting Identities, Student’s Emotional Well-Being, Legal Implications to Teacher Response, Relevant School-Based Policies]

Tyler and Sam have been friends/dating on and off again for the last 2 years at your high school. Tyler is a student with ADHD. In his cumulative file, it is documented that he was once identified as having Emotional Disturbance in fourth grade, but services were discontinued in middle school. Tyler receives weekly counseling. Sam identifies as a male (but was assigned female at birth). Sam is receiving weekly counseling services due to past trauma. Tyler and Sam are involved in a physical conflict about Sam’s new boyfriend. The students are separated, parent meetings are held, and appropriate consequences are assigned to the students. The next morning you are informed that the students met off campus to continue the altercation. You are informed that Sam brought a knife to the fight.

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can create a learning environment where you can help students mediate arguments in nonviolent ways?

☐ **Very Confident**
☐ **Confident**
☐ **Somewhat Confident**
☐ **Not Confident**
How we see it:

This must be reported to administration immediately. The teacher has no recourse in the matter. This is child endangerment and must be reported. On-campus behavior continued after school hours (such as bullying after school) or off-campus conduct done in retaliation for on-campus activities—students fighting in a park, for instance—can result in an on-campus discipline proceeding. In an attempt to avoid this type of encounter, an opportunity can be provided for all parties to offer grievance about the issue in a controlled environment that offers free and open discussion. This can be monitored by a counselor to hopefully come to a resolution by all sides on how to best deal with their feelings in this matter.

VIGNETTE 25**TAGS***[During Class, Teacher to Student, Student to Teacher, ELA]*

A White student is reading a book to the whole class. The main character's name is Quvenzhañe. Rather than learning the correct way to pronounce the character's name, the student says, "Her name is too difficult for me to say, so we will just call her Q any time we see her name." You intervene and tell the student the correct pronunciation; however, the student says, "Phonetically, her name does not read that way, so I will continue to call her Q."

The vignette-specific “How confident are you...” Likert scale question:

How confident are you that you can use this moment to cultivate the student's appreciation for diverse names?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident
How we see it:

There is a lack of cultural sensitivity that must be addressed. Would the student act similarly with a Western name? Whether being culturally disrespectful, unaware of their actions, or even just stumbling over a name they had never seen before, the student needs to understand the importance of appropriately acknowledging another human being. The second you hear the student say, "I will continue to call her Q," interrupt and redirect: Say the correct pronunciation of the name Quvenzhañe and ask the student to put their best effort to repeat it back to you. Reiterate to the student that it is important to not change or shorten a name, but rather ask for help. Follow this up by explaining that taking the time to learn and correctly pronounce someone's name is showing a high level of respect and that repeatedly mispronouncing someone's name is a racial insult, a type of cultural othering.

VIGNETTE 26

[Early Elementary, Racial Identity, Student's Emotional Well Being, Parent Response]

Back-to-school night is coming up. You've been looking forward to building a positive relationship with a student's parent around some concerns you have about the student's reading skills. You display student self-portraits during back-to-school night. The parent sees their child's drawing and asks, "Porque te pusiste tan guerita si estas bien prieta?" (Why did you color yourself light skinned when you are so dark?) Tears well up in your student's eyes.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you in knowing what your next steps should be to meet the needs of the child and maintain an effective relationship with the parent?

☐ Very Confident

☐ Confident

☐ Somewhat Confident

☐ Not Confident

How we see it:

While your first tendency may be to remain silent, you don't want to allow such a comment to go unchallenged but you also don't want to alienate the parent who you need on your team to help with the learning issues. Consider replying with a comment such as "In our class, we teach all children that they are beautiful and perfect just the way they are." Follow this up by reading books in the classroom about accepting oneself for who we are.

VIGNETTE 27**TAGS**

[During Class, Student to Teacher, Religious Identity]

December 12, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, is a very important and highly celebrated holiday at the predominantly Mexican school you are teaching at. One of the students asks you if you also believe in Our Lady of Guadalupe. You do not share that belief.

The vignette-specific "How confident are you..." Likert scale question:

How confident are you in knowing how to address the student's question?



**Very
Confident**



Confident



**Somewhat
Confident**



**Not
Confident**

How we see it:

You must be cognizant of not giving the appearance of criticizing the child's faith. This is more likely that the child wants to connect with you, the teacher, on something that is important to them than an actual interest in your faith. Focus on the relationship. Consider this response: "We didn't celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe when I was growing up, but I am very interested in hearing what it means to you and how you celebrate it."



Workshop Materials

Introduction

This section of the handbook can be useful for:

- ◆ EPP leadership (e.g., Deans, Chairs, Program Directors/Coordinators, etc.) to encourage widespread use of vignettes in teacher preparation coursework. In most cases, it suffices to follow the instructions in the facilitator's guide below with faculty. Anyone familiar with the contents of this handbook can successfully do the facilitation.
- ◆ Faculty to introduce the vignettes and the accompanying protocols to teacher candidates.

Facilitation Guide

This is a high-level overview of a facilitated conversation (hereafter referred to as the session) to introduce teacher educators (i.e., EPP faculty) to the protocols that they can use to help teacher candidates explore the complex and real situations that teachers have encountered in today's classrooms.

This guide is accompanied by [PowerPoint slides](#) that contain information and activities that will help you move through each part of the session. We encourage you to modify the slides and this guide, so they work for your context.

Pework for the Facilitator:

- ◆ In preparation for this session, read and familiarize yourself with the **entire** Handbook, titled, *Complexities in the Classroom: Vignettes for Teacher Candidates*, paying specific attention to pages 10–13 to understand how to use the protocols introduced on Slides 16, 17, and 18 in the [accompanying PowerPoint slides](#).
- ◆ Select three (3) vignettes from the Handbook and insert one into each protocol on Slides 16, 17, and 18: One vignette for the diagnostic protocol, one vignette for Protocol A, and another for Protocol B.
- ◆ Bring to the session print or electronic copies of Protocols A and B with vignettes embedded in them. These copies will be shared with the participants during the “Applied Experience” activities described in the guide below.
- ◆ [Access the PowerPoint slides](#). Review the facilitation process detailed below and familiarize yourself with the slide content. Modify the slides to reflect your institution and be sure to add the context specific information noted below.

Session Length: 90 mins.

Title/ Suggested Time	Slide Number	Process
INTRODUCTIONS ⌚ 4 mins	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the participants. • Facilitator and participants do brief introductions.
WARM-UP ⌚ 6 mins	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the warm-up activity by having participants work through the questions on Slide 3 in pairs. 2 min per person. • Elicit 1–2 stories from the participants. Have them share out those stories. • This warm-up will provide a nice segue into what comes next.
SETTING THE CONTEXT ⌚ 2 mins	4–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate the “why” behind this session: What problem/issue in teacher education is it addressing? Also articulate the collaborative process behind the development of the content presented in this session.
AGENDA ⌚ 1 min	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the agenda.

Title/ Suggested Time	Slide Number	Process
NORMS ⌚ 3 mins	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay out the group norms. Have the group create or agree to norms/agreements to create the democratic climate necessary for a productive discussion. This slide is intentionally left blank for you to add your group norms.
SESSION OBJECTIVES ⌚ 1 min	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the session objectives.
TAPPING INTO BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ⌚ 5 mins	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give participants an opportunity to tap into their existing knowledge base and share what they know about the use of vignettes in teaching and learning situations. This can be done as a whole group discussion.
FILLING IN GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE ⌚ 4 mins	10–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand on participants' responses from Slide 9 to fill in any gaps.
TRIGGER WARNING ⌚ 6 mins	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the trigger warning provided to alert participants to the fact that some of the vignettes may potentially contain distressing content • Talk through the warning—provide the guidelines for ways to manage emotions (relax, detach, center, shift) • This may be a moment to talk with the participants about the rationale for trigger warnings when working with vignettes in teacher education courses and discuss what to say in such warnings and how to say it.
DIAGNOSTIC PROTOCOL ⌚ 8 mins (See <i>Pework for the Facilitator</i>)	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and describe the diagnostic protocol. • Invite participants to articulate their perspectives and understandings of the diagnostic protocol and ask any questions they may have about it. • Explain that the focus in the session will not be on this protocol; rather, the focus will be on the other two protocols that can be used formatively with feedback opportunities for candidates during small and whole group discussion.

Title/ Suggested Time	Slide Number	Process
APPLIED EXPERIENCE: Protocol A 🕒 20 mins <i>(See Prewrite for the Facilitator)</i>	17–19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and describe Protocol A (Slide 17). • Invite participants to articulate their understandings of the protocol and ask any questions they may have about it. • Put participants in small groups. • Provide each group with a print or electronic copy of Protocol A with a vignette. • Explain the steps/process participants will follow to engage with Protocol A (Slide 18). • Check for understanding and start the small group work. About 10 minutes will be enough. • If the session is face to face, once participants are in their groups, step to the side, wander around the room, and listen in. • When time is up, tell participants that you are moving to debriefing. • Have participants talk about their experience with Protocol A. Invite them to share their perspectives (Slide 19).
APPLIED EXPERIENCE: Protocol B 🕒 20 mins	20–22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and describe Protocol B (Slide 20). • Invite participants to articulate their understandings of the protocol and ask any questions they may have about it. • Ask participants to go back to their small groups. • Provide each group with a print or electronic copy of Protocol B with a vignette. • Explain the steps/process participants will follow to engage with Protocol B (Slide 21). • Check for understanding and start the small group work. About 10 minutes will be enough. • If the session is face to face, once participants are in their groups, step to the side, wander around the room, and listen in. • When time is up, tell participants that you are moving to debriefing. • Have participants talk about their experience with Protocol A. Invite them to share their perspectives (Slide 22).
CLOSING 🕒 10 mins	23–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer the handbook as a resource; provide participants with an electronic copy of it. • Provide an overview of the handbook. • If time allows, have participants peruse the handbook. • Answer any questions they may have. • Implement the evaluation survey.

Endnotes

¹ Jeffries, C., & Maeder, D. W. (2004). Using vignettes to build and assess teacher understanding of instructional strategies. *The Professional Educator*, XXVII (1 & 2).

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ728478.pdf>

² Campbell, P. (1996). How would I handle that? Using vignettes to promote good math and science education. *American Association for the Advancement of Science*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED413170.pdf>

³ Hughes, R., & Huby, M. (2002). The application of vignettes in social and nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37(4), 382–386.

<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2002.02100.x>



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