Introduction

You are a teacher candidate in an undergraduate licensure program, likely in your second year. You are enrolled in a social foundations course that focuses on the interactions between contemporary social problems and various philosophies of education. Over the last few weeks, you have read articles and chapters written by education philosophers, theorists, and researchers that talk about the purpose of schooling and education, the layers of curriculum, the lived experiences of students, and, most recently, the challenges of school and classroom discipline. All of these readings have focused on students, families, and communities historically underserved in US schools and marginalized in US society. In class, your instructor has facilitated discussion about concepts in the readings, engaged you in tasks to make connections between the broad context of US schools and teacher decisions you may need to make in the future, and asked you to start to look at your own schooling—including what you are receiving now—through the lenses provided by the course.

About a third of the way through the course, your instructor presents a live-actor scenario in which you play the part of a teacher meeting with a student named Daria Miller. Daria is an outgoing fifteen-year-old Black honors student who is creative and hardworking but often talks in class when she is not supposed to. In this simulation, you are to meet with Daria after school to talk about an incident that occurred that day when, in class, you called her out publicly for talking and she left the room abruptly, saying, "This is some bullshit. Why's it always gotta be me?"

What do you think you would do in your ten-to-twelve-minute interaction with Daria? What would you say when you walked into the room?

What would you anticipate she might say or do during the interaction? Would you ask any questions about what happened in class or tell her how you feel about it? Would you claim responsibility for calling her out or even address her walking out? If you are a teacher candidate in the SHIFT Project at Vanderbilt University, you have a chance to find out exactly what you would do in this situation before you ever enter the classroom. And if you are a teacher educator, for whom this book is intended, you have a chance to see what each teacher candidate in your course would do and use those interactions to move future teachers closer toward anti-oppressive teaching.

The Daria Miller case is one of a number of live-actor simulations we have created and embedded in a variety of courses at Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education since 2013 to prepare preservice teachers for common dilemmas they will face in today's classroom. The simulations are part of the SHIFT Project, used to shift horizons in future teachers to move them toward anti-oppressive teaching, concepts more fully explored in chapter 3. Embedded in a series of tasks we call the *SHIFT cycle*, these simulations reveal a lot about the knowledge, assumptions, and biases of a teacher candidate. They also provide a safe and supportive environment in which candidates are given the opportunity to open themselves up to new learning rather than defending traditional approaches that reinforce the status quo of societal inequities. While we are still researching the effects, we believe from data gathered so far that the SHIFT simulations set teacher candidates down a different path, one of preparing for a lifetime of practicing and learning about anti-oppressive teaching.

Interest in using simulations in teacher education is growing. In addition to using these simulations here at Vanderbilt, we have also worked with teacher educators at other institutions to design and use SHIFT simulations in their programs, which has helped us to refine the principles articulated in this text that help make their use effective within a teacher licensure program. Moreover, it has pressed us to consider the moral and ethical obligations that come with this type of work and that are imperative to address as simulations broadly writ increase in use within teacher education and education research. Thus, this book is written for teacher educators who are interested in using simulated encounters in their own teacher preparation programs, as well as those interested in teacher learning, anti-oppressive teaching, or design-based research. We intend the advice and tools provided in this book to introduce the theory and rationale

behind SHIFT simulations and to make it easier for teacher educators to use them in specific courses, as well as to envision and plan for how they might be integrated on a larger scale within a licensure program. We include examples of SHIFT simulations that have been used in teacher licensure courses, including the protocols given to both teacher candidates and actors and a narrative of how we developed the case, how it fit into coursework (with paired readings), how the participants responded, and how the instructor debriefed with the class. We explain what we have done and provide other teacher educators with specific examples to use as models with a rationale that will help them construct their own cases or modify the approach to their needs and program.

Why SHIFT?

Toward Anti-Oppressive Teaching describes how programs can design and use simulated encounters with teacher candidates in ways that contribute to more equitable outcomes for historically underserved and marginalized student populations. The simulated encounters we describe are live-actor, video-recorded, group-debriefed interactions between individual teacher candidates—those who are working toward initial licensure—and actors who play the role of a student, parent, or coworker based on a protocol. Each encounter simulates a situation that is common in teaching and that foregrounds identity, positionality, and systems of oppression in an attempt to make them more visible to candidates. The encounters are part of a cycle of instructional tasks that permit candidates to predict what may happen, reflect on what did happen, and analyze their choices during the encounter in an effort to move toward approaches that support more equitable outcomes for students.

This cycle encourages—and in fact demands—that candidates experience a significant shift in their cultural and intellectual "horizons," philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer's characterization of self-understanding in a given moment in time.[1] When a candidate's horizon has shifted, she can no longer see teaching situations in the same way because she has come to understand herself differently, which makes more and different learning possible for her students. We explain both the "why this" (part I) and the "how to" of using this approach (part II), including the principles and the theories of practice. More than anything else, this book starts a broader

conversation about how to design these encounters within the context of a teacher preparation program and use them ethically with learners, actors, and local communities in mind.

The need for new pedagogical approaches is evident in empirical research on education outcomes for minoritized students. Few in the US believe that our schools are educating all children well or are beyond any "achievement gap."[2] Black students are more likely to attend segregated schools, more likely to be taught by novice teachers, and far more likely to be punished for subjective disciplinary infractions than their peers.[3] Parents and families of immigrant and refugee students are less likely to receive communication from schools and are often hesitant to enter school buildings or to reach out to teachers with questions or concerns.[4] Children living in poverty experience significantly more teacher turnover in their schools, which results in a lack of stability in the school culture.[5] Girls, especially girls of color, are still underrepresented in advanced STEM courses, and boys, especially boys of color, are often overrepresented in special education and underrepresented in gifted education.[6] Jewish and Muslim students are more likely to be victims of hate crimes than students practicing other religions.[7] LGBTQIA+ students are also more likely to be bullied at school, which impacts their attendance rates and academic achievement, and they are subjected to greater scrutiny on issues like dress codes and public displays of affection.[8] Students with disabilities are less likely to be fully integrated into class activities and student interaction, even in classrooms that are deemed inclusive.[9]

This considerable but still incomplete list reveals how students feel the impact of societal forms of oppression or experience that oppression in new and even more intense ways in school buildings and classrooms. Moreover, this list (represented here mostly in the passive voice) points to the ways in which systems, structures, and procedures perpetuate oppression by making it less visible. That is, students, families, and communities, with their various identities, are framed as the problem rather than the objects of practices perpetuated by other (dominant) persons or social systems. Thus, it is vitally important to provide future teachers for these and all students—before they are in a position to do real harm to young people—with clear lenses that allow them to see the connections between these systems and their future decisions as teachers, lest they unknowingly reproduce these same systems. This requires a substantive shift in teachers' understanding

of their work, recognizing their curricular and instructional expertise as always "partial," as well as a shift in the way they regard their students as knowledgeable resources for the teaching and learning they will engage in together.[10] Understanding this is experiential in a Deweyan sense: it involves direct encounters with these systems *and* those who are impacted by them in ways that invoke thought, feeling, and action.[11]

The approach to simulations explored in this book aims to help future teachers see, know, and value children as knowledgeable individuals, as members of culturally rich communities, and as persons situated within systems of oppression that persist in US society and to respond to them and their needs and resources in a way that interrupts business-as-usual and moves toward more equitable outcomes of all kinds.

Terminology and Conventions

We use various terms for consistency, clarity, and convenience. First, we use *teacher preparation program* to denote any form of teacher licensing program, whether university based, district based, or community based. This includes both traditional and alternative routes to licensure. The term does, however, assume some characteristics of these programs: a core group of teacher educators working together over the years to develop and refine the path to licensure, teacher candidates learning in relatively stable cohorts for at least the course of a semester, and courses or other educative spaces in which the simulated encounters can be used. To this end, we discourage teacher educators from designing and using simulated encounters as stand-alones, separate from other learning that is happening in the program.

We use *teacher candidate* to refer to those who are not yet licensed as classroom teachers and are in a program to become such. At Vanderbilt, teacher candidates are undergraduate or professional students seeking licensure along with their baccalaureate or master's degrees. In other programs, teacher candidates may be pursuing licensure only or are already in the classroom as paraprofessionals, residents, or even teachers with a temporary license. Our experience in the SHIFT Project starts with teacher candidates prior to significant classroom experience, but we have also used simulations with candidates who are in classroom placements. The main point is that simulated encounters are used to shape those whose view is still being formed prior to completing their licensure requirements.

In some chapters, we provide direct quotes from teacher candidates who have participated in SHIFT simulations. As a matter of convention, we use the first names and often provide demographic information for teacher candidates who provided their comments through our survey and gave us permission to attribute them. When quoting from encounters or other simulation materials or describing moments from those interactions, we either use pseudonyms when referring to findings from previously published materials for purposes of consistency or do not use names if permission was given at the time of participation to use the materials for research purposes but with the presumption of anonymity (as identified in IRB consent forms).

Throughout the book, we refer to both *teacher educators* and *instructors*. We have attempted to use *teacher educator* more broadly when thinking about the efforts within teacher education over the last several decades to prepare teachers for anti-oppressive education or when referring to faculty and staff in a licensure program who may be involved in designing or using simulated encounters. We use *instructor* when referring to a specific course or experience in which a simulated encounter is employed.

Finally, our motivating goal in the SHIFT Project is the education and development of anti-oppressive educators. We use this term as Kevin Kumashiro uses it, as an ideal toward which teachers constantly aspire.[12] We argue, with Ibram Kendi, that one cannot be either oppressive or not oppressive—the first is clearly wrong, and the second is not nearly enough.[13] One must be affirmatively *anti*-oppressive, committed to actively working against systems that limit human potential. This is the stance from which this work emerges.

About the Book

Part I focuses on what the SHIFT cycle is, offers principles for how we design and use simulated encounters within our program, articulates the theory of learning that guides it, and documents the impact of the project. These chapters provide a practical explanation of the design as well as its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings.

In chapter 1, "Why SHIFT?" we explain how and why this signature pedagogy came to be developed and how it draws on but differs from similar pedagogies in teacher education, both past and present. We then describe

the SHIFT cycle in detail and what it looks like for a specific encounter, the Daria Miller simulation.

Chapter 2, "SHIFTing Practice: Guiding Principles," highlights, explains, and explores the design principles that make SHIFT simulations make sense in and for practice. These principles include building critical incidents that reflect dilemmas of teaching, maintaining complexity, immersing students in richly specified contexts, striving for usefully artificial situations, and attending to dispositions of continuous learning.

In chapter 3, "Pulled Up Short," we articulate the theory that helps explain the design and the power of SHIFT Simulations. We reveal how the simulation cycle leads not to a seemingly simple disruption of habit (or taken-for-granted ways of responding to events) but to a personally and existentially disorienting experience that both prompts *and* requires a reconstruction of the meaning and understanding available to the teacher candidate. We argue that preparing future teachers as anti-oppressive educators requires a continual shift in horizons.

Chapter 4, "The Impact of SHIFT," represents our efforts to document how teacher candidates change as a result of this experience over time and as they enter the profession as teachers of record. The chapter is punctuated by qualitative studies of both the process and the impact on candidates and their teaching performance but is substantively built around teacher candidates' comments and feedback during and after their simulation experience. We do this purposely to suggest that the impacts of SHIFT are neither preset nor static but appropriately diverse based on the positionality of the teacher candidate.

Part II directs attention to the conditions needed for integrating SHIFT simulations into any effort to educate those who would be teachers. As the chapters suggest, SHIFT is not simply a pedagogy to be applied but an approach to the endeavor of preparing teachers.

In chapter 5, "Infrastructure for the Encounter and the Debrief," we walk the reader through the process of assessing their present program to check the dispositions, ideas, and values that motivate what they presently do. We ask the reader to identify their understandings of teaching practices and teaching as a (community of) practice.

Chapter 6, "Crafting Simulations," is a guide for designing your own simulations or choosing to adopt/adapt simulations authored by others. We highlight the need to identify real dilemmas in teaching, to draw out

rich characters with whom candidates will interact, to deeply specify the cultural context of the interaction, and to maintain circumstances in which the candidate is forced to acknowledge multiple entry points and possible responses.

Actors play a critical role in effective SHIFT simulations, and it is important that those running simulations pay careful attention to those actors. In chapter 7, "Caring for Actors," we offer those who want to make use of SHIFT simulations advice for how to identify, recruit, and train actors who can work the encounter in ways that maintain tension but offer alternatives for thought and action to teacher candidates. We pay particular attention to finding ways to work with and learn from actors that attend to their psychological and mental well-being as they are, in a way, being learned on by novice teachers.

The point of the final chapter, "Learning to Facilitate," is simple: once you have designed the simulation cycle materials, your work is not done. It is just as important to design the work of facilitation, especially of the group debrief. We discuss in detail a set of approaches to debriefing that are not exhaustive but do present a clear case that different simulations may call for different approaches to the group debrief. We articulate one simple principle available in all efforts to debrief: make use of the candidates' own words and actions to ground and guide any shared sense-making efforts.

The appendix provides materials for four of the simulated encounters referenced in this text. We do not provide complete materials for the twenty or so simulations we have created or even all of those referenced in this text. Instead, we include a sampling of scenarios that have been used the most in our program, and thus we know the most about in terms of how they work, and that represent the breadth of identities, scenarios, and interactions that are part of the SHIFT Project. We do this not just for length but also because we do not encourage teacher educators to simply lift the scenarios we have used and set them down in their own programs but, rather, to derive from the guiding principles and models provided the resources needed to craft in response to their own teacher candidates, their own contexts, and their own needs.

We are delighted to share this work with you and invite you to think with us about it, becoming part of the effort toward an anti-oppressive pedagogy that SHIFT simulations represent.