This is the authors accepted manuscript (AAM) of:

Allen, A., Engelhardt, M., & Stewart, C. (2023). Pre-service teachers' understanding of sacrificial listening as a pedagogical framework. *Journal of Curriculum Studies.*

Pre-service Teachers' Understanding of Sacrificial Listening as a Pedagogical Framework

Introduction

Listening is a key skill necessary for students to learn effectively both in and outside of classroom environments (Fogelsong, 2016; Jalongo, 2008). Though researchers posit that listening is both a shared and an individual process (Low & Sonntag, 2013), outside of comprehension tasks, listening has rarely been emphasized in curriculum or schools as a tool to help students develop understanding of content or of others. Teacher listening remains under-researched in education, even though research asserts "listening really matters" (Comber & Hayes, 2023, p. 37), and teachers are seldom given tools which assist in teaching listening skills (Fogelsong, 2016; Jalongo, 2008). Despite this lack of direct teaching about how to listen as well as how to teach listening, research on the topic shows it is an invaluable tool to help students grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

Learning to listen to views different from your own with respect and with interest is an essential part of education to prepare students to live in a democratic society (Meadows, 2013). Theories such as active listening emphasize the necessity of direct instruction on how to listen and provide various strategies for teaching listening skills to students (Canpolat et al., 2015). Listening to, considering, and accepting others' opinions also intersects with concepts of social awareness and relationship skills included in social and emotional learning theory (SEL) (Mella et al., 2021), and theories about intergroup contact show that listening to stories about outgroups impacted students' attitudes (Cameron et al., 2006). Outside the field of education, Vishanoff (2022) theorizes that a specific type of listening, sacrificial listening, helps to bridge cultural,

political, and religious divides by promoting the development of understanding through listening to unfamiliar voices.

This qualitative study uses arts-based research (Sinner et al., 2006) and found poetry (Shashwati et al., 2022) as research methods to investigate preservice teachers (PST) understandings of sacrificial listening as a pedagogical tool. Specifically, following a class session about the origins of sacrificial listening, its key tenets, and its potential as a pedagogical tool, the research team asked PST what they would consider the key components of sacrificial listening and where they felt this theory could be applied to classroom practice. Using their responses to an open-ended survey, the research team created poems that synthesized the group responses. As sacrificial listening has the potential to be translated into classroom practice as a tool to not only teach listening skills to students but also to help students develop social tools necessary to participate in an increasingly diverse society, this study is important because it begins to develop initial links between the idea as it exists in theory and what that theory could look like in classroom practice.

To better understand the importance and relevance of sacrificial listening in today's educational landscape, we first explore existing educational theories (intergroup contact theory, social and emotional learning, and active listening) that have been found to improve relationships across cultures and provide students with opportunities to engage with members of different groups aided by the act of listening. In doing so, we attempt to set the stage for understanding how sacrificial learning is relevant to theory, research, and practice in education before describing sacrificial listening itself in greater detail and sharing pre-service teachers (PST) understandings of it.

Intergroup Contact Theory

Research has shown that positive, direct contact between cultural groups improves cross-cultural understanding and can lead to varying levels of reduced prejudice depending on the context (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2011). Commonly referred to as intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954), these positive effects generally occur in interactions marked by four key factors, including, "equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law or custom" (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66). Research shows this theory has been successful with elementary school students in practice (Torres, 2019). Torres (2019) found, as a result of direct contact with consultants from eleven different countries over the course of one academic year, students gained a more accurate understanding of world cultures and peoples and "began to see these cultures as spaces abundant with diverse cultural assets, and the consultants as valuable keepers of knowledge, competence, and skills" (p 161). They also displayed interest in developing cross-group friendships.

High quality, close cross-group friendships appear to be extremely effective in reducing prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), especially cross-race friendships that begin in childhood (Aboud et al., 2003). Friendships across groups may even benefit members of the ingroup who have not directly engaged with members of the outgroup. However, not all intergroup contact yields positive results. If contact is involuntary, participants feel threatened, participants experience anxiety about the contact, or when there is conflict or competition between the two groups, the chances of a negative interaction are increased (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; 1992). Additionally, depending on the local community or existing connections, it may be difficult to arrange intergroup contact. Because of this, extended contact could serve as a more accessible avenue (with less potential for negative results) to decrease prejudice between groups.

Some research shows reduced bias and decreased negative perceptions may occur as a result of the *secondary transfer effect* (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), *extended contact effect* (Cameron et al., 2006), or *imagined intergroup contact theory* (Crisp & Turner, 2009). Vicarious experiences of friendship or knowledge about existing friendships between members of the ingroup and outgroup fall into these categories. More specifically, imagined intergroup contact theory is defined as "the mental simulation of a social interaction with a member or members of an outgroup category" (Crisp & Turner, 2009, p. 234). In other words, a person may achieve similar positive results to Intergroup Contact Theory simply by visualizing positive interaction with members of an outgroup and thinking about how they might feel and/or act. These benefits include decreased stranger anxiety alongside increased familiarity and empathy (Hoffman, 2000; Keen 2010; Mar & Oatley, 2008), especially in instances where direct intergroup contact is difficult due to the homogeneity of the community (Findora & Hammond, 2021). Imagined contact may also reduce negative stereotyping (Brambilla et al., 2012; Stathi et al., 2012).

Cameron and colleagues (2006) found that, after listening to stories about ingroup members and refugees, elementary students had increased positive attitudes towards refugees (as opposed to students in a control group). Similarly, Findora and Hammond (2021) apply imagined intergroup contact theory to the use of literature and narrative empathy, finding that diversifying English curriculum allows white students to wrestle with ethnocultural empathy and prejudice and make connections with non-white characters. They suggest "if reading creates imagined intergroup contact that decreases prejudice towards one individual, it may in turn decrease the prejudice towards the individual's outgroup, as well as outgroups to which the individual does not belong" (Findora & Hammond, 2021, p. 4). Other research in the field of children's literature, though not directly naming indirect forms of intergroup contact theory, shows similar

gains. For example, while using children's picture books to explore personal and global cultures with first grade students, Jewett (2011) found students willing and able to connect their own personal cultural models to the cultural models of others, saying things like other ways of living were "different but okay" (p. 23).

Regardless of whether intergroup contact is real or imagined, research shows four interrelated processes lead toward attitude change, including learning about outgroups, changed behaviors, affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal (Pettigrew, 1998). If new learning amends negative perceptions of the outgroup, contact could reduce prejudice. Similarly, repeated exposure to outgroups creates an adaptation in behavior as increased comfortability enhances the positive effects of contact. Continued contact also reduces anxiety, creating positive emotions which lead to the establishment of affective ties. Finally, intergroup contact can lead to the adaptation of new perspectives within your ingroup, realizing that ingroup norms and customs are a single way of viewing the world (rather than the only way). To assist in the process of conducting conversations between different group members situated across diverse cultures, individuals must be given ample social learning opportunities that develop interpersonal skills needed for success inside and outside of school.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Starting at an early age, children need to engage in various social experiences so they can learn, accomplish, and interact successfully with others (Elias & Weissberg, 2003). Vygotsky (1978) conceived learning as a naturally social activity. He suggests, "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with peers" (p. 90). Communication, then, plays a significant role in the social learning process by promoting engagement through shared

diverse experiences, which can often lead to the construction of new knowledge and development of mutual understanding (Rasmussen, 2001; Schusler et al., 2003; Wells, 1999). Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a process in which individuals develop the necessary values, skills, and attitudes to gain social and emotional capability (Elias et al., 2014). SEL incorporates the essential skills of thinking, behavior, and self-control to accomplish social tasks (Ibarra, 2022), which serve as a foundation for five SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills (CASEL, 2005). These social and emotional competencies are important factors in the success of students, teachers, and schools, which means SEL has an essential role in the education system (Jones et al., 2013). Addressing these competencies with students will promote social adjustment, lower behavior problems, and lessen emotional stress (Greenberg et al., 2003).

During the process of actively engaging with others in social interactions, individuals in the classroom take on the responsibility of becoming speakers, listeners, and thinkers (Vacca et al., 2011). Developing a classroom community requires teachers to allow students to have opportunities to know their peers (Elias et al., 2014). Teachers can promote SEL in the classroom by incorporating activities that allow students to express their opinions and provide opportunities for student interaction (Ferreira et al., 2020). For instance, including debates, role play, and structured dialogues in the classroom can assist students in voicing their outlook on topics, allow them to listen to different points of view from peers, and develop a well-rounded understanding of issues which results in an increased engagement (Ferreira et al., 2020; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Research has shown that when students are taught and exposed to SEL experiences, positive school outcomes can occur from students increasing their ability to consolidate their emotions, thinking, and behavior (Jones & Doolittle, 2017).

Given this, alongside the pedagogical necessity of creating a classroom environment that supports learners' involvement with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002), in-school SEL programs have been successful because they teach students to value differences and demonstrate sensitivity towards others while listening to them share their feelings (Pasi, 2001). In a meta-analysis evaluating SEL programs in schools, Durlak et al. (2011) found evidence that programs that target the five SEL competencies have a positive effect on students' social and emotional skills, behavior, and attitude towards themselves, others, and school. In addition, the study found these programs enhanced relationships and decreased anxiety.

Listening and accepting others' opinions intersects with the SEL concepts of social awareness and relationship skills (Mella et al., 2021), and these concepts help students prevent future social conflicts. Individuals who exhibit listening skills tend to be more successful in understanding, communicating, and solving problems with others (Abali & Yazici, 2020). Active and empathic listening is critical to truly understanding the speaker's intent and beliefs, and this type of listening sends out a message of care toward the speaker. Activities designed to improve SEL skills can be successfully paired with listening activities. For example, students can foster deeper connections with peers by listening during formal interactive discussions centered around topics such as cultural background, traditions, family, or opinions on events that will expand their perspective as they consider others' experiences are often not the same as their own (Mulvahill, 2022).

Ultimately, SEL has the potential to enable students to be more responsible, empathic, and productive (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Due to pressure for educators to focus more on academics, a lack of resources, and a limited amount of time, classrooms are often limited in

how they promote SEL (Durlak et al., 2011); however, the effect SEL has on students' ability to empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and the inclusion of social interactions should make it a priority in today's classroom (Ferreira et al., 2020). For SEL to be successful, individuals need to actively listen to others and demonstrate listening skills that improve communication and collaboration between unfamiliar voices.

Active Listening

Active listening is a special way to listen that impacts the listener's attitude toward themselves and others, has the potential to change fundamental values and personal philosophy, and can cause individuals to become less defensive and more open to experiences. It involves paying attention not only to the words spoken but also to the nonverbal cues, such as body language and tone of voice (Park & Park, 2018). In 1957, Rogers and Farson (2015) developed the idea of active listening as a method to understand what a speaker is saying from their point of view and convey that understanding to the speaker. Initially, it emerged as one component of a person-centered approach to therapy for clinical psychologists; counselors used this method when listening to clients, attempting to grasp the facts and feelings being expressed in order to address their problems (Rogers & Farson, 2015).

In the elementary classroom, active listening benefits both teachers and students (Rost & Wilson, 2017) because it has the potential to build deep positive relationships that alter the listeners' attitudes, causing growth and change (Rogers & Farson, 2015). Through active listening, teachers can better understand their students' needs and concerns, which can help them create a supportive and inclusive learning environment. However, though teachers stress the importance of listening to their students, many would still benefit from formal training on how to teach listening to their students (McNaughton et al., 2008). Hennings (1992) suggests "listening

involves the reception and processing of incoming data. To listen is not just to hear; it is the active construction of meaning" (p. 3). With this in mind, teachers can begin to engage students in active listening by demonstrating active listening habits in the classroom while paying attention to internal and external factors that may affect the listening process (Caspersz & Stasinska, 2015). Teachers can also encourage active listening by providing opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Similar to studies referenced in regard to intergroup contact theory, research shows that engaging in read-alouds with children's literature is tied to the development of children's listening strategies, including development of critical thinking and oral communication skills (Draper, 1993). Educators may also choose to use listening stations and/or authentic listening activities with the whole class or in small groups to build meaningful knowledge, improve critical listening skills, enhance collaboration, and promote cognitive growth (Fisher & Frey, 2019). For example, authentic listening activities may include a teacher choosing to play a radio broadcast to link classroom learning to current events (Fisher & Frey, 2019), or students may be asked to listen to examples of different greetings, providing students with the opportunity to interact with members of different cultures and respond with kindness (Porter & Roberts, 1981).

Ultimately, the goal of active listening is to bring about change (Rogers & Farson, 2015). Elementary teachers can model, practice, and teach while weaving active listening strategies throughout daily instructional activities. This practice allows students to observe and experience how to be active listeners, attempting to create understanding from the content, feelings, attitudes, and perspectives of the speaker (Rogers & Farson, 2015). By using active listening in the classroom, teachers can build stronger relationships with their students and create a more positive and effective learning environment, reducing the barriers to mutual interpersonal

communication (Rogers, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Since learning to respectfully listen to the views of others is essential in a democratic society (Meadows, 2013), frameworks that provide guidance for how to do that can be helpful pedagogical tools for teachers. Building on the theories mentioned in the literature review, sacrificial listening can be seen as a way to build understanding between members across different groups through the act of listening actively. Formally conceptualized by Vishanoff (2022) to bridge cultural, political, and religious divides between individuals, sacrificial listening is the mental and intellectual practice of listening to unfamiliar voices that can result in an individual revising their understanding to accommodate what others are saying. The process of sacrificial listening, according to Vishanoff (2022), is "the practice of listening attentively to unfamiliar voices, constructing interpretive models that relate what one has heard to familiar categories, and then deconstructing those models and categories through further acts of listening" (p. 1). When adjusting interpretations through this act, an individual must assume that what others are saying makes sense, even when it contradicts their known evidence. Intellectual humility, a mindset that guides one's intellectual conduct, is advanced through sacrificial listening. To help sustain sacrificial listening, the virtues of open-mindedness, self-awareness, respect for others, charity, integrity, perseverance, and hope are required. Sacrificial listening advocates the process of "coming together" and advancing human communication through the role and practice of listening. In this act, "listening knowledge" is stressed over "talking knowledge" to help ensure the individual truly hears what others are saying.

The undervalued and sometimes painful experience of misunderstanding is highlighted in the act of sacrificial listening. When misunderstanding occurs, individuals need to reexamine the

categories they have labeled the other person in, then attempt to understand others for who they are, not for whom we want them to be to fit into our own agenda. To Vishanoff (2019), a misunderstanding signals listening. He posits, "It may not lead us directly to better understanding, but it does show that we are listening well enough to recognize our *mis*understanding" (p. 17). During the period of misunderstanding, the interaction that accompanies verbal communication is a crucial moment in coming to understanding through sacrificial listening. Ultimately, in sacrificial listening, individuals should learn to listen well enough to continue realizing their misunderstandings and go through the process of revising their own understanding. Listening deeply to others should not only advance our own understanding of them but also advance the understanding of ourselves.

A perfect state of understanding is not expected in any relationship (Vishanoff, 2022). In sacrificial listening, it is essential for relationships to be "two-way" streets, with individuals not acquiring knowledge of the other while disassembling their own identity or concealing true feelings. A "good relationship" should include attempting to understand the other person while interacting. Through teaching, sacrificial listening can be used to build new relationships in the classroom. From this knowledge and description of sacrificial listening as a theoretical framework, teachers of varying backgrounds and experiences (including PST) can use sacrificial listening as a pedagogical tool in the classroom to incorporate listening knowledge, build relationships, develop understanding, and advance human communication.

Methodology

This qualitative study examines preservice teachers (PST) understanding of the theory of sacrificial listening within the context of their future classrooms. Using their words, we consider the potential of sacrificial listening in the classroom through the investigation of three research

questions:

(1) How do preservice teachers generally understand sacrificial listening?

(2) What do preservice teachers see as the key components of sacrificial listening?

(3) How do preservice teachers feel the theory of sacrificial listening applies to classroom practice?

The research team consisted of three people: one elementary education faculty member with expertise in social studies and two doctoral students who also serve as field supervisors at the university. All three members of the research team conducted data analysis using an arts-based research (ABR) approach (Sinner et al., 2006), namely, the systematic creation of found poetry (Shashwati et al., 2022).

Arts-Based Research and Found Poetry

As a qualitative research method, arts-based research (Sinner et al., 2006) attempts to break the artificial barrier between art and science (Butler-Kisber, 2002). It is often used to create intimacy in order to increase understanding (Amos, 2019), disrupt dominant ways of thinking and knowing often present in research (Butler-Kisber, 2002), or to evoke emotional responses (Butler-Kisber, 2002). While ABR can take many forms, this paper explores the use of poetic inquiry and, more specifically, found poetry, using participant responses to an open-ended survey about sacrificial listening to create poems that answer the research questions (Shashwati et al., 2022). Found poetry is used for data analysis and to collectively represent participant responses (Furman et al., 2007). Used in this way, the resulting poem becomes an imaginative reconstruction of participant responses (Butler-Kisber, 2010) without the use of any additional words or phrases except where noted.

Participants

Twenty-five PST enrolled in a university-based educator preparation program at a large research university in the rural southeast participated in this study. All were graduate students in their final semester, seeking initial licensure, and student teaching full-time in grades K-6 during the semester the study took place.

Instruments

Miles et al. (2014) suggest that researchers should decide what information will be collected, then plan how to collect that information in advance. As a result, to conduct the study, the research team created two different instruments, including instructional materials for the class session immediately preceding the administration of the survey and a survey protocol.

Instructional Materials

During the class session immediately preceding administration of the survey, students engaged in about thirty minutes of instruction on the topic of sacrificial listening. At the beginning of the presentation, PST were provided with an opportunity to reflect on a prior experience when they verbally interacted with someone whose beliefs did not align with their personal beliefs, feelings, identity, or previous experiences and how this interaction made them feel, including whether it impacted their relationship. Following this activity, the key tenets of sacrificial listening and connections between sacrificial listening and active listening were presented through a slideshow. During this presentation, the research team also shared information about the undervalued experience of misunderstanding and how sacrificial listening can be used as a tool to build relationships with others both in and out of the classroom. Finally, PST listened to practical suggestions for implementing sacrificial listening in their current field experiences and future classrooms.

Survey Protocol

To answer the research questions, the research team designed a brief survey instrument that used a mixture of open and closed questions, presented one at a time using simple and familiar terms. Appropriate answer spaces for the measurement intent were provided (Dillman et al., 2014). In total, the survey consisted of eight questions. Three of these were short answer or multiple choice, designed to provide context for participant answers. Five were open-ended, designed to elicit participants' thoughts on the topic. (The full list of questions is provided in Appendix A). The survey instrument was administered in person after the workshop on sacrificial listening; every member of the population surveyed had a known, nonzero probability of being sampled and were accurately represented on the list from which the sample was drawn (Dillman et al., 2014). As outlined above, the researchers deliberately planned the workshop on sacrificial listening at the beginning of the class session. Following the workshop, participants were given twenty minutes of class time to complete the survey to minimize nonresponse error and to minimize participants' reluctance to respond. In all, 30 participants participated in the workshop on sacrificial listening, and 25 completed the survey.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study occurred during one regular class session of an elementary school curriculum class. This class session included a total of 30 students from two course sections that met together on a regular basis. The data collection team included all members of the research team. The two doctoral students, who were not instructors for this course, were responsible for presenting details about the study and providing consent documents to the PST. Following a presentation about sacrificial listening (as detailed above), PST were asked to complete a brief survey online.

Prior to taking the survey, PST were given the opportunity to discuss the presentation

with each other and completed a gallery walk (Ridwan, 2019) where they were asked to think about the idea of sacrificial listening in relation to their future practice. This technique was explicitly used to allow PST space to process new information, and because, similar to the use of focus groups, access to others' ideas have the potential to increase student understanding and may prompt PST to share information that they may not have considered sharing otherwise (Krueger & Casey, 2014). To increase the relevance of the discussion during this pre-interview activity, students were grouped together in grade-level groups based on their current field placements.

The primary investigator left the room, and the other two research team members provided PST with a consent form about the sacrificial listening study and explained how the data collected from the survey may be used for future publications and presentations. PST were then given twenty minutes to complete the survey; all PST finished before the time expired.

Data Analysis

Following initial data collection, the research team adopted the BEST-M approach of data analysis (Shashwati et al., 2022), utilizing found poetry as a way to represent participant responses. As part of the BEST-M approach, the letter B stands for "Beginning Data Analysis." During this phase, the research team looked at survey responses and, individually, coded responses to the first four open-ended survey questions. These questions asked PST to consider sacrificial listening, its key concepts, and its connection to the classroom and classroom practice. Research team members then met to compare individual codes and combine recurring codes into larger themes.

In Step 2, the letter E stands for "Excavating Evocative Data Nuggets." During this stage, each of the three researchers tackled one of the research questions, which were (1) How do

preservice teachers generally understand sacrificial listening?, (2) What do preservice teachers see as the key components of sacrificial listening?, and (3) How do preservice teachers feel the theory of sacrificial listening applies to classroom practice? Using themes created in Step 1 and paying particular attention to similar phrases or ideas that multiple participants repeated, researchers identified potential "data nuggets" that could be used later in the process. Moving on to Step 3, S, "Scooping out the Data," researchers then extracted this data, removing words that were superfluous and creating a list of phrases containing relevant excerpts that aligned with both the themes created in Step 1 and the research question each researcher was attempting to address.

During Step 4, in which the letter T stands for "Tying the Thread," poems created from participant responses were finally "found." Using the words scooped out in the previous step, individually, each researcher created poems using verbatim participant responses to encapsulate broad ideas related to the research questions. These responses were tied together in a format that made sense while remaining faithful to the meaning ascribed by the participants. In the findings section, these poems are used to answer each of the three research questions. Each poem is followed by some notable student responses identified during Step 1 (the beginning analysis process), information about repeated phrases versus outliers, and, in some cases, clarifying contextual information about the participants.

As a final optional step, Step 5, letter M, asks researchers to return to members to perform a "Member Check." As these surveys were completed anonymously and because the poems consisted of phrases from as many as 25 individual participants' responses, member checking was not a viable option. However, the phrases used to complete the poem primarily consist of exact or similar phrases included in multiple surveys. Additionally, because all three

researchers both coded the data and created their poem individually, the other members of the research team triangulated data and provided interrater reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations

This study has multiple limitations. First, our sample size is small, including PST from only two sections of the same course. Many of these students had the same experiences throughout their teacher preparation program, and generally, cannot be considered representative of preservice teachers collectively, in other programs throughout the United States or globally. A small and experimentally limited sample size raises questions of generalizability and/or transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). However, the goal here is not to generalize the findings and apply them to other groups, but to make the findings clear and evident, allowing those who read the study to determine the applicability of the understandings developed throughout to their own work. Second, because PST engaged in an instructional session immediately prior to completing the survey, including group work, it is possible their answers were impacted by groupthink (Janis, 1982; Rose, 2011). In general, because this topic was new to PST, once an idea was raised, there was little to no objection to its suggested application. More research should be conducted on how other groups interpret and apply ideas of sacrificial listening in the classroom, including other PST and in-service teachers. Research should also be conducted in the classroom to evaluate how elementary and secondary students respond to pedagogical practices rooted in sacrificial listening practices.

Findings

Prior to this class session, none of the PST had heard of sacrificial listening. Following instruction about the origins of sacrificial listening, its key tenets, and its potential as a pedagogical tool as outlined above, PST completed the survey included in Appendix A, and their

answers were used to develop poems in response to the three research questions.

Poem 1: How do preservice teachers generally understand sacrificial listening?

Sacrificial listening is the willingness to put your beliefs and opinions aside
and fully digest what the other individual is telling you.
Listening to others despite differences.
Listening to listen and gain understanding,
not just listening to respond.

Sacrificial listening involves being open-minded,
self-aware, and understanding of other people's opinions.
Putting aside your own thoughts
to try to understand someone else's point of view.
Taking the time to listen to others,
while having an open mind,
that allows for the incorporation of new ideas.

It is putting aside personal ideals and biases,
in order to understand the speaker's perspective.
Actively listening to something or someone that has another point of view from you,
and respecting and attempting to understand where they are coming from.

This poem utilized the exact words and phrases from the data provided by the PST to develop the poem describing their general understanding of sacrificial listening. Overall, there

were five categories, or themes, with a large number of responses in response to this general understanding. The most significant theme was putting aside personal ideals, biases, and your own thoughts. This theme was repeated throughout survey answers describing general understanding of sacrificial listening and, as a result, the phrase "putting aside" or "put aside" was repeated intentionally three times throughout the poem. Additional commonly used phrases from PST to describe their understanding of sacrificial listening included being "open-minded," "others' perspectives," and "life experiences." PST also noted "a gain in understanding" when describing sacrificial listening. The words active, differences, others, respect, empathy, self-aware, and fully were frequently present in PST responses.

One response, the word "fully," was noted by several PST in describing their understanding of sacrificial listening and can be used to establish the importance of how individuals should be listening when sacrificial listening occurs. "Fully listening" is a process associated with active listening that is needed for individuals to process information effectively from others (Wolvin & Coakley, 1988). In general, to be "fully" engaged in the listening process and for active listening to take place, an individual needs to give complete attention to the speaker, show interest in what the person is saying, and not interrupt the speaker (Weger et al., 2010). Individuals need to listen for the content, intent, and feeling of the speaker. Being "fully" present and actively listening to the speaker directly relates to the ideals present in sacrificial listening due to its involvement of listening to unfamiliar voices and the revising of understanding to accommodate what others are saying (Vishanoff, 2022). For sacrificial listening to occur, the listener must better understand and digest what the other individual is communicating. This can be accomplished by "fully" or actively listening.

Poem 2: What do preservice teachers see as the key components of sacrificial listening?

It's key to…

Put aside your own bias.

It's key to…

Be open-minded & adapt to others opinions

It's key to…

Show empathy while listening to others actively

It's key to…

Use a growth mindset

It's key to…

Have patience

It's key to…

Provide strong facial cues you are listening

It's key to…

Mutually respect individuals - teachers, students, and parents

It's key to…

Take time to reflect & process to build relationships and a better understanding

In an attempt to accurately represent the responses from the research question, this poem keeps phrases and meaning intact; however, the phrase "It's key to" was included in each new line in the poem as a break to separate meanings and phrases that were repeated by multiple PST. This research question was somewhat difficult to translate due to the length of responses. Several words or short phrases that were observed to be repeated the most frequently included: active listening, open-mindedness, empathy, understanding, putting aside bias, patience, and mutual respect between individuals (students, teachers, and parents).

Two outliers (words and phrases mentioned by only one student) were identified and included in the poem due to their importance to the learning experiences of this specific university-based educator preparation program. For example, the phrase "facial cues" was an outlier but an important phrase to include for this poem's research question due to how good and active listening involves being "fully present" (Khanna, 2020). Providing cues, including visual cues, signifies that the other person has something important to say and is a trait of active listening (Bauer et al., 2009). PST in this program have had extensive knowledge presented to them on the identified traits of an active listener. Another outlier mentioned, "growth mindset," has strong connection to the essence of what sacrificial listening encapsulates. It is also a phrase used extensively throughout the educator preparation program. Individuals who occupy a growth mindset usually are more likely to take on challenges, try new strategies, and develop new ways of thinking (Dweck, 1999). Individuals exhibiting growth and adjusting their interpretations is vital for the success of sacrificial listening.

Poem 3: How do preservice teachers feel the theory of sacrificial listening applies to classroom practice?

Everyone has different opinions and different backgrounds;

allow children to learn that their background differs from that of their peers.

Build classroom community;

everyone feels safe and included,

mutual respect is a social skill they will keep.

Meaningful connections with content and people;

the development of empathy,

welcome and understood–inclusivity.

Lifelong learning among students;

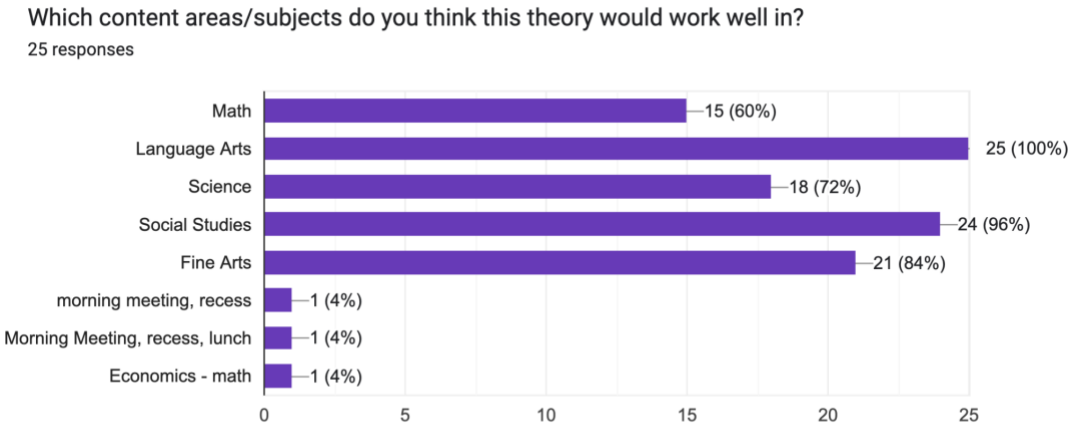
sense of belonging to all.

This found poem was created using direct responses that encapsulated the most common themes across participant surveys. The themes that occurred most commonly included building relationships/classroom community, building (mutual) respect, the idea that sacrificial learning could relate to any content area, a connection to the development of empathy, the promotion of lifelong learning, the inclusion of different perspectives, and the possibility of using this theory as a tool to teach social skills. In addition to the phrases included in the poem, individual PST also mentioned some phrases that were less common. For example, some PST felt that this theory could be used to advocate for new ideas, as a classroom management tool, or to build self-esteem/self-awareness.

In conjunction with this question, we also asked PST to explicitly consider what subjects this theory could apply to as well as concrete ways they might use the ideas associated with sacrificial learning in classroom practice. Figure 1 shows the subject areas where PST felt this theory would be applicable. Unsurprisingly, the areas where most PST felt this concept would be useful included Language Arts and Social Studies. More surprisingly, however, was the fact that 60% of students felt that the key tenets of sacrificial listening had some application to math.

Figure 1.

Subject Areas Where Sacrificial Listening Can Be Applied



Both in their answers to this multiple choice survey question and in their answers to the open-ended questions about implementing sacrificial listening in practice, more than 30% of PST broached the idea of morning meeting. As part of this university-based educator preparation program, PST have had experience designing and implementing morning meeting lessons. Morning meeting is a student-centered, responsive classroom learning approach that allows teachers to implement and demonstrate social and emotional learning skills while providing students opportunities to develop an active role in a democratic classroom community where student voice and participation is valued (Cornett & Quinn, 2021; Tilhou, 2020). Studies have found that a responsive classroom approach can result in students having better pro-social skills promoting the importance of valuing others' feelings and experiences (Rimm-Kaufman & Chiu, 2007). As an engaging way to build a responsive classroom community of respectful learners, morning meeting involves four key components: greeting, sharing, group activity and a morning message (Cornett & Quinn, 2021; Kriete & Davis, 2017; Responsive Classroom, 2016). In each component of morning meeting, learning becomes a social experience that stresses the importance of learning how to listen, research problems, ask questions, and examine other

individuals' perspectives (Gardner, 2012; Kriete & Davis, 2017). Given this exposure to morning meeting as part of their educational experiences, student responses aligning information they heard about sacrificial listening to this teaching strategy is not surprising.

Other strategies PST mentioned using to incorporate the ideas of sacrificial listening in the classroom included read-alouds, peer interviews, having students work together to complete a building challenge in a set amount of time, class discussions or debates, playing the telephone game to learn to listen and hear one at a time, asking students to respond for their partner (listen to your partner and tell the class what they said to a question), or during the discussion of topics in which society has changed over time (slavery, Civil Rights Movement, etc.). One PST also mentioned that they might use this strategy as a tool to interact with colleagues. While a few students included specific lesson topics or very explicit activities, a majority of these responses were vague and did not explicitly demonstrate how they might incorporate sacrificial listening. This may have been due to unclear wording in the question, or it may signal a lack of PST self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Odebiyi, 2023). PST who have a strong self-efficacy are more likely to be able to implement new or innovative teaching methods (Hawkman et al., 2019).

Two outlying responses about teaching strategies included to "embark wisdom" or as a classroom management tool. These two responses were not only less common, but the researchers also felt that they did not align with the ideas presented in the class session and may signal a misunderstanding between the presenters and the participants. However, these responses were presented in only 8% of the survey responses.

Discussion

Listening in the classroom must transcend typical expectations that the student listens quietly while the teacher transmits knowledge (Low & Sonntag, 2013), and findings from this

study demonstrate how sacrificial listening has the potential the move beyond this norm. Sacrificial listening both aligns and builds on existing educational theories today's educational landscape that address cross cultural relationships and highlight the necessity of students listening to more than just the teacher - they must also listen to each other and to members of different cultural groups. In this section, our findings will be related back to these theories, and we will discuss connections to sacrificial listening.

Bridging Gaps and Building Relationships

Sacrificial listening has the power to bridge cultural, political, and religious divides among individuals by listening to unfamiliar voices, revising personal understandings, and using these actions to build new relationships (Vishanoff, 2022). These key tenets of the theory outlined by Vishanoff were clearly understood by PST in this study. At large, PST felt that sacrificial listening included a "willingness to put your beliefs and opinions aside," regardless of personal differences, and an attempt "to understand where [another person is] coming from." This level of understanding is the first step in building relationships that transcend cultural, political, and religious divides. Further, PST noted that "Tak[ing]time to reflect & process to build relationships" was a key tenet of the theory. In application to classroom practice, PST found that sacrificial listening, as a tool, has the potential to help build "meaningful connections with content and people," lead to "the development of empathy," and that a classroom based on the principles of sacrificial listening would include "inclusivity" as a place where students are "welcome and understood."

Intergroup contact theory suggests that direct contact between cultural groups, in some contexts, can lead to an improved cross-cultural understanding and reduced prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2011; Torres, 2019), even when this contact is only imagined (Cameron et al.,

2006; Crisp & Turner, 2009). However, this contact does not always have a positive result (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; 1992). In thinking about implementing sacrificial listening in practice, PST suggested instructional activities that included both direct contact with others (peer interviews, class discussions, asking students to respond for their partner) as well as imagined contact (through read-alouds or discussion of topics in which society has changed over time). Building on the idea of intergroup contact theory, it seems possible that students who have experienced instruction based on the theory of sacrificial listening, whether applied to direct or imagined contact, have an increased potential of experiencing positive outcomes due to this contact since, as PST noted, sacrificial listening includes listening to others to gain understanding despite differences, being open-minded, and putting aside bias. This finding should be investigated futher.

In addition to thinking of sacrificial listening as a pedagogical tool, PST also considered how sacrificial listening could be used to build relationships outside of the classroom. One PST response specifically called out "teachers, students, and parents" while another referenced that this idea could be used to build relationships with colleagues. These observations suggest that, if PST are able to translate what they have learned about the theory into concrete ideas that can be implemented, sacrificial listening has the potential to act as a powerful tool for teaching and learning in and out of the classroom.

Highlighting Intellectual Humility and Virtues

A mindset that guides an individual's intellectual conduct, intellectual humility, is demonstrated in sacrificial listening through the interpretation of what other people are saying. Opportunities for students to experience social and emotional learning (SEL) often help individuals learn to accept others' differences and understand that their current views might be

incorrect (Pasi, 2001). In conjunction with sacrificial listening, SEL can be used to advance intellectual humility by enabling students to debate their sides of conflicts from different perspectives, listen empathically, and build relationships with others from different backgrounds (Durlak et al. 2011; Ferreira et al., 2020; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Several virtues tied to the success of sacrificial listening can also be promoted in social and emotional learning (SEL) experiences, including open mindedness, self-awareness, respect for others, and integrity.

In this study, PST demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of intellectual humility and the required virtues. When describing their understanding of sacrificial listening, PST frequently mentioned the importance of "putting aside bias," which can be summarized by the virtue of open-mindedness. When describing the key components of sacrificial listening, PST identified the virtue of respect, which was outlined by Vishanoff (2022) as a requirement for sustained sacrificial listening. Another key component identified, "willing to grow" ties to one of the 5 SEL competencies, self-awareness. When asked how the theory of sacrificial listening applies to future classroom teaching, PST explicitly mentioned the importance of SEL experiences in the classroom enabled by "student led discussions" that might be conducted through turn and talk, peer interviews, and debates. Specifically, PST mentioned Morning Meetings which actively promote opportunities for SEL and inherently feature the virtues needed for sacrificial listening to be successful. Through observations and data from the research questions from this study, it was evident that PST were able to connect the importance of intellectual humility and the required virtues found in sacrificial listening to the practice and theory of SEL.

Revising Misunderstandings

By adjusting existing views and revising understandings to accommodate what others are saying, sacrificial listening has the ability to decrease misunderstandings between individuals (Vishanoff, 2022). Most misunderstandings are formed as a result of poor listening (Iwankovitsch, 2001), and PST articulated responses that align sacrificial listening with a reduction in misunderstandings between individuals. In relation to this idea, almost half of the respondents mentioned putting aside personal ideals and biases, and many PST noted the importance of being open-minded about others' perspectives and life experiences. In addition to explicit connections between SEL and sacrificial listening, based on PST responses, they may have seen Morning Meeting as a space to not only value others ideals but also to be a place to be openminded and work through misunderstandings.

PST also seemed to understand that sacrificial listening in classroom practice might include strategies that teach or highlight active listening skills. In responses to multiple survey questions, PST made comments suggesting a key component of sacrificial listening is to "show empathy while listening to others actively" and generally understood the concept would include "actively listening to something or someone that has another point of view from you." As mentioned previously, in active listening, a person attempts to understand what the speaker is saying and feeling from the speaker's perspective, which can build positive relationships and alter the listener's attitude (Rogers & Farson, 2015). Because active listening demonstrates this consideration and respect for others' ideas and perspectives, this strategy may prevent misunderstandings because it reduces ineffective listening and communication breakdown (Rogers, 2017). In this way, we see PST make connections between ideas associated with active listening and a key tenet of sacrificial listening, one that asks individuals to adjust their current interpretations to accommodate what others are saying (Vishanoff, 2022). Ultimately, PST do

appear to understand that sacrificial listening can be used as a pedagogical tool to reduce misunderstandings between unfamiliar voices.

Conclusion

Findings from this study confirm what is already known about teacher education: there is an explicit need for teacher educators to intentionally work with PST on how to take an abstract theory and apply it to practice in concrete ways (Brugar et al., in press; Liston et al., 2006). In this study, we see PST who understand an idea in theory, but struggle with thinking of ways the theory can be applied to specific activities and content areas within the classroom. When asked for explicit examples of instructional strategies that could be used with this theory, their answers were generally vague. Although it sounds good in theory, they had trouble articulating what it might look like in practice.

Despite the inability of PST to move from theory to practice, our findings suggest the development of pedagogical methods for sacrificial listening has potential value to more consistently yield positive results from intergroup contact and to assist students in expanding their social and emotional skills. Moving forward, the research team plans to create and provide tools and workshops to equip both veteran and beginning teachers with ways to implement this theory in practice, in turn creating spaces for future research on this theory.

Opportunities to observe the act of sacrificial listening in practice are needed so the value of this theory as a pedagogical tool that yields results as outlined above can be more accurately determined. Specifically, more research should be conducted on how preservice and in-service teachers interpret and apply ideas of sacrificial listening to their pedagogical practice. In schools, research should also be conducted to consider how students respond to sacrificial listening practices across content areas.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix A: Survey Protocol

1. What grade level are you currently working with? (short answer)
2. Prior to this class session, have you ever heard of sacrificial listening? (Yes/No)
3. Describe your understanding of sacrificial listening. (long answer)
4. What do you see as the key components of sacrificial listening? (long answer)
5. Why might sacrificial listening be important in a classroom environment? (long answer)
6. How could you use the theory of sacrificial listening in your future practice? (long answer)
7. Which content areas/subjects do you think this theory would work well in? (choose all that apply)
    - Math
    - Language Arts
    - Science
    - Social Studies
    - Fine Arts
    - Other (provide an answer)
8. Provide an example of a classroom activity you would use or have used that incorporates aspects of sacrificial listening. (long answer)