Listening in Teacher Education: A Constructivist Grounded Theory

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research is to examine listening since it essential for effective communication yet is not well understood (Murphy, 2019; Worthington & Fitch-Hauser, 2018). The aim is to address the listening gap in the field of teacher education (Haroutunian-Gordan & Waks, 2010; Kourmousi et al., 2018; Schultz et al., 2008) by interviewing two elementary teacher candidates about listening. The emerging constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) results in an analogy of listening based on a communication atom with listening represented as protons and neutrons located in the nucleus of the atom and electrons representing speaking found in levels surrounding the nucleus. Listening is further explained through the interaction of: a) senses – auditory and visual, b) dispositions – critical, inquisitive, and introspective, and c) self-understanding – beliefs and values. Speakers assert a message through vocalization and gesticulation based on their self-knowledge. The mutual attraction of listening protons and speaking electrons binds the communication atom into a coherent whole. Neutrons in the nucleus represent self-talk. A fundamental outcome of this research is that listening generates voice. Implications are based on listening that facilitates the development of: voice and identity, safety in the classroom, dispositions including curiosity and patience, and self-talk. Listening is essential for fostering rich academic conversations and productive discussions among teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and K-12 students.

One recent morning while seated behind a bakery store window I saw an elderly woman alone and crouched on the curb of a city street. The woman spoke rapidly with animated facial expressions as her arms and hands waived wildly in the air. She seemed to be talking to herself since no one was near, and she wasn't wearing headphones or earbuds. Seeing her caused me to wonder about the importance of listening in communication. With this in mind, the purpose of this qualitative inquiry is to examine listening in the context of my work with teacher candidates.

Research Problem

There is a need to examine listening in teacher education in light of its central role in communication and learning. While suggesting that listening is a critical life competency, Worthington and Fitch-Hauser (2018) write that listening "is fundamental to all other communication competencies – speaking, writing, and reading. It is the first competency used in life and the one used most often even when the other competencies are acquired" (p. 4). Kate Murphy, author of *You're Not Listening* (2019), maintains that "listening is often regarded as talking's meek counterpart but is actually the more powerful position in communication" (p. 224). The *Common Core State Standards Initiative* (National Governors Association Center & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2020) marginalizes listening in the ELA Literacy -- Speaking and Listening Standard with more focus on speaking than listening. Although listening is acknowledged as a literacy component in education, it is understudied in teacher education. This research article addresses this gap in the teacher education literature.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to create a grounded theory of listening that describes and explains listening from the perspectives of two elementary teacher candidates enrolled in a teacher education program. The specific research questions are:

1. How can teacher educators integrate listening skills to enhance culturally-relevant classroom practices?

2. In what ways can teacher educators promote listening in light of cultural relational skills that teacher candidates can then transfer to their own field-based contexts?

3. What listening skills do teacher candidates need for effective classroom engagements and subsequent field-based teaching?

Connection with ATE Standards

This examination of listening aligns with the Scholarship Standard as outlined in *The Standards for Teacher Educators* created by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE, 2020). The specific aspect of this standard addresses the pursuit of new knowledge to benefit those involved in teacher education including teacher educators, teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and K-12 students.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism serves as the theoretical framework for this research with the understanding that knowledge is comprised of socially mediated cognition originating from an individual's experience in a social world (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Constructivism is an epistemology that has bifurcated along two main lines of thought including radical constructivism based on a Piagetian view (von Glasersfeld, 1989) and social constructivism based on a Vygotskian perspective (Bozkurt, 2017).

This research acknowledges both the individual and the social in addressing the ontological question. Accordingly, the researcher and the participants do not hold privileged perspectives on what constitutes reality or truth. Rather, they construct meaning from subjective

interpretations of multiple realities interpreted through communication that relies heavily on listening.

Literature Review

Waks (2011) notes that Dewey criticized listening in traditional classroom instruction where it existed as a kind of one-way or straight line form of communication that failed to connect with students' interests as they sat passively either listening or reading silently. Exceptions to this kind of passivity on the part of students occurred when speakers "provided useful guidance about tasks the younger students will themselves soon be expected to perform" and when teachers engaged in storytelling as they "drew upon and transform prior experiences and associations of students in order to fascinate, delight, and move them emotionally" (Waks, 2011, p. 194).

In teacher education, understanding the social, political, and cultural contexts of students' beliefs based on their family and schooling experiences is helpful in connecting with students' interests and means of communicating (Schultz et al., 2008). Boyd et al. (2019) find that fourth and fifth grade students who were English language learners are more likely to develop dispositions for listening when they "relate their personal experiences to the focal text to help understand it" (p. 34). Further, Parker (2010) recommends opening lines of communication among diverse students and incorporating students' beliefs and values that invites them to listen to one another for establishing equity and trust in the classroom.

Teachers expect students to listen during instruction (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997). For example, teachers might ask students to listen when providing instructions for an assignment, while reading a story aloud in class, or when working in small groups. Although there have been many changes in teaching since Dewey's day, much time in school remains devoted to asking

students to listening to teachers (Imhof, 2008). Additionally, listening transcends the classroom to include other school settings like hallways, cafeterias, and playgrounds where students gather.

Methods

This paper is part of a larger study on listening. An exploratory conference session titled: "Enhancing Teacher Candidates' Listening Skills" was offered at the ATE 2018 Summer Conference with colleague Paulo Tan where we discussed broad themes and questions focused on listening in teacher education cohorts including those involved in face-to-face and online hybrid delivery formats. Discussion generated during that session helped us refine our methods and methodology on this topic. Following the conference, we obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Hawaii System Human Studies Program to conduct research on listening. My focus has been with the face-to-face teacher education cohort that is reported here.

Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative research approach of this study is constructivist grounded theory (Creswell & Poth, 2014). Charmaz (2014) notes that grounded theory "serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them" (p. 17). The theory emerging from this research is generated from a reflexive process that is subjective, analytical, and abstract based on the researcher's "past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17).

Data Sources

The inductive data emerged from interviews with two research participants enrolled in a face-to-face teacher education cohort. Interviews consisted of what Charmaz (2014) calls "intensive interviewing" employing extended wait times and a "gently-guided, one-sided

conversation that explores research participants' perspective on their personal experience with the research topic" (p. 56). Interviewing in constructivist grounded theory is not so much focused on getting the research participants stories right in relation to predetermined questions. "Instead, it is the site of exploration, emergent understandings, legitimation of identity, and validation of experience" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 91).

Three audio recorded interviews were conducted with each participant during the summer between the first and second year of the two-year teacher preparation program. After each interview, audio recordings were transcribed. The second and third interviews were designed to clarify and elaborate what was said during earlier interviews. For example, during the first interview while responding to the third research question, a participant remarked: "I guess the willingness to be open to other perspectives is really important." During the second interview when returning to this question and topic, the participant mentioned that it is "so easy to get caught up in what we are thinking and hard to get out of our own head and listen to the perspective of other people." By the third interview, the participant said that "allowing others to speak their truth gives them more confidence to do so ..." After the third interviews, I felt that meanings emerging from the interviews were saturated and additional interviews would not likely produce novel findings for the study.

Data Analysis

Based on a constant comparative method and line-by-line coding of the interview transcripts, I created initial codes from ideas repeatedly expressed as well as ideas that carried emotionally stimulating content. Initial codes clustered narrative statements with gerunds as a form of action coding (Charmaz, 2014). An example of an initial code from the first and second interview transcripts continuing from the previous example deals with the issue of voice as it

links with a sense of competence and relatedness. Focused codes were created by analyzing initial codes in light of the third interview when participants were asked to elaborate on their own experiences based on the initial codes. Continuing with the example under review, during the third interview, the focused code became: having voice enables better listening.

I also wrote memos in the margins of the transcript texts. Charmaz (2014) recommends that "memo-writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process" (p. 162). For example, after the second interview when reviewing the excerpt: "willingness to be open," I noted that the issue of voice connected the speaker and the listener. This memo reminded me to invite the participant to talk more about voice and connection during the third interview.

Participants

Research participants were women of Japanese-American ethnicity enrolled in a graduate level initial licensure teacher education program. Participants ranged in age from late twenties to early thirties. Each participant was seeking elementary (grades K-6) teacher licensure. Prior to the study, the participants identified their teaching strengths as "relationships" in cultivating a supportive community as determined from a psychological survey from the Battelle for Kids (BFK) Connect Framework (Quinn et al., 2014). The relationships quadrant from the BFK Connect Framework identified belonging as a basic human need as compared to the three other quadrants premised on stable environment, continuous improvement, and high expectations addressing security, growth, and accomplishment.

Role of the Researcher

Along with serving as the researcher for this study, I served as a teacher education cohort coordinator, seminar instructor, and advisor for the research participants. I was vested in the

research as well as my cohort responsibilities to support participants' success in completing the teacher education program.

Researcher Bias

My many roles within the teacher education cohort may have limited participants' ability to speak freely during interviews on matters critical to the study due to the inherent imbalance of power in our respective roles in the teacher preparation program. Additionally, I may not have been completely forthcoming in questioning participants to avoid shaking their confidence and commitment to the teacher education program.

Trustworthiness

Findings may be considered trustworthy since meanings evolving from the interviews were co-created with the participants in a reflexive process where they were asked to reflect on their experiences related to listening in their field placements, seminar classrooms, and life experiences beyond the teacher education program. The intent of the interviews was to learn more about listening from the participants' perspectives and not pass judgement on what they said or did not say. Additionally, participants were invited to analyze and express the meanings of their experiences with the understanding that engaging in the study would not impact their involvement or standing in the teacher education program. Participants conducted member checks of this paper to confirm its accuracy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Under these circumstances, researcher bias did not likely impair the trustworthiness of the paper.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it is just one part of a larger research project on listening involving both quantitative and qualitative mixed methods research. The resulting grounded theory contained in this paper is based on an interpretation of listening from the authentic

perspectives of only two research participants as seen through the researcher's subject lens. The small sample size limits the generalizability of a grounded theory. The theory, however, may offer insights into ways of thinking about listening that others may find useful in their work with teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and K-12 students. Additionally, the paper could serve future grounded theory research in providing a sample for theoretical sampling.

Findings

How can Teacher Educators Integrate Listening Skills to Enhance Culturally-Relevant Classroom Practices?

Candidate A believes that teacher educators ought to provide instruction that students view as personally relevant to their lives. Candidate A notes teachers should base their instruction on students' "interests, backgrounds, and learning needs, or styles [as well as] their culture, neighborhood, and their thought process[es], and if there is a gap [between you and them], you want to bridge that." Likewise, Candidate A comments that she listens attentively to what is of interest when she said: "In seminar classes, what I'm interested in, I listen [to] the most, for example: classroom management." Frequent checks-for-understanding are seen as vital for collecting feedback from students to measure what sense they make of instruction. Discussions involving active student engagements are effective strategies for promoting listening and learning in the elementary classroom. As proposed by candidate A, active engagements whereby students move and speak with one another foster effective instruction.

Candidate A suggests that speaking and listening go hand-in-hand like two parts of a whole. "In field classes," Candidate A reflected, "I listen to my mentor teacher. If it is a lesson I'm not familiar with -- for example: science. I want to catch different steps, or how they [mentor teachers] phrase things or how they are teaching." Candidate A emphasizes having an open

dialogue with mentor teachers so she can express her knowledge with mentors regarding effective instruction even if her understandings may not fully align with her mentor teacher. In this way, teacher candidates develop their own voice as they collaborate with mentors rather than simply following the directions of the mentor.

Candidate B said that "people want to know that their voice matters." This means being able to speak one's truths and allowing others to speak theirs. In this manner, she states that teacher candidates can listen to "let them [students] know that they are being heard and that they are valued." Candidate B feels that teacher candidates need opportunities to "get out of their own heads" and take interest in what others are saying. Candidate B believes that conversations validate the voices of candidates and mentor teachers as they take turns speaking and listening to one another about their planning, instruction, and assessment. Candidate B summarizes that having voice enables listening, and speaking and listening are two parts of a whole.

Candidate B is empowered when others ask her to listen to their concerns and issues. She uses the expression: "just listening" to communicate with the speaker that "I hear you. I'm here to support you if you need it." She proposes that when others choose her to listen to their concerns and issues, it is a powerful statement that safety and trust has been established with the speaker. In some cases, according to Candidate B speakers want to be heard with minimal feedback. She comments that "some people may not want a response at all. Being there to listen may be enough."

Candidate B goes on to say "as far as listening, we don't listen exclusively with our ears. Listening is [an] intake of information including visually and kinesthetically. Listening [happens] through our ears through sound, but there is a lot of listening with other modalities." Candidate B observes "that there is [an] assumption that sitting still [in the classroom] is paying attention."

However, looks can be deceiving so it is important to have frequent checks for understanding, and assessing student listening may consist of activities where students show what they know through physical movement.

In What Ways can Teacher Educators Promote Listening in Light of Cultural Relational Skills That Teacher Candidates can Then Transfer to Their Own Field-Based Contexts?

Candidate A speaks about the importance of actively listening to elementary students as they reflect on what students say. In the elementary classroom, Candidate A mentions that it is vital to find out what students are thinking when they engage in the subject content. For example, for teachers to understand what sense students are making of a story, teachers need to find out what students are thinking as they read. Listening is equivalent to what Candidate A calls "paying attention," and this means taking an interest in students and what they say. Additionally, Candidate A shares that there is an expectation that both students and teachers pay attention to one another.

Just as Candidate A suggests that listening requires curiosity about what a speaker says, she also points out that it is vital for the listener to make culturally appropriate gestures to communicate effectively. In Candidate A's view, eye contact is often vital for promoting active listening. However, in Japan, eye contact is considered disrespectful in certain circumstances such as when someone bows to you. Thus, lack of eye contact may become a gesture of respect in some cultural contexts. In U.S. elementary classrooms, Candidate A proposes that student eye contact with the teacher is deemphasized when students are asked to examine a text or image when the teacher offers verbal instructions.

To better understand listening, Candidate B suggests that speakers embed their own stories to help listeners connect with the speaker's experiences. When comparing speaking and

listening, Candidate B said that along with listening, "it is important to express yourself too. If you keep everything in, then it would be difficult to be heard." Candidate B also proposes a counter argument that it is "so easy to get caught up in what we are thinking [it can be] hard to get out of your own head and listen to the perspective of other people." She continued, "you don't want to talk about yourself all of the time. I think it is important to foster conversation." When reflecting on a stressful encounter with a teacher during field experience, Candidate B reflected on how she processed the challenging experience by saying: "first it is good to listen to yourself and then if you can't get grounded, if you can't find a solution that you are happy with, then reach out to someone who can help." She believes that when difficult situations arise during field experience, the "internal dialog is really strong." In Candidate B's words, it is "good to listen to others and learn from their experience" to gain a more balanced perspective and become less self-critical. Candidate B reflects that "she learned that we need to build relationships with students" and the "language we use with our students can impact how they [teachers] think about them." From Candidate B's perspective, "it is important to be mindful of the language "teachers use with students [because it reveals] how we define them."

What Listening Skills do Teacher Candidates Need for Effective Classroom Engagements and Subsequent Field-Based Teaching?

Candidate A speaks about the importance of movement including the use of hand gestures to convey meaning for listeners. Listening through both auditory and visual senses is crucial for helping English language learners (ELLs) acquire English according to Candidate A. For example, Japanese students in classrooms in Japan learned English by observing the teacher's movements during instruction as well as by viewing images that illustrated vocabulary terms and concepts. Additionally, Candidate A believes teachers need to use "attention-getters"

for students to listen. For example, if her mentor teacher needed to get the attention of the entire class, the mentor "had several cues … like [saying] 'class, class', or 'if you can hear me clap once' as a clapping pattern." In this way teachers signal students to stop what they are doing and focus on the teacher.

Candidate A says she would in her words "zone out" if professors lectured in a manner that allows for little teacher or student movement or when she attends online synchronous classes when feeling fatigued from a long day of working in the schools. For example, Candidate A refers to zoning out at times when "I just stare and look at the professor and nothing gets in my head. Nothing is registering. I call that daydreaming or zoning out." She goes on to suggest that "in a big class it can be hard to keep zoning out from happening. [Teachers using] techniques like movement, proximity, and music or video" can help minimize zoning out. She mentions using pictures in her teaching in Japan for engaging students in learning.

Candidate B stresses the importance of active listening during online classroom discussions. In her words, "I have to be more mindful when online because it is easier to withdraw from what is happening." In face-to-face contexts, Candidate B suggests that key signs for listening are gestures like maintaining eye contact, learning forward toward the speaker, and nodding to silently acknowledge understanding or agreement; however, these actions are not required to indicate that someone is listening. For example, gestures are less apparent in online contexts where information is shared in a manner that isolates the speaker from the speaker's message.

Candidate B feels that an online synchronous classroom may result in a safe and courteous intellectual environment. Yet, she also acknowledges the necessity of being polite and

courteous in online environments that may inhibit candidness that could spark deeper

connections with others in the virtual space.

The next section contains the grounded theory derived from the findings. This theory is

the researcher's subjective construction of reality based on an interpretation of the findings.

## Grounded Theory of Listening

Communication

Listening is central for communication as portrayed in Figure 1 *The Communication Atom*.

Listening and speaking are described as subatomic particles held together by their mutual

attraction. To apply a scientific analogy, listening, featured at the core of the circle diagram, is

composed of positively charged protons and neutrally charged neutrons packed tightly at the

center, or nucleus, of the communication atom. Speaking elements are constructed of negatively

charged and spinning electrons found in two energy levels outside of the nucleus.

Figure 1

The Communication Atom
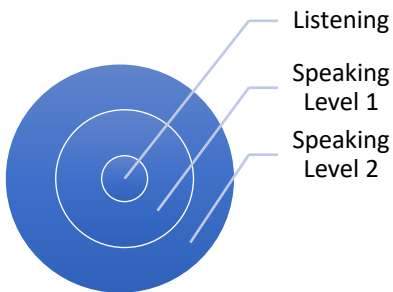
The mass of the communication atom is derived mainly from listening protons just as

protons and neutrons compose the nucleus of an atom and account for nearly all of its mass. The

speaking electrons move randomly in wave and particle motion beyond the listening nucleus

which holds them in their levels by forces of mutual attraction. Speaking Level 1 has a lower

energy level where the speaker anticipates that the listener will listen silently without interruption or judgement. Speaking Level 2 is where the speaker is receptive to feedback in the form of suggestions and recommendations to address a problem, issue, or concern. Without the listening core, speaking electrons would fly off into space and destabilize the communication atom.

Listening and speaking are connected through the attraction of opposites just as protons and electrons are attracted to one another by opposite charges. A third sub-atomic particle often found in the nucleus of the communication atom is the neutron. Neutrons represent listeners engaging in their own internal dialogue or self-talk. These neutrons hold no charge or influence on listening protons or speaking electrons, yet neutrons are essential parts of communication.

Listening

At a higher level of magnification, listening protons are comprised of quarks as shown in Figure 2 *Listening Quarks: Senses, Dispositions, and Self-Understanding*. Listening protons are comprised of sense, disposition, and self-understanding quarks. The first up quark of the listening proton consists of physical sensory receptors like auditory and visual senses. The second up quark consists of dispositions such as being critical, inquisitive, and introspective. The down quark is comprised of self-understand based on the listener's beliefs and values. In sum, each listening proton consists of two up quarks made of senses and dispositions and a down quark labeled as self-understanding.

Figure 2. *Listening Quarks: Senses, Dispositions, and Self-Understanding*
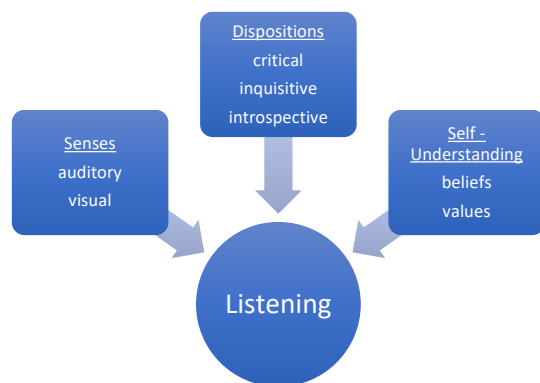
Listening and speaking are vital processes of communication that lead to relationship building. Speaking can exist at alternative energy levels depending on the anticipated reaction of the listener. Like a Deweyan dualism, listening and speaking are two parts of a whole that combine to produce a unit of communication just as an atom is comprised of positively charged protons, neutrally charged neutrons, and negatively charged electrons. Isolating listening from speaking distorts the nature of communication to render it unrecognizable. Listening and speaking depend on one another in a mutualistic relationship. Describing the characteristics of listening and speaking may generate insights into communication components with the caveat that both are present during communication even during self-talk when the speaker and listener are the same person.
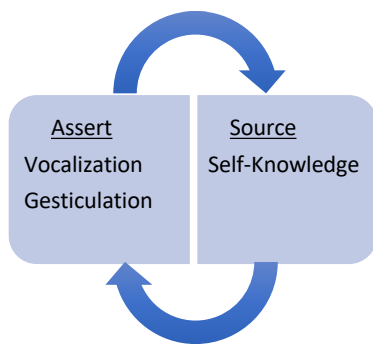
Speaking

Figure 3 *Speaking: Assert and Source* exemplify two fundamental speaking components that are analogous to electrons with either up or down spin orientations found in two energy levels beyond the nucleus. Assert and Source electrons are interrelated with each impacting the other as diagramed by the blue arrows in Figure 3. The first component of speaking is labeled

"Assert" with a spin up orientation consisting of vocalization and gesticulation. Vocalization pertains to sound generation that can be heard, filtered, and given meaning by the listener. Gesticulation consists of movements made by the speaker that signal nonverbal meanings. The second component of speaking is "Source" with a spin down orientation representing the self-knowledge of the speaker.

Figure 3

Speaking: Assert and Source

The Communication Atom model portrayed here shows the *core role of listening in generating voice* among individuals engaged in sharing their knowledge. Voice is not only the expressive literacy skill of speaking and writing but also the sum of the identity factors that situate a person's emotional, social, and intellectual interests and capacities. Voice represents inherent identity factors that comprise an individual's being. Communication is composed of the attractive bonds between listening and speaking that might otherwise be called relationship threads or fields. These bonds of attraction equate to the curiosity or interest that the listener has in the speaker's message, and the bonds enable the construction of the speaker's voice.

Discussion and Implications

Voice

Just as listeners create voice by listening to speakers, they also benefit from voicing their ideas when speakers are willing to take a turn at listening. Voice can become explicit through the use of empathetic listening involving a connection with others through sensing, processing, and responding (Drollinger et al., 2006). Teachers committed to learning through social interaction, as compared to transmission teaching, create opportunities for students to collaborate and critically consider one another's ideas and justify their thinking and reasoning (Gillies, 2016). In field experience classrooms, mentor teachers and teacher candidates can listen to one another and offer their own perspectives on practical classroom matters dealing with planning, instruction, assessment, and nonacademic content designed to support students and their learning.

Identity

Teachers, teacher candidates, and K-12 students may develop their voices to affirm their identities through intentional conversations on academic, emotional, and social matters that are vital to them. For this to happen, teachers play the critical role of listening to engender student voice. Listening, and understanding, are evident through listener response and subsequent actions. Actions may involve voicing ideas whereby listeners and speakers trade roles through turn-taking exchanges. This kind of interaction may result in fostering learning not only for teaching elementary students but also for candidates working with mentor teachers who are responsible for assisting, guiding, and supporting teacher candidates.

Listening depends on the listener's interests as well as the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Listening in the classroom connects the identities of self and others as teachers strive to understand the wants, needs, interests, and aptitudes of their students (Rud &

Garrison, 2010). Effective listening is more likely when teachers seek to understand students' prior academic knowledge and interests as well as beliefs and values emanating from their homes and community comprising their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992).

Safety

Students benefit from feeling safe so they may communicate more readily through their own receptive and expressive literacy skills. When students feel safe in the classroom, they may be more receptive to the experiences of others and the underlying social, emotional, and cultural forces that give rise to their own identities and the identities of others. To expand on the communication atom analogy, the speaker's electrons may be in their resting state so that the communication atom does not become threatened or fearful that would minimize receptiveness to listening. In the classroom setting, this is commonly described as minimizing threats to students' physical, emotional, and intellectual safety (Merrow, 2004).

Curiosity

Listening is fundamental for learning, and meaningful learning happens when the listener displays an inquisitive attitude toward the speaker and the speaker's message in light of the listener's own background knowledge. This implies encouraging student and candidate curiosity so students ask questions and seek answers to their own inquiries. Listening to Level 1 speakers conveys respect as well as social and emotional support. Listening to Level 2 speaking, calls for listeners to respond with suggestions and recommendations. Listening, or paying attention, to a speaker can involve thinking about what is said and how it is said (Siregar, 2017). Depending on the context, listening may involve serving as a sounding board while at other times it may require proposing courses of action. In both cases, listener's curiosity drives the communication and invites the speaker to share a message.

Patience

Students prefer teachers who listen patiently (Haider & Jalal, 2018). Listening with patience conveys a sense of compassion (Garrison, 2010). Level 1 listening counters the traditional classroom questioning structure of initiation-response-feedback whereby teachers listen primarily to evaluate student thinking related to predetermined answers (Fisher, 2011). Contrarily, a teacher's quiet support of student talk may help students feel more connected with others that is consistent with caring and kind classroom environments. Being chosen as a listener is a role of honor whereby speakers and listeners who support one another's intellectual, emotional, and social needs.

Self-Talk

Although communication usually involves two or more people, a teacher or student can listen to her own thoughts and thereby generate an internal dialogue. This self-talk may enhance self-awareness through metacognition as listeners examine what they know and how they know it. Along with speaking, students and teachers as well as teacher candidates and mentor teachers benefit from periods of silence to listen to their own thinking (Schultz, 2010). Quiet think time in classrooms is essential for students to focus on their own thinking in light of their ongoing learning.

Conclusion

As a participant in this study noted: "people want to know that their voice matters." The need to become expressive may relate to a desire for achieving connection with others. Interestingly, both of the participants scored high in the area of "relationships" on the BFK Connect Framework survey (Quinn et al., 2014). This outcome reflects their predisposition for seeking connection with others, and a prime way for them to do this is to listen.

Competence, autonomy, and relatedness as Ryan and Deci (2000) point out, "appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being" (p. 86). In the field experience classroom, mentor teachers are encouraged to engage in two-way conversations that incorporates listening to teacher candidates so they can develop their teacher voices. When teacher candidates have opportunities to speak and listen with mentors, and K-12 students, their communication may help them not only feel more connected with classroom stakeholders, it may also help candidates gain a sense of competence and belonging in the classroom and school.

Other considerations for teacher educators' intent on promoting listening is to give candidates opportunities for Level 1 and Level 2 speaking during peer bonding activities as candidates learn from one another. An example of a Level 1 speaking/listening activity is when students engage in identifying and analyzing their encounters with diversity as they speak with a partner during a cooperative learning activity such as stroll-pair-share. An example of a Level 2 speaking/listening event might include reflection-based discussions on matters dealing with planning, instruction, or assessment that employ Socratic Seminars or other interactive discussion structures where students have rules for engagement that promote democratic participation that value all voices (Parker, 2010).

In regards to the first two research questions that included the terms "culturally-relevant classroom practices" and "cultural relational skills," the participants did not directly comment on culture as it pertained to classroom practices and skills. One of the participants did mention that not making eye contact was a sign of showing respect in Japan which could be inferred as a culturally-relevant practice. Due to the lack of participants' comments on cultural relational

skills and practices, I am concluding that interests, identity, safety, curiosity, patience, and self-talk are fundamental factors for effective listening.

      Finally, let's return to the woman speaking rapidly at the curb. Perhaps she needed to ask a question, clarify a thought, or elaborate her own thinking through self-talk or she may have been trying to gain the attention of passersby. Regardless of her reason for speaking without a listener, I was reminded that "communication is at least a two-way street and cannot exist in the absence of listening" (Rice & Burbules, 2010, p. 2729). Having no one to listen to her must have been a disconnecting experience for her and others whether they are found on the street or in the classroom.

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