A Case Study of Instructional Conversations
for Equitable Participation in an Elementary Classroom

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Abstract

This study analyzed how the use of the Instructional Conversation for Equitable Participation (ICEP) rubric affected teaching practices in a combined kindergarten and first grade virtual classroom and made considerations for ways to improve the rubric for continued use. The rubric was designed to assist teachers and students in participating in collaborative, small group discussions that emphasized students’ identities and experiences and promoted all students’ participation. Though the rubric was under development, it influenced the teacher’s instructional practices and noticings. In particular, using the rubric revealed ways that the teacher could be more culturally responsive to the everyday experiences of her students. Analysis of the video recordings, reflection notes, and transcripts indicated that having a framework to guide reflection and determine next steps in facilitating an ICEP was beneficial. The results brought attention to the importance of discussions with small groups on equitable participation and student voice. Evidence showed that components of the ICEP rubric could also be used to enhance interactions with the whole class. The findings from this study also suggested considerations for the rubric’s content and structure and the influence participating in a professional learning community had on the teacher.
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................. 4
Literature Review .......................................................................................................... 6
Method .......................................................................................................................... 11
   Design and Setting ................................................................................................... 11
   Participants .............................................................................................................. 12
   Data Sources ........................................................................................................... 12
      Video Recorded ICEPs ........................................................................................... 12
      Reflections ........................................................................................................... 14
      Critiques of the ICEP Rubric ............................................................................. 14
      EDEP 711 Field Notes and Transcripts ............................................................... 15
      Personal Memos .................................................................................................. 15
Data Analysis .............................................................................................................. 15
   Role of the Teacher-Researcher .............................................................................. 16
Results ......................................................................................................................... 18
   The Effects of the ICEP Rubric on My Teaching .................................................... 18
      Teacher Noticings ............................................................................................... 18
      Classroom Discourse .......................................................................................... 24
      Equitable Participation ....................................................................................... 27
      Cultural Responsiveness ..................................................................................... 29
Considerations for the ICEP Rubric Development ..................................................... 31
   Content and Structure of the ICEP Rubric .............................................................. 31
   Professional Learning Community (PLC) ................................................................. 38
Discussion ................................................................................................................... 40
   Implications for Practice and Policy ...................................................................... 43
      Becoming Culturally Responsive ....................................................................... 44
      Support for Small Group Instruction ................................................................ 44
      Areas for Professional Development .................................................................. 44
      Participating in an ICEP Professional Learning Community ............................ 45
      Time Constraints Implementing ICEPs ................................................................ 46
      Students’ Use of the ICEP Rubric ..................................................................... 46
Limitations and Future Research .............................................................................. 47
References .................................................................................................................... 50
Appendix A: ICEP Rubric as of May, 2021 ................................................................. 54
Appendix B: Questions to Elicit Teacher Noticing Using ICEP Rubric During Self-Reflections ................................. 59
A Case Study of Instructional Conversations for Equitable Participation in an Elementary Classroom

Language, in all its complexity, guides and influences our thoughts and actions. Though language is not exclusive to humans, we are unique in being able to create and produce an unlimited amount of language variation that is made up of different sounds, gestures, and written characters. Human language, in a sense, is boundless. It has found its way in all aspects of life, especially in education, as being a crucial part of the teaching-learning process (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002).

Language is key to the idea that children learn at greater depths through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978) and instructional conversations (IC) (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2007). ICs are small group discussions between a teacher and students that promote concept development (Tharp et al., 2000). Over the past seven years teaching, I have adopted pedagogical philosophies grounded in these understandings; however, until this study I had not followed a concrete model to guide my use of language and expression in my classroom conversations. In this study, I addressed these shortcomings and showed how using a structured framework influenced my teaching practices.

The framework I used was the Instructional Conversations for Equitable Participation (ICEP) rubric that was under development while I was conducting this study. The origins of ICEP stemmed from components of ICs and the Classroom Assessment of Sociocultural Interactions (CASI) protocols. The rubric was designed as a resource for teachers to facilitate ICs that promote equal participation from all students, while integrating their cultural and everyday backgrounds. I describe IC and CASI and the vision of ICEP more fully in the literature review.
below. The aim of this study was to identify how the use of the ICEP rubric affected my teaching practices and highlight any areas to consider for continued ICEP development.
Literature Review

CASI is an observation system used to measure interactions between teachers and students (Jensen et al., 2020). The various indicators of CASI can be grouped into three categories: life applications, self in group, and agency. The life applications section focuses on the teacher’s ability to incorporate and make connections between academic content and students’ out-of-school lives. The other categories address the classroom culture and environment, such that students learn collaboratively and opportunities are available for students to display autonomy in their academic decision-making (Jensen, 2018).

Based on five decades of work by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) and other researchers (e.g., Dalton, 1998; Estrada, 2005; Goldenberg, 1991; Tharp et al., 2000; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Yamauchi et al., 2013), ICs are used in classrooms as an instructional approach to elevate discourse between teachers and students by drawing attention to students’ perspectives and engaging them in creating deeper, more meaningful understandings of academic concepts. When ICs are implemented effectively, students speak as much, if not more than the teacher, disrupting the traditional view of student and teacher roles assumed in direct instruction (Tharp et al., 2000). Throughout an IC, the teacher draws on students’ background knowledge and encourages learners to expand on their thinking as they engage in shared activities and conversations. As students continue to contribute, the teacher assists by weaving conversational threads together so that ideas build on each other. Students, ideally, leave the discussion with a stronger foundation of the concepts and desired opportunities for future explorations (Wells & Haneda, 2005). Other studies have also
shown that ICs improve student outcomes and develop strong cooperative learning environments within the classroom (Goldenberg & Patthey-Chavez, 1995; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999).

The ICEP rubric merged concepts from IC and CASI and divided the content into five domains. The rubric was intended for teachers of Grades 3-8 to use because the developers felt they would need to make adjustments for younger children’s development. They thought these developments would come after they established a rubric for older children. I am discussing the domains as they were presented at the time of the study. The rubric developers have since reordered and renamed some of the domains.

Domain 1: Connected Discussions focused on how the teacher and students connect thematic foci of classroom discussion with the students’ everyday experiences, such as routines, interests, relationships, perspectives, expertise, values, and traditions, including issues of fairness, bias, and justice. Domain 2: Complex Expression with Everyday Language looked at how interactions assist student expression of complex ideas using the students’ everyday language resources (e.g., dialects, vernaculars, and creoles) through modeling, elicitation, and affirmation. Domain 3: Student Initiative highlighted how interactions assist student initiative to reason and regulate their own participation and learning in classroom discussions. Domain 4: Equitable Participation emphasized the importance of fostering opportunities for each student to contribute as meaningful participants in small group ICs. Lastly, Domain 5: Collaborative Discourse focused on the extent to which classroom discussions assist students to explore, co-construct, and negociate meaning with each other and with the teacher. Appendix A provides the rubrics that were used during this study.
Wells (2009) claimed that ICs are not typically carried out in early childhood classrooms because teachers feel children at this age cannot sustain conversations without getting off-topic. Therefore, one-sided conversations tend to dominate the classroom through direct instruction. Though Wells (1986) had observed young children having complex conversations with adults, he still cautioned the idea of direct instruction noting that:

> once this pattern of inequality has been established as the norm in school, older children accept and even collude with it, becoming unwilling either to ask the sort of questions that might lead to a genuine instructional conversation or to go beyond giving minimal answers, even when a teacher’s question calls for an expression of their own opinions or an account of their personal experience (2009, p. 4).

The findings from Chapman de Sousa’s (2017) study supported the notion that ICs can happen with young children. She found that ICs were difficult to carry out with preschool children and only a few lessons in her data set showed full implementation. However, children’s contributions in ICs increased when teachers used joint-productive activities, gesturing techniques, and encouraged peer interactions. Chapman de Sousa suggested that more professional development in these areas could assist teachers to overcome these challenges to have ICs with young children.

Other studies have indicated the importance of professional development for improving teaching practices (Desimone et al., 2002; Stammen et al., 2018). Studies have also shown that when teachers can critically reflect on their practices, they are more likely to identify inconsistencies within their beliefs and practices and be attentive and responsive to students’ thinking and interactions (Banhart & Es, 2014; Davis et al., 2006). These reflective skills are
referred to as teacher noticing. With increased years of experience or guidance from a mentor, teacher noticing is more likely to develop and strengthen (Burbank et al., 2010; Davis et al., 2006). Teacher noticings are also more likely to occur when teachers have tools and frameworks to guide what they attend to, determine how to interpret events, and ultimately know how to make informed decisions based on these events (Davis et al., 2006). I proposed that my use of the ICEP rubric in this study would elicit more “teacher noticing” and promote purposeful reflections on my ICEP lessons.

This study was framed by Dewey’s (1933) theory as it applies to teacher reflection. Taking part in a reflective process is a recommended practice for educators. Spalding and Wilson (2002) argued that reflective thinking is essential to identifying, analyzing, and solving the complex problems that characterize classroom thinking. According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2016), “accomplished early childhood teachers engage in systematic reflection on their teaching to enhance their professional knowledge and skill and to benefit young children’s development and learning” (p. 82). The essential components of accomplished teaching include critically examining practices, seeking the advice of others, and drawing on educational research to deepen knowledge, sharpen judgment, and adapt teaching to new findings and ideas (NBPTS, 2016). When teachers reflect, their actions are better considered, so both teachers and students benefit (Spalding & Wilson, 2002).

The idea that teachers engage in reflective practices and seek opportunities to better their craft, is a familiar concept, often associated with Dewey’s work on reflective thinking (Rogers, 2002). Dewey (1933) defined reflection as the “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the
further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 1394). Rogers (2002) synthesized Dewey’s views into four criteria:

- reflection as a meaning-making process
- reflection is a systematic and rigorous process
- reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others
- reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of oneself and others. (p. 845)

She acknowledged, like Dewey, that reflective thinking is complex, takes time, and involves deliberate thought. Rogers proposed that these ideas be used as a starting point for conversations around reflection in education.

King and Barry (1998) applied the work of Dewey by promoting reflection as an essential skill for teachers. King and Barry differentiated between the teacher who “ponders about how well the skill, strategy, lesson, etc. is going or has gone . . . and the more professional evaluator . . . who systematically reflects on a lesson” (p. 409). The authors provided a list of questions, as seen in Appendix B that I adapted for this study to promote teacher noticings that would go beyond “pondering.”

Davis et al. (2006) noted that when teachers use specific frameworks to guide their analyses, their reflections are more productive. I used the ICEP rubric in this way and strove to investigate how the rubric affected my teaching practices. I also wanted to use my reflections to provide feedback to the ICEP developers on the rubric’s context, structure, and use. My research questions were: (a) How did use of the ICEP rubric affect my teaching practices? and (b) In what ways can the rubric be changed to increase the practicality of its use?
Method

Design and Setting

This study was designed as a case study that implemented principles of action research. A case study is an in-depth investigation using data from a variety of sources to better understand a specific topic or phenomenon (Hesse-Biber, 2017). This approach was used since the focus of the study was on the relationship between the ICEP rubric and my teaching practices in a specific classroom at one point in time.

In action research, practitioners take an active role in seeking knowledge by integrating theory and practice to make positive changes as individuals or within communities (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003). I deployed action research techniques in an effort to enhance my teaching practices, as I critically reflected on my use of the ICEP rubric and made adjustments to my implementation and understanding of ICEPs. I also used the action research to consider ways that the rubric could be improved for my future use and that of other teachers.

This study took place in the kindergarten and first grade blended classroom I taught in the 2020-2021 school year at the University Laboratory School (ULS), a public K-12 charter school in the State of Hawai‘i. ULS students were grouped heterogeneously and represented the socio-economic, academic achievement, and ethnic cross-section of the public school population in the State (University Laboratory School, 2020). Programs and curriculum at ULS emphasized collaboration, inquiry, reflection, written and verbal expression, laboratory work, and problem solving.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all instruction at ULS took place virtually until March 16, 2021, when face-to-face instruction resumed. The ULS distance learning model
required all students to use a laptop computer issued by the school. Students participated from their homes in video instruction via Google Meet that I facilitated from my classroom.

Participants

The participants included the 19 students in my class, whose ages ranged from 5 to 7 years. Nine of the students were in kindergarten, and 10 were in Grade 1. Males and females were split evenly in Grade 1. There were five female kindergarteners and four male kindergarteners. Of the 10 first grade students, eight were returning students who I taught last year. All parents signed an informed consent form for their children to participate in the study. For small group instruction, I grouped the students based on individual academic achievements and concepts, as well as their personal interests.

There were seven adults who also participated in the study. They included the ICEP rubric developers, who were three female professors from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and one male professor from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Adult participants also included three teachers who enrolled in EDEP 711, a graduate course at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. All of the adult participants signed informed consent forms to participate in the study.

Data Sources

Video Recorded ICEPs

As shown in Table 1, between January 2021 and March 2021, I recorded nine virtual lessons conducted on Google Meet that were intended to implement a specific ICEP domain. There were two lessons in which I applied Domains 1-4 and one lesson focused on Domain 5. The length of each lesson was between 30 and 55 minutes depending on the class setting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Date Recorded</th>
<th>ICEP Domain</th>
<th>Topic of Lesson</th>
<th>Class Setting</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-11-2021</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>civil rights movement</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-26-2021</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>needs of plants; conservation; climate change</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1-29-2021</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>reading comprehension; seasons; conflict resolution</td>
<td>small group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2-1-2021</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Katherine Johnson; perseverance; using Google Meet breakout room</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2-9-2021</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>reading comprehension; sequencing events; brushing teeth</td>
<td>small group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2-11-2021</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>reading comprehension; animal adaptations</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2-22-2021</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>lunar new year</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2-26-2021</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>writing strategies; writing process</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3-11-2021</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>representing the meaning of “I am Strong” through art</td>
<td>whole class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While conducting lessons on Google Meet, I could see all of the participants; however, the recorded video only showed the participant who was speaking. Knowing in advance that this would occur, I noted on memos who participated in the conversations and how much they contributed. When I watched each video, I created an event log of the lesson by noting and transcribing what I viewed as important events and interactions based on the indicators on the rubric.

**Reflections**

Soon after I completed a lesson, I applied the ICEP rubric for the Domain I was focusing on. As a part of my post-lesson reflection, I used King and Barry’s (1998) questions (see Appendix B) to guide my reflections and elicit teacher noticings. The same process occurred after I watched the recorded videos in May 2021, after the school year and 711 course ended. Therefore, I wrote post-lesson and post-video reflections for each of the nine lessons.

**Critiques of the ICEP Rubric**

I wanted to create a similar reflection process for my critique of the ICEP rubric that was consistent throughout the study and focused specifically on my use of the rubric and its functionality. I asked myself the following questions: (a) What do you notice? (b) How did using the rubric affect your planning and implementation of IC? (c) How do you think we (ICEP developers) can change the rubric to be more useful to other teachers? I wrote responses before and after each lesson. For my reflections before I implemented each domain, I only responded to the first question. After the lesson and while watching the videos, I responded to all three questions. In May, I also wrote a final critique of all of my experiences using the rubric and applied these questions.
**EDEP 711 Field Notes and Transcripts**

Field notes and recorded audio from discussions were collected from the EDEP 711 course, a practicum that focused on learning about and applying ICEPs in the classroom and offered by the ICEP developers. One of the objectives of the course was to provide feedback to the developers about the practicality of the rubric. In an early session, one of the developers defined practicality as being recognizable, relevant, and feasible. We considered recognizable to mean the extent to which innovative ideas incorporate existing classroom procedures to meet learning goals. Regarding relevancy, we considered the alignment of ICEP practices with procedures of daily teacher work. For feasibility, we considered whether the perceived benefits of the practices were worth the time and energy needed to enact them.

I attended all seven of the EDEP 711 Zoom sessions between January 2021 and May 2021. Each session was about two hours. A student at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT who also attended the sessions transcribed the recordings.

**Personal Memos**

Throughout the study, I wrote personal memos. These personal memos documented my noticings, questions, and opinions in regards to my professional development and the rubric.

**Data Analysis**

Because this was a case study, I used grounded theory methods of analysis. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), grounded theory provides opportunities for continuous and simultaneous interplay of data as they are collected and analyzed. Considering the action research taking place, I also used concepts from Dewey’s (1933) reflective thinking model as data was being collected and analyzed.
Through constant comparative analysis of the data, I looked for concepts and elements that were relevant and labeled them with codes. Starting with the research questions, I developed initial codes and later refined them to be more specific. For example, I initially established a code for the considerations of the content on the ICEP rubric and later refined the code to focus on the vocabulary and the developmental appropriateness of the content.

I also used open coding to determine themes that emerged from the data. I read through the reflections, field notes, and personal memo to identify themes. The video recorded ICEPs were analyzed by watching the videos using the ICEP rubric. As I watched the videos, I looked for evidence of an ICEP based on the indicators from the domain that I applied in the lesson. When I noticed myself or the students exhibiting ICEP behaviors, I made a note of the event and transcribed portions of the conversation. I coded these events and identified themes.

After open coding was completed, I used axial coding as a way to organize the codes to determine how they were related to one another (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) and showed significance. Codes that were frequently tagged and those that identified a change in my professional growth were deemed significant. I based the change in my professional growth on behaviors and ideas that I had prior to the study and during the study that showed a noticeable shift.

**Role of the Researcher**

As the teacher-researcher, it is important to note that I had established relationships with the students who participated in the study. Eight of the students were returning first graders, so I knew them for about a year and a half. Because data collection began in December, I knew the
other 11 students for about five months. Knowing the students’ personalities and academic abilities aided in how I determined topics to be discussed and facilitated the conversations.

I also had a personal investment in the study since I was conducting it for a graduate degree. Being both the teacher and researcher created the potential for biases and assumptions in my implementation of the lessons, data collection, and analysis. My views and perspectives about the outcomes of the lesson or use of the rubric may have been biased to be more optimistic and positive, than if I had a more objective role as just the researcher.

To guard against some of the biases, I recorded notes regarding these biases, perspectives, and any adjustments made throughout the study in my personal memo to promote objectivity in my data collection and analysis. Collecting data from multiple sources also allowed me to look for patterns that were consistent.
Results

In this section, I present the results of my analysis. These results are organized relative to my two research questions: (a) How did use of the ICEP rubric affect my teaching practices? and (b) In what ways can the rubric be changed to increase the practicality of its use?

The Effects of the ICEP Rubric on My Teaching

Over the course of this study, the ICEP rubric affected me in several ways. From the data, four themes emerged: (a) my teacher noticings, (b) the classroom discourse, (c) equitable participation among students, and (d) my cultural responsiveness. In the following sections, I elaborate on these themes.

Teacher Noticings

Teacher noticing is the ability to be reflective of one’s teaching practice in order to become more attentive and responsive to students’ thinking and interactions, as well as identify inconsistencies within one’s own beliefs and teaching practices (Banhart & Van Es, 2014; Davis et al., 2006). The ICEP rubric provided a framework for me to bring focus on these noticings and make more timely adjustments. In all of my reflections of the recorded lessons, I noted that students seemed comfortable with themselves, each other, and the classroom by how freely they spoke out, carried conversations before and during the lessons, and worked together to build common understandings. Prior to using the ICEP rubric, I would hone my teacher noticings on these student behaviors and determine ways for me to get better at eliciting these behaviors from the students. Because I had not consistently followed structured guidelines in my noticings, what I focused on changed based on the immediate needs of the students or classroom environment.
The ICEP rubric redirected my noticings so that I focused on specific areas of my teaching more consistently. It provided a concrete and tangible tool that guided me through the progression of desired behaviors aimed at enhancing my instruction. The more I used the rubric, the more I noticed it shifting my attention to focus not only how I was facilitating conversations, but also what I was saying to promote the discussions. For example, in my reflection after using Domain 1, I wrote:

I will try to create more opportunities for students to share their personal experiences, as well as my own. I want to keep being mindful about my prior knowledge (expression, use of vocabulary) and how that influences the students' understandings, reactions, and beliefs. I want to find additional ways to get more participation/involvement/assessment from students in a whole group setting. Perhaps check-ins along the way?

In this reflection, I noticed a few things about my teaching based on the Domain 1 rubric: Connected Discussions. I realized I went through the entire lesson without making a single personal connection and had also missed opportunities for students to share their own experiences and connections to the topic. I also noticed how my affirmations and acknowledgements were based on my own biases, which I describe later, and recognized how this could potentially influence young children’s developing schemas.

Reflecting on the Domain 1 indicators also influenced how teaching in a whole-group setting affected my ability to hear all of the students. I noted in the reflection from this same lesson that 7 of the 19 students “shared spontaneously” and that the class mostly “affirmed others' comments” through their body language. Noticing the imbalance of verbal participation
and assumptions of student engagement that I was making, I began to brainstorm ideas to combat the challenges I faced teaching in a whole class setting.

I continued to focus on the Domain 1 rubric for a few weeks and implemented the lessons I learned from my noticings. In the reflection on a follow-up lesson using Domain 1, I noted a difference in the topics I chose and how it increased opportunities for me and the students to share our personal experiences and connections. I also wrote how I noticed myself “pausing and shifting the direction of the conversation to accommodate the rubric indicators and stray away from keeping the content standards at the forefront.” As I continued to use the other domains in the ICEP rubric, this noticing became a part of a bigger revelation about my struggle to consider time while managing the flow of conversations to meet content standards.

In memos of my noticings from lessons using Domain 2: Complex Expression with Everyday Language and Domain 3: Student Initiative, I wrote “that my fear or anxieties about time and having to reach a particular end goal before the lesson is over, hinders me from taking in the moment and capitalizing on the opportunities for students to deepen their thinking.” In each lesson, there were moments when I did not ask students to elaborate on their thinking or to extend on their classmates’ ideas. For example, in the beginning of a lesson using Domain 3, I showed the students a picture of Katherine Johnson solving a physics equation, since later we were going to learn more about her as a historical figure in space exploration. I only told the students her name and asked them to use picture clues to determine her occupation. One of the students, Jesse, quickly unmuted his microphone and said “scientist!” Instead of asking him to explain how he came to that conclusion, I shifted the focus to reading the message on the next page of the slidedeck that revealed the answer. In this example, I valued keeping the
conversation on track towards meeting the lesson objective more than taking time for the student to share their reasoning.

In the reflection notes I made soon after the lesson was over, I did not write about this incident or even recognize that I had missed opportunities for me or other students to probe each others’ thinking. Instead, I mentioned how I interpreted the use of Domain 1 as offering guidelines that focused more on the students’ behavior regarding how they participated and regulated themselves throughout discussions, rather than my role as the teacher. I wrote that “I originally didn’t think my portion mattered as much as the students.” It was not until watching the recorded video of the lesson that I realized the importance the teacher indicators had on being able to facilitate an ICEP.

Using the rubric in conjunction with watching the recorded lesson promoted my noticing about how I interacted with the students. I played back parts of the video and looked closer at the rubric indicators. Doing this gave me a clearer picture of what had happened and “helped keep me accountable and honest about how my interactions were assisting the students' participation as much as their interactions were.” The reflection notes from watching the lesson using the Domain 2 rubric showed similar findings. I noticed a pattern in my teaching practices and discovered that my feelings of having to meet content standards or learning objectives caused me to miss opportunities for students to share ideas and elaborate on them.

Another example of how the ICEP rubric affected my teacher noticings developed after using the Domain 1 rubric: Connected Discussions a second time. It shifted my perception about conversations involving issues of social injustice and caused me to plan differently. In the reflection from my first lesson using this Domain, I made a note that
in order to exhibit the desired behaviors from Indicator 1d: Examines Inequity, the lesson has to be planned to target this indicator and resolve issues of inequity by either having the learning objective about racial and cultural inequities in our world or by addressing inequities that occur during classroom discourse.

Therefore, for this first lesson, I selected a children’s book about the civil rights movement in the 1960s. I later realized, after conversations with the ICEP developers and colleagues in the EDEP 711 class, that this was a literal and narrow interpretation of the indicator. I came to understand that conversations about inequities can also stem from situations that happen on the playground, at home, or in the classroom, which can become a bridge to conversations about bigger social justice issues we could have later on.

With a new understanding of inequity, I changed my small group lesson plans. At the time, my instruction for these groups integrated reading and science standards. I was teaching weather patterns and its influence on animal habitats, while also incorporating reading skills and strategies. I originally planned to use a non-fiction text; however, I switched it to fiction so that it could expose areas of inequities for us to discuss. The book I selected was about a groundhog who experienced a personal dilemma because his friends put pressure on him to choose the weather they wanted for the next six weeks. I was not sure in which direction the conversation would go since I did not know how much experience the students had with the topic of injustice, nor was I sure if adding the additional concept would be too much. However, to my surprise, one of the students made an unexpected connection towards the end of the lesson when I asked if any of the students had ever been in a situation where they had to choose between two people on
what they wanted to do. Though we were running out of time, I decided to seize the opportunity and let the conversation carry out. The following is an excerpt from the event log of this lesson. At this point in the conversation Carlos and Malia gave a thumbs down, indicating that they did not have related experiences. Junior said, “No” and Margo did not respond. I realized after watching the video that I did not provide enough wait time for her, since I quickly moved on in an effort to elicit connections by explaining how this scenario could happen on the playground at school. At that moment, Carlos interjected.

Carlos: Is there bullies at the Lab School?

Junior: I think there are!

Me: What?! That would mean there would have to be mean people.

Carlos gave an example of when he felt “pulled” between two friends at preschool. His friends wanted to play different things and they wanted him to choose what they would play. I suggested that in such a situation, the children could settle these disagreements respectfully and fairly by playing the game rocks, paper, scissors. Junior continued on the topic of whether there were bullies at our school. He said, “I don't think UH Lab would let them [the bully] in,” referring to the process by which parents at our charter school applied for their children to attend the school. To which, I replied, “Well we would have to teach him or her how to be nice.” Junior continued about how he and others would just stay away from the bully. I suggested that they could try to help the bully learn how to be nice. Noticing that the time had run out and the next small group session needed to begin, I shifted the discussion back to the groundhog story and wrapped up the discussion.
After this experience, I realized that this conversation would probably not have occurred if I had used a nonfiction book. I noticed how incorporating opportunities for students to “examine inequities” has the potential for students to evaluate social norms and also discuss their roles in these related scenarios.

The rubric gave me the structure that shifted my noticings to reach these levels of awareness and ultimately changed my classroom conversations. I found that when I watched the videos and self-assessed using the rubric, my noticings were more targeted; therefore, more beneficial to learn from. In one of the EDEP 711 meetings, Julie mentioned how teachers watching their own videos can learn more about their teaching and the students’ behavior than they would typically do because watching a recorded lesson allows educators to see what happened and reflect “in the moment,” rather than rely on their recall. Because the rubric listed the indicators, I was able to narrow my noticings and knew exactly what to look or listen for when watching the videos. I was more critical of my interactions, as well as those of the students. I was able to clearly identify the evidence, or lack thereof, in regards to a specific domain that I may otherwise have missed in a post-lesson reflection without a video, as is noted in the section on cultural responsiveness.

**Classroom Discourse**

My use of the ICEP rubric did not affect how often I had classroom conversations, as much as the type of topics that the children and I discussed. In five different reflections from my self-assessments, I noted how I wondered if certain conversations would have happened if I had not used the ICEP rubric. For example, the Domain 2 rubric: Complex Expression with Everyday Language prompted me to add more advanced vocabulary and concepts to a science lesson. The
science lesson was a part of a series of investigations about plants’ basic needs. Since it was the final lesson of this unit, I originally intended to only assess the students’ knowledge and understanding of plants. However, considering the indicators from Domain 2, I chose to focus on introducing the concept of climate change by using the cacao plant as an example since it is sensitive to climate change and could create conversations about global warming, conservation, and sustainability--all abstract concepts for 5 to 7 year-olds. Though these topics are not addressed directly in kindergarten and first grade Next Generation Science Standards, I felt it was worth an attempt to see how students would respond.

Below is a portion of the event log from this lesson. I played a video that showed how a restaurant made a model of the Earth out of chocolate. When patrons ordered dessert, a part of the chocolate Earth was taken away to represent the effect of people taking resources from the Earth and making choices based on wants, rather than needs. If the patron posted on social media about conservation, chocolate was added to Earth to fill in the missing pieces. As we were watching the video a student, Junior, said, “Ms. Megan can I tell you something? The more I look at that chocolate, the more I want to eat it.” I laughed and said, “Junior you're not alone” and related his comment to the statistics on the page that indicated how people were continuing to order dessert knowing the effects on the chocolate Earth, instead of posting to social media and reversing the negative effects. The following shows how the conversation carried on.

Jocelyn: At least it's not the real earth.

Junior: . . . if that was the real earth, I'm not going to eat it.

[Paul and Carlos speak over each other.]

Jocelyn: If you're eating your real earth, you're destroying your home.
I acknowledged Jocelyn’s comment and connected it to the video by explaining how there are some things people do that harm our planet, like cutting down trees and creating a lot of trash.

Albert: Yeah, Ms. Megan has a point . . . . the problem with the chocolate and trash . . . . It's a lot of pollution. . . . It's like in the Choclatina book.

Jesse: And also, well, it's super sad. I can't even watch this anymore.

[Cynthia turned her microphone on to say something, but I noticed that Malia had her hand raised for some time so I called on her.]

Me: Sorry Cynthia, you can go right after Malia.

Malia: Probably because it's the rain?

Me: What about the rain? Keep going?

Malia: . . . the rain is coming [speech indecipherable]

Junior: Uh Malia, you know the rain is literally what makes our oceans.

Me: Yes, but Malia brings up a good point. In some places it's too much rain.

[Other students raising their hand or trying to insert comments but indecipherable.]

Malia: I hope it doesn't rain. Or maybe I like it because it waters my plants.

Junior: Has anyone visited Vietnam? Because the oceans there are really polluted.

[I nod and give a thumbs up to acknowledge Junior’s comment, while telling Cynthia she can share her ideas.]

Cynthia: If trash is all over our earth and if people trow trash all over the earth, it's not good. Our earth will be not happy. But when I was with my friend at the playground, we cleaned up the trash in the park.
The conversation continued with similar banter. By the end of the lesson, eight additional students spoke up to be a part of the discussion, either by asking questions or sharing personal experiences. The other four students showed signs of engagement with their body language by nodding their heads or putting their thumbs up or thumbs down when I asked questions or their peers talked. After watching the video of the lesson twice and reviewing the notes I took during the lesson, I noted that the students who were more actively speaking showed that they were able to use their everyday language to communicate their understandings and connections--one of the key indicators within the Domain 2 rubric. It seemed to me that the students' participation increased as the once abstract concept of climate change became more concrete and relatable to their experiences. The decision to incorporate this topic was rewarding.

**Equitable Participation**

Equitable participation is a key aspect of ICEPs and is the focus of Domain 4: Equitable Participation. One of the components of an ICEP is having a small group discussion. Domain 4 emphasizes teachers facilitating an instructional conversation in a small group so the interactions and connections can be meaningful and give everyone an equitable opportunity to verbalize their thinking. Due to COVID-19 and mandates from my administration, only two of my eight recorded lessons were taught in a small group. Regardless of the number of participants, I still used the rubrics to guide my planning and implementation of lessons and reflections.

In the reflection I made after I finished a reading lesson using Domain 4, I noted how I could apply these guidelines and indicators to any discussion or learning environment, whether in a large group, small group, or even just one-on-one. “These are good standards to live by,” I wrote. Taking this new outlook on how to use Domain 4, I found myself trying to apply the
behaviors to any conversation I had with students and also using it in tandem with other
domains, such as Domain 2: Complex Expression with Everyday Language. In my final
reflection on using the ICEP rubrics, I mentioned that “Domain 4 became a part of the backbone
to the classroom culture and climate I tried to create both online and in-person.”

Though there was evidence that I could apply the concepts of Domain 4 and find success,
the data also showed that in seven of the nine video reflections, I encountered some challenges
when I tried to facilitate an ICEP that included all of the students. I found that with the whole
class, the same students participated and did not participate. For students who were typically
more silent, instructing in the small group lessons gave them more opportunities to speak out and
contribute meaningfully in discussions.

I also noted in post-reflections that students did not have equal opportunities to contribute
their personal connections and experiences, elaborate on their thinking, ask questions, or build on
their peers’ ideas because “it would have lengthened the lesson and they could have lost
interest.” These expectations made it difficult to include everyone in the conversation and for
them to elaborate or extend on the ideas being shared. I had to try hard to include everyone,
which I thought was a challenge worth accepting since it encouraged me to find ways to keep all
of the students engaged enough to want to participate on their own in the whole group
discussions. For example, I found it helpful to learn more about my students so that we could
discuss topics relatable to them and to present more visual aids that could be used to probe ideas
and questions.

It is important to mention, as noted in a personal memo, that students who usually did not
verbally participate during lessons were participating more in later lessons and during other parts
of the day. I credited this increase in student interest and participation to my developing awareness of the ICEP indicators and shifting what I valued as I facilitated conversations. For example, I found myself asking students to elaborate on their thinking and to make personal connections to concepts, instead of focusing on meeting content standards within a certain time frame. Reading their body language and knowing about them individually also assisted me to create opportunities to get as many involved as possible.

**Cultural Responsiveness**

The most impactful way I think the ICEP rubric affected me was in my cultural responsiveness. After playing back my recorded videos, I realized that I was teaching and exposing my students to a culture that I was born into and it was becoming a part of their knowledge base. For example, during a discussion in which I integrated science and reading lessons using Domain 1: Connected Discussions, I shared about my experience with the four seasons based on the northeastern part of the United States, where I am from. I did not provide or give the students opportunities to provide their understanding of seasons in Hawai‘i or Vietnam, where they are from. As a result, when I asked the students to show which season, winter or spring, they would want for six more weeks and to draw a picture that communicated these ideas, three of the four students drew and verbalized my version of the seasons. That is, they drew and described winter as being cold with snow and barren trees and spring with newly blossomed trees and flowers with animals coming out of hibernation. When I was creating this lesson, I did not think of my cultural biases; however, from the post-reflection and video reflections using the rubric, it was clear that I was passing on information that was from my own background, instead of helping students build knowledge that was based on their own experiences.
In the video reflection from this lesson, I also wrote about how this example resonated with me. It made me wonder about other aspects of my culture that are so ingrained in me that I am passing on to students without realizing it. Being their teacher for their first two years of school, I recognized that my words and actions are often valued and are a model for the children’s behaviors and words. In all my efforts to adopt and understand the local culture in Hawai’i and make adjustments to literature, historical events, holidays, visual aids, and topics to reflect this culture, I failed to realize the depth of my cultural biases. Therefore, in this lesson, I instinctively drew spring in Pennsylvania where I grew up, instead of Hawai’i. In my post-reflection I wrote:

When implementing the ICEP the second time, I was more aware of the need to connect the content or lesson with my life and the students' lives. In the process, I didn't realize how teaching and modeling something that was comfortable for me to talk about was also teaching and sharing stories that were unrelated to Hawai’i.

The event-log from this lesson also showed that one of the students erased her drawing and began copying my picture. As I mentioned in my post-reflection, “sharing my experiences with the winter/spring and the changing seasons isn’t the problem. It’s doing so unknowingly and automatically that is the problem.”

I did not intend on using the northeastern United States’ representation of winter and spring. However, I did, and it became the reference the students used to build their background knowledge of seasons. The event log of this lesson and my post-reflection showed that when I noticed a student struggling to draw what season they preferred, I began to model drawing seasons from my childhood, instead of our local environment. In the post-reflection I mentioned
that when I noticed the student changing her picture and another student asking how to draw a snowflake, I realized my biases of seasons had overshadowed the students’ experiences in Hawai’i.

This example became the catalyst to help me be mindful and aware of the information I share. It also solidified the importance for me to have the students’ voices and experiences lead the conversations. Indicator 2d: Develops Critical Language Awareness also made an impact on my cultural responsiveness. As noted in a post-reflection, “because of this one indicator on a very detailed rubric, I am trying to include different languages in a variety of ways, like including other greetings from around the world in our morning share circle and learning about holidays in other countries as they come up throughout the year.” I was not expecting these outcomes when I started this study; however, as rare as these moments were and almost overlooked, they became a profound part in shaping how I now view the topics of social justice and equity and their roles in the classroom.

**Considerations for the ICEP Rubric Development**

In this section, I present my findings on areas for the ICEP developers to consider in increasing the practicality of using the ICEP rubric. From the data, two themes emerged: (a) content and structure of the ICEP rubric and (b) the significance of being in a professional learning community.

**Content and Structure of the ICEP Rubric**

The ICEP developers wanted to create a rubric that was recognizable, relevant, and feasible for teachers. In conversations I had with the ICEP developers and teachers in the EDEP 711 course, how useful a long and detailed rubric should be for teachers, in other words its
feasibility, was a topic that kept surfacing in our meeting throughout the study. The transcripts and meeting notes reflected these conversations, in which we questioned and assessed if having five domains was practical for teachers to use in terms of the time needed to understand and implement the rubric. Concerns about the rubric being “too long” because of it having five domains, or it being too “overwhelming” for teachers to be able to digest, implement, and learn from were mentioned in all seven meetings. The transcripts showed that I had agreed with this notion; however, in my final critique I took a different stance. I wrote:

Going through the process of learning how to use the rubric and understanding its expectations was overwhelming at times. Some domains felt redundant at the moment. However, after four months of going through the process and critiquing my teaching and beliefs, the knowledge I gained and the changes it made to the classroom discourse and culture made the length of the rubrics necessary. All of the domains were unique and valuable enough to stand on their own. It’s a robust rubric, but it’s a good one that I’ll continue to use.

The details in each rubric brought out nuanced conversations that helped me gain a better and clearer understanding of what an ICEP should look like, sound like, and feel like for both teachers and students. For example, in our fourth meeting we reviewed the rubric for Domain 3: Student Initiative and tried to arrive at a common understanding of the meaning and expectations for Indicator 3f: Student as Authority. The transcript from this meeting showed that in the beginning of the conversation the focus was on considering how the age of a student might affect their ability to “lead discussions” and “steer instructional conversations” and that the rubric might need to be “adapted” to fit different ages. There were arguments on both sides of the issue.
The teachers who taught older students thought that age was a factor because of either their cognitive development or social pressures. Because I taught young students and have experienced their abilities to steer conversations, I mentioned that age may not be the deciding factor and that the culture of the school, expectations of the teacher, and time spent having these dialogic discussions were more important factors that could have a greater influence on students’ initiative in conversations.

Laura then drew our attention to think about the title, “student as authority,” as being more about promoting equity of students’ voices in the conversation. This influenced us to discuss more about our perspectives on students’ positions in classroom discussions. The responses from me and the other teachers showed that we had the same intentions—for students to be leading the discussions and “staying on topic in their small groups and conversations with others without the teacher standing over them.” In response, Laura brought up the idea that perhaps “student agency” should be considered when thinking about Indicator 3f, which shifted the direction of the conversation once more.

Hector highlighted the idea that even in dialogic discourse “turn-taking” can be controlled leaving us to wonder what that really looks like in terms of student agency. Sensing the conversation was coming to an end, Kalena summed up the discussion about what it means for students to have authority in conversations perfectly when she said:

I think of it [student as authority] as coming from a kind of a values place, and tying it to do with something like kuleana [responsibility] and connecting that responsibility of taking leadership . . . and shifting ownerships, shifting responsibility. It's not quite power but I mean . . ., power is in it, but it's something about knowing your role, knowing when
to be vocal and when not to, when to support others, and when to step in and lead and having that balance, and that it's a kind of a reciprocal dance, almost. So I mean we call it the— building a sense of kuleana in, in my realm [Hawaiian] that's kinda how I think of it. But it's something about that ownership of knowing this is your kuleana and this is your learning and so you have to have a role in it, but also support others who are doing it with you; it's a kākou [all of us] thing.

This conversation is evidence of how one component of one of the domains took our group down many paths that deepened and broadened our understanding. In a sense, this was an ICEP itself that started with us wondering about whether age was a factor in children being able to steer discussions and led to a shared understanding of how ICEPs can be a “reciprocal dance” between participants. We built each other’s ideas to develop a better understanding of not only what Indicator 3f was intending, but also to clarify our beliefs and values about having ICs with children. I wonder if these discussions would have happened if the rubric was abbreviated and the indicators were combined or erased.

In the final meeting with the ICEP developers and teachers, I suggested that if the rubric had to be shortened, then an accompanying text would be necessary to provide background knowledge about the meaning of ICEPs and the vision for how the rubric could guide teachers in their development of facilitating ICEPs. My analysis of this study’s findings showed that each domain has its own specific purpose, whether for the teacher or students. Every post-reflection, video-reflection, and meeting showed different evidence of growth from each domain indicating the importance of having a detailed rubric with multiple components that included specific behavior indicators for teachers and students to target.
Another area to consider keeping or adding onto, though it would lengthen the rubric, is having explicit examples of language and behaviors listed under each indicator. I mentioned in a post-reflection from Domain 2 that “I liked having the sentence starters and examples of what the expectation [eliciting or modeling expression] should sound and look like. I had these running through my head and keeping them at the forefront to facilitate the conversation.” I think having the extra guidance helped me know what to do and most importantly how to do it. For example, in the Domain 5: Collaborative Discussion rubric, under Indicator 5d: Orients to Others’ Ideas it says, “asks to respond to another’s ideas (e.g. “I agree with…”).” Reading only the first part of the indicator, I interpreted this to mean asking whether any student wanted to respond to what another student had just said. However, after considering the example given, I realized that I needed to include language that would encourage students to respond to others by not just adding new ideas, but also acknowledging what others before had said.

In the post-reflections from the other domains and my final critique, I also mentioned that these explicit examples could be used to assist teacher noticings so that they are more refined. The rubric provided precise language with a clear idea of the indicators and could serve as conversation starters among colleagues because everyone would have the same language and examples to build on. However, the data showed that there were benefits from collaborating with others by constructing and negotiating ideas when the expectation or meaning of the indicator was not as precise. Therefore, leaving some of the indicators open-ended could be intentional from the rubric authors in order to promote discourse.

Considerations that I and the other teachers made early in our meetings suggested that the categories used to rate teachers’ performances should be based on the amount of evidence
shown, versus considering one’s abilities as “novice, intermediate, or advanced.” The rubric developers took our recommendations and changed the rubric by the time we were discussing Domain 3. In the post-reflection using Domain 3, I wrote, “I think linking the indicators directly to the amount of evidence is more concrete and takes on more of a growth-mindset than feeling like I’m obtaining a certain level of achievement. Now there’s a better sense that it focuses more on the process rather than the end goal.”

I also made notes in post-reflections describing how I focused more on letting the behavioral markers--listed under the indicators--guide my next steps in implementing an ICEP, rather than using the descriptors under the leveled categories because I thought they were too general. My self-assessments also showed that sometimes I was between categories. In these post-reflections, I noted the difficulty I had trying to figure out which category I belonged in. In these moments, I felt like my time was better spent narrowing my teacher noticings on the specific indicators rather than the labeled categories. When I focused on the listed behaviors, I could pinpoint and determine what I did successfully and what I needed to improve, making my reflection process targeted and productive.

The last area I considered was the developmental appropriateness of some of the ICEP components. As mentioned earlier in this section, some have questioned the use of collaborative discourse among young children in the primary grades. Laura mentioned that there would be less collaborative speech because children at this age are still developing the concepts and skills. Malie responded with evidence from one of my lessons that our EDEP 711 group watched. She noticed my students building on one another, highlighting that collaborative speech is possible, but noted that it was mostly likely because it was something the students learned to do.
I agreed with Malie, but also argued that there still may be developmental differences. For example, in all of my video reflections, I noted that students responded directly to me most of the time, rather than to their peers. The data also showed that at times students did not “respectfully listen to peers” throughout the conversation and only a few times did a student “ask a peer for clarification” or “correct others’ misconceptions.” Modeling, teaching, and making discourse a regular part of our classroom culture are common practices, though the students’ developmental levels may still be a factor as indicated in the data. I suggested that a note could be added to the rubric that mentioned that since young children are developing these skills and behaviors, that the emphasis should be on the teacher modeling and creating a lot of opportunities for dialogic discourse.

I also noted in post-reflections a few other areas of the rubric that made me wonder if there were developmental differences. Indicator 4a: Organizes Community Discussions suggests that teachers “foster rotating roles (leader, recorder, etc.)” for students in the discussions. Considering that students in kindergarten and first grade are learning how to read and write, asking them to record ideas throughout the discussion may not be as beneficial; however, for older students it may be appropriate and could help track the conversations.

Topics about social injustice, examining inequalities, and developing critical language awareness were also areas that I considered because of my students’ development. In the post-reflection from Domain 2, I suggested that perhaps for teachers of young students we can “examine language marginalization” by focusing on recognizing and using language that is viewed as marginalized, especially if it is the preferred or dominant language of the students. As an early childhood teacher, I am often assisting students in their language acquisition by using
their everyday language. Examining language marginalization and having conversations regularly about this topic, along with conversations about social injustices and inequalities, may be more appropriate for older students who are more socially and culturally aware.

**Professional Learning Community**

As noted throughout the results, discussions with the ICEP developers and teacher colleagues helped me and my teacher peers to construct new knowledge together. During our meetings, we discussed the intentions of the ICEP rubric and came to common understandings about the language, content, and how to use the ICEP rubric. Every participant offered different perspectives that influenced how I moved forward in my development at facilitating an ICEP. The collaborative and open environment highlighted the value of assisting one another and working towards a mutual goal, in this case, becoming better educators in dialogic discourse.

In one of our meetings, we discussed the meaning of the Indicator 2e: Express Ideas Using Everyday Language from Domain 2. At first, I interpreted students' use of their “everyday language” as a setback to learning Standard English. My idea of what this dimension was intending for students’ expression began to shift as others contributed their perspectives and understandings. I recognized how I was thinking too literally about this dimension. I used the example of one of my students continuing to spell /da/ instead of /the/ because they were using their “everyday language.” Towards the end of the semester, my understanding widened, and I came to the conclusion that this dimension is a reminder that when students can communicate using their “everyday language,” it means they feel comfortable being themselves and a part of an emotionally safe community.
New ideas were also shared and discussed in these meetings. They opened possibilities for different ways to interpret and use the rubric. For example, in one of the earlier meetings, Malie suggested that students could also use the rubric to self-assess their participation and role in discussions and that teachers could assist students in their growth in these areas by having a common rubric to learn from. At the final meeting, Julie shared that she asked her students to assess themselves using the student section of Domain 3: Student Initiative and found that it was beneficial for her to learn what her students thought of themselves as contributors and to have the time to reflect on these skills. Though Malie and Julie taught students in upper elementary and middle school, they planted a seed for me to consider adapting and using with younger students.
Discussion

The results indicated that the ICEP rubric affected my teaching practices and reflection process in positive and constructive ways. Though the rubric was in development throughout the study, it still influenced my teacher noticings and guided my decision-making when planning and implementing lessons. These findings are consistent with the literature on effective teaching and reflective practices. Research suggests that having a systematic framework to reflect on lessons is productive (Davis et. al., 2006) and benefits both the teacher and students (Spalding & Wilson, 2002). I think the ICEP rubric provided the structure and guidance to examine my and the students’ roles in conversations and ultimately led to having more meaningful student-driven discussions in the classroom than before implementing ICEPs.

As the current study focused on how the ICEP rubric influenced my teaching practices, it did not examine my overall effectiveness at facilitating an ICEP. Seven out of the nine lessons I taught for this study were with the whole class, which made it difficult to fully implement an ICEP. However, the data showed that the more time I spent reflecting on and making intentional choices based on the desired behaviors identified on the rubric, the more I progressed in being able to apply components of an ICEP. I even found myself considering the indicators from the rubric when I was interacting and talking with students at other times, separate from the study’s lessons, as I became aware of my affirmations and acknowledgments, probed students for their reasoning, showed enthusiasm, and supported their wonderings. The results indicated that the classroom discourse among young children was sustainable, such that they were engaged for 20-30 minutes. The discourse also incorporated complex topics and language and enriched the classroom environment. These findings are consistent with the literature on a dialogic approach
to teaching (Wells & Haneda, 2005) and provides reasoning for teachers to implement ICEP concepts in classrooms.

The finding that was least anticipated, but most influential to my teaching, was how the rubric brought attention to my cultural responsiveness. Reese, Jensen, and Ramirez (2014) define cultural responsiveness in the classroom as having “interactions that build on and draw from students’ lived experiences” (p. 505). They also mentioned that according to Goldenberg and Coleman (2010), our culture is based on the one we were born into and this conceptualization of culture can be problematic because it continues the misconception that culture does not change. However, in a sociocultural perspective, culture can change through daily interactions.

These concepts resonated with me, since I was fairly new to Hawai‘i and am a white female teaching in a diverse school. I previously considered myself to have a sociocultural perspective, as I embraced the various cultures and ethnicities that make up Hawai‘i and began to shift my cultural norms and values. In the classroom, I changed picture books to represent the racial diversity of the school, incorporated more learning opportunities to discuss the colonization and imperialism of Hawai‘i with my young students, and designed the curriculum to be more place-based. However, through this study, I realized that this was just skimming the surface and that my cultural biases are deep rooted in the one I am born into.

The rubric and discussions in the EDEP 711 course about equity and social justice drove me to go deeper and explore these cultural biases. I thought that these biases could be problematic in perpetuating aspects of white supremacy in education. The rubric influenced me to think about how I was incorporating conversations about social justice and how I could develop critical language awareness in young children—concepts I would not have considered on
my own. It elicited me to plan more lessons around concepts of racial segregation and whiteness (Altman, 2006). More importantly though, it allowed me to recognize how my cultural biases were unintentionally seeping into classroom conversations, as described in my reflection from the lesson on seasons. Even if the topic was just about seasons, to me it felt like the tip of the iceberg.

It is also important to note that during the time of the study, the controversy about Critical Race Theory in schools had emerged in the US. The combination of the rubric and revisiting the concepts addressed in Critical Race Theory, challenged me to notice my role as a white educator in a diverse school. Though I was a part of a racial minority, being one of the three white individuals in the classroom, I still held authority through my position as a teacher. According to Pane and Salmon (2009), as a means of advancing social justice, education should interrupt, rather than reproduce, white norms and practices. Starting in my own classroom, I saw this juncture as a great time to interrupt white norms and practices and learn more about the place I was living.

The growth I experienced over the course of this study was not only due to the framework the ICEP rubric provided, but also to the conversations I had with others about the content of the rubric and its ability to assist teachers in facilitating ICEPs. According to Dewey (1933), interacting with those who value personal and intellectual growth of themselves and others are key components in the reflective inquiry process. The ICEP developers and teacher colleagues provided this type of professional learning community for me and reaffirmed this notion.
The ICEP developers’ vision of the rubric to be “practical" was based on being recognizable, relevant, and feasible for teachers as described earlier in the results. Doyle and Ponder (1977) argued that “change protocols” or “innovation projects” (p. 6) are perceived as being practical if teachers try to use them in their classrooms. The authors highlighted that as teachers gain more experiences with the protocols, their understanding of the expectations increase. On the contrary, they noted that without having expectations clearly outlined the protocols may not be sustainable for teachers to continue to use. This idea relates to the ICEP rubric being recognizable. The study also suggested that teachers view protocols as practical if they can translate into the teacher’s existing classroom environment--in other words, its relevancy--and if the cost of implementing the protocols outweigh the means--its feasibility. My findings were consistent with these ideas. Though my findings suggested considerations for the ICEP developers to change aspects of the rubric to be more recognizable, the relevancy and feasibility of the rubric appeared to be very practical. I think because my instructional approach aligned with ICEPs and there was a significant amount of beneficial outcomes, the ICEP rubric showed to be a practical tool to use in my classroom.

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

In this section, I reflect on the implications of my study for educational practice and policy. I will discuss the following areas: (a) becoming culturally responsive; (b) support for small group instruction; (c) areas for professional development; (d) participating in an ICEP professional learning community; (e) time constraints implementing ICEPs; and (f) students’ use of the ICEP rubric.
**Becoming Culturally Responsive**

As noted above, the way the rubric assisted my development in becoming more culturally aware and responsive was the most influential result of the study. Use of the ICEP rubric has the potential to assist teachers, administrators, and curriculum writers to be more culturally responsive, particularly for those, like me, who come from communities which are different from their students.

**Support for Small Group Instruction**

Another implication is related to whole group versus small group instruction. I found that components of an ICEP can occur when facilitating a discussion with the whole class. However, when I think about the essence of an ICEP, I have to remind myself that it is about facilitating conversations that promote students sharing their perspectives and experiences, while creating an environment with equitable participation. It is difficult to accomplish this with large groups, as noted in my experiences throughout the study. Therefore, small group instruction is suggested. The ICEP rubric can be used as a tool to assist and support teachers who strive to or already implement small group instruction in their classroom.

**Areas for Professional Development**

While facilitating an ICEP in small groups is ideal and recommended, specific classroom routines, student expectations, and pedagogical approaches are needed to support this type of instruction. ICEPs prioritize student-centered dialogic discourse and give students ownership and autonomy in their academic decision-making. Because only a few students are involved in an ICEP with the teacher, the students not involved will need to manage their own learning tasks. These are important factors for teachers and administrators to consider when implementing
ICEPs. Professional development is suggested for teachers who are unfamiliar or need assistance with such management or instructional approaches.

**Participating in an ICEP Professional Learning Community**

Though the ICEP rubric was intended for teams of educators who teach in the same schools and teach the same grades or content areas, there is potential for it to be used among other groups of teachers. In the EDEP 711 course, the teacher participants and I were teaching different grade levels and content areas; however, we had similar educational beliefs and approaches. We shared a similar value of teachers’ and students’ roles in classroom discourse. More importantly, we had similar goals of creating a professional learning community centered around open-mindedness, learning from one another, and compromise. I think these commonalities allowed us to comfortably build on one another's ideas and respectfully question one another. Having a professional learning community made up of teachers with similar approaches to teaching and collaboration may be as beneficial as teams made up of teachers who teach the same grade level or content area.

The ICEP rubric was also intended for teams of teachers to form professional learning communities without an instructional coach or administrator. According to Doyle and Ponder (1977), there are three types of teachers when change protocols are put in place: (a) the rational adopter, (b) the stone-age obstructionist, and (c) the pragmatic skeptic. Professional learning communities that include teachers who are stone-age obstructionists, those who are resistant to change, or pragmatic skeptics, those who are hesitant to change, could be difficult. Without an instructional coach or administrator to mediate differences in opinions or set expectations for
adapting or adopting ICEP protocols may be challenging for individuals in professional learning communities to navigate and overcome by themselves.

Lastly, recording ICEP lessons and watching them while simultaneously using the rubric was advantageous for honing my teacher noticings and showed to have a significant impact on changing my teaching practices. These practices may benefit the professional learning community as well because conversations would be based on evidence that everyone has access to, rather than teachers using their anecdotal notes or recalling past lessons. Video recording can promote conversations being focused and targeted leading to productive use of time.

**Time Constraints Implementing ICEPs**

I and the other teachers in EDEP 711 engaged in ICEP professional development as part of our graduate studies. Oftentimes, teachers argue that there is not enough time to complete essential tasks (e.g. lesson planning, communicating with parents and colleagues, providing feedback of student work, preparing materials for activities) during their contractual day (Collison & Cook, 2001). The time needed for ICEP professional development is a constraint teachers, administrators, and policy makers should consider when implementing ICEP protocols in their classrooms or schools.

**Students’ Use of the ICEP Rubric**

As mentioned earlier, students using the rubric as a self-assessment can potentially be another way the ICEP rubric is used in the classroom. Students can examine their roles and contributions in an ICEP and set goals for their improvement. Research shows that rubrics have a positive impact on student performance when it includes criteria and performance level expectations (Bradford et al., 2015; Brookhard & Chen, 2014). Since modeling is an effective
mode of learning any new skill (Bandura, 1986), teachers can model for students ICEP expectations based on the indicators, as well as how to use the rubric in the reflection process.

Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this study were mostly due to COVID-19 restrictions, which required virtual instruction. For 9 of the 19 students, these online interactions were their only experience with each other and me to establish school norms. Technology, students’ home environment, and the lack of physical proximity presented challenges and setbacks throughout the study. At times it was difficult to hear what a student was saying because the sound was muffled. There were online lessons where students joined from their car or at a store. When a student needed assistance academically or behaviorally, I could not address the situation privately or provide the same kind of individual instruction that would normally occur if we were in the classroom together. Using eye contact as a way to connect in conversation and focus attention was also something the students and I adapted to in our online meetings. I made some assumptions about students’ engagement during the virtual lessons because I was familiar with some of them from the previous year.

Another limitation that I encountered was that most lessons had to be held with the whole-group because it was mandated by my administrator. However, about four months prior to data collection, small group lessons happened regularly. In the smaller setting, the students and I were able to learn more about each other and develop classroom norms and etiquette—things that would usually happen with the whole group if we were in-person. I think the more intimate interactions from those small group sessions transferred to the whole group lessons because even though the virtual environment was challenging, the students still appeared to be comfortable
sharing their ideas openly and freely. This is consistent with other research that small group instruction can positively influence classroom culture (Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999).

Because this was a case study consisting of only my accounts and experiences using the ICEP rubric, additional research that includes more participants who also use the rubric is recommended. These studies can take different paths. For example, comparing the difference between professional learning communities that include teachers of similar grade levels to those with mixed grade levels or comparing similar content to mixed content. Given that the rubric is designed for teams of teachers to use on their own, more research on the characteristics of the most productive professional learning communities leading to teachers learning to use ICEPs can be helpful.

Some areas for future research that could contribute to the development and use of the ICEP rubric include studies that identify if prior courses are needed for teachers before engaging in ICEP professional development. As mentioned earlier, I found that the culture of the classroom influences the success of ICEPs. The individuals in the professional learning community in this study had common values and approaches for establishing our classroom culture (e.g. student-led, inquiry-based, constructing knowledge together, and frequent discourse). It would be helpful to investigate whether such prior knowledge and experiences assists teachers to grow their understanding of how to facilitate ICEPs. Would a teacher with opposing views have similar outcomes or is additional professional development needed before teachers begin to incorporate ICEPs in their classrooms?

I also think the ICEP rubric is worth exploring in other content areas like physical education and the arts. Oftentimes the focus of professional development is language arts, math,
science, and social studies, which leaves out health, fitness, and the arts. In my school, our middle and high school students rotate between seven teachers throughout the day switching classes every 45 minutes. Teachers most likely would have 4-5 classes a day to work on becoming better facilitators of ICEPs; however, students might not have the same amount of time. It would be interesting to learn more about the influence of having multiple teachers who teach the same students on the students’ abilities to participate in ICEPs. If it became a school-wide initiative, it would also be interesting to determine how the school culture and climate was affected.
References


https://people.ucsc.edu/~gwells/Files/Papers_Folder/documents/ICAERA09.pdf


## 1. CONNECTED DISCUSSIONS

How teacher and students connect thematic foci of classroom discussion with students' everyday experiences (such as routines, interests, relationships, perspectives, expertise, values, and traditions), including issues of fairness, bias, and justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Novice (1)</th>
<th>Intermediate (3)</th>
<th>Advanced (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. Fosters Personal Sharing</td>
<td>The teacher rarely or never shares from her own life or provides opportunities for students to share. She does not affirm, extend, or examine what is shared.</td>
<td>Sometimes the teacher shares from her own life or provides opportunities for students to share, but rarely affirms, extends, or examines what is shared.</td>
<td>The teacher regularly shares or provides opportunities for students to share. She affirms, extends, and examines what is shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Weaves Everyday Experiences</td>
<td>The teacher does not weave discussion theme with students' everyday knowledge and experiences.</td>
<td>Sometimes the teacher weaves discussion theme with students' everyday knowledge and experiences.</td>
<td>The teacher often weaves discussion theme with students' everyday knowledge and experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. Builds Background Knowledge</td>
<td>Teacher does not provide background knowledge, concepts, skills, and relevant schemata to foster student participation</td>
<td>Teacher sometimes provides background knowledge, concepts, skills, and relevant schemata to foster student participation</td>
<td>Teacher regularly provides background knowledge, concepts, skills, and relevant schemata to foster student participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d. Examines Inequity</td>
<td>The teacher does not provide opportunities for students to examine and resolve issues of inequity</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes provides opportunities for students to examine and resolve issues of inequity</td>
<td>The teacher often provides opportunities for students to examine and resolve issues of inequity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e. Peer Sharing Everyday Experiences</td>
<td>Students do not share about themselves or show interest in peers' experiences.</td>
<td>Students sometimes share about themselves, but rarely show interest in peers' experiences.</td>
<td>Students often share about themselves and show interest in peers' experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1f. Personal Connections</td>
<td>Students do not connect discussion theme with their own life outside of school.</td>
<td>Students sometimes connect discussion theme with their own life, but not with personal experiences with inequity</td>
<td>Students regularly connect discussion theme with their own life, including personal experiences with inequity</td>
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</table>
### 2. Complex Expression with Everyday Language

*How interactions assist student expression of complex ideas using students’ everyday language resources (e.g., dialects, vernaculars, creoles) through modeling, elicitation, and affirmation.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Novice (1)</th>
<th>Intermediate (3)</th>
<th>Advanced (5)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2a. Models Expression</strong></td>
<td>The teacher rarely uses everyday or complex language to model idea expression.</td>
<td>The teacher uses everyday and complex language to model expression, but more of one than the other.</td>
<td>The teacher regularly integrates complex and everyday language to model idea expression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focuses talk on ideas using a variety of words</td>
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<td>- Expresses ideas using everyday language</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Complex grammar (e.g., connectives, precision, syntax, morphology)</td>
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<td><strong>2b. Elicits Expression</strong></td>
<td>The teacher rarely elicits student expression by questioning, listening, or asking them to explain their thinking.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes poses questions and listens to elicit student expression but only rarely asks them to explain their thinking.</td>
<td>The teacher often elicits student expression by questioning, listening, and asking them to explain their thinking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Allows for overlapping speech and other culturally consistent speech patterns</td>
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<td>- Listens actively to student expression</td>
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<td>- Invites to expand (e.g., “tell me more”)</td>
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<td>- Questions views (e.g., “what do you mean?”)</td>
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<td>- Asks for reason (e.g., “why do you think?”)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2c. Affirms and Extends Expression</strong></td>
<td>The teacher does not affirm or extend student expression.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes affirms student expression but only rarely extends their expression.</td>
<td>The teacher regularly affirms and extends student expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Affirms student use of everyday talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Rephrases student ideas with new words (e.g., “so you are saying ___”)</td>
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<td>- Assists students to deepen ideas (e.g., “what might the opposite view be?”)</td>
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<td><strong>2d. Develops Critical Language Awareness</strong></td>
<td>The teacher does not develop students’ critical language awareness.</td>
<td>Sometimes the teacher develops students’ critical language awareness.</td>
<td>The teacher often develops students’ critical language awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Positions everyday language as important and appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Examines language marginalization (e.g., related to texts in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Encourages student sharing with language marginalization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2e. Express Ideas with Everyday Language</strong></td>
<td>Students do not use everyday or complex language to communicate ideas.</td>
<td>Students sometimes use everyday and complex language to communicate ideas.</td>
<td>Students regularly use everyday and complex language to communicate ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Express ideas using everyday language and complex grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ask questions about complex ideas with everyday language and word variety</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Connect complex ideas with personal experiences using everyday language</td>
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</table>
3. STUDENT INITIATIVE

How interactions assist student initiative to reason and regulate their own participation and learning in classroom discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>No or Little Evidence (1)</th>
<th>Some Evidence (3)</th>
<th>Consistent Evidence (5)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T E A C H E R</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. <strong>Positions Self as Learner</strong></td>
<td>The teacher does not seek to learn from students.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes seeks to learn from students, but rarely admits ignorance or summarizes insights gained.</td>
<td>The teacher often seeks to learn from students and acknowledges insights and new knowledge gained from them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Seeks to learn from students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Acknowledges student expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Admits ignorance</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Restates/summarizes gained insights</td>
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<tr>
<td>3b. <strong>Integrates Student Contribution</strong></td>
<td>The teacher rarely integrates student contributions in her/his classroom conversations.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes integrates student contributions in her/his classroom.</td>
<td>The teacher regularly integrates student contributions in her/his classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responds to ideas generated by students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Links student ideas to focus of discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Provides opportunity to consider alternatives to their idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3c. <strong>Probes for Reasons with Students</strong></td>
<td>The teacher rarely asks for reasons or evidence from students.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes asks for reasons or evidence but rarely focuses on rationale over correctness.</td>
<td>The teacher regularly asks for reasons or evidence from students and focuses on rationale over correctness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Asks reasons for statement (e.g., &quot;how do you know?&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Asks for evidence (e.g., text, graphics, personal experience) to support argument</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focuses on rationale over correctness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>S T U D E N T S</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3d. <strong>Self-Regulate</strong></td>
<td>Students do not participate without prompting, seek support or guidance, or identify misconceptions.</td>
<td>Students sometimes self-regulate but only rarely identify their own misconceptions.</td>
<td>Students regularly participate without prompting, seek support or guidance, and identify their own misconceptions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Participate without prompting</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Seek support and guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identify own misconceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3e. <strong>Contribute Ideas</strong></td>
<td>Students do not contribute ideas, ask unsolicited questions, or identify limitations of arguments.</td>
<td>Students sometimes contribute ideas but only rarely identify limitations of arguments.</td>
<td>Students regularly contribute ideas, ask unsolicited questions, and identify limitations of arguments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Contribute relevant insights</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Ask unsolicited questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Identify limitations of arguments</td>
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<tr>
<td>3f. <strong>Student as Authority</strong></td>
<td>Students rarely assume instructional or leadership roles typical of a teacher.</td>
<td>Students sometimes assume instructional or leadership roles typical of a teacher.</td>
<td>Students often assume instructional or leadership roles typical of a teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Affirm peers</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lead discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Correct others' misconceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Steer instructional conversation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 4. EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

*How interactions foster opportunity for each student to contribute as meaningful participants in small group instructional conversations.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>No or Little Evidence (1)</th>
<th>Some Evidence (3)</th>
<th>Consistent Evidence (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4a. Organizes Community Discussion | - Creates small groups  
- Provides participation opportunity for all  
- Fosters rotating roles (leader, recorder, etc.) | The teacher does not create small groups, provide participation opportunities for all, or foster rotating roles. | The teacher sometimes organizes community discussion, but rarely fosters rotating roles. | The teacher regularly organizes community discussion. |
| 4b. Distributes Encouragement | - Communicates belief in ability to every student  
- Distributes specific feedback among students and student groups (e.g., affirmation, extension)  
- Corrects misbehavior when needed in private, empathetic, and respectful ways | The teacher rarely distributes encouragement. | The teacher sometimes distributes encouragement but rarely corrects misbehavior in equitable ways. | The teacher regularly distributes encouragement and corrects misbehavior in equitable ways. |
| 4c. Supports Student Wondering Together | - Provides positive emotional climate (e.g., smiling, laughter, verbal affection)  
- Provides adequate time, hints, and objects (realia) to share thinking with each other  
- Uses plural pronouns to encourage risk-taking  
- Furthers wondering of group with follow-up questions rather than evaluating | The teacher rarely supports students wondering together. | The teacher sometimes supports student wondering but rarely furthers wonderings with follow-up questions. | The teacher often supports and furthers students wondering together. |
| Student | 4d. Contribute Meaningfully | - Ask clarifying questions  
- Respectfully listen to peers (as engagement)  
- Express eagerness nonverbally (e.g., lean in, point, intently observe, nod)  
- Share without prompting from teacher  
- Think out loud or share uncertainties | The students do not contribute meaningfully by questioning, listening, expressing eagerness, sharing, and thinking out loud. | The students sometimes contribute meaningfully, but only rarely think out loud. | The students regularly contribute meaningfully by questioning, listening, expressing eagerness, sharing, and thinking out loud. |
## 5. COLLABORATIVE DISCOURSE

The extent to which classroom discussions assist students to explore, co-construct, and negotiate meaning with each other and with the teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Little or No Evidence (1)</th>
<th>Some Evidence (3)</th>
<th>Consistent Evidence (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5a. **Structures Group Discussion**  
- Provides discussion topic or joint activity  
- Assigns joint task from discussion or activity  
- Encourages peer assistance in small group conversation | The teacher does not structure group discussion or joint activity. | The teacher provides discussion opportunities and scaffolds joint product from discussion, but only rarely encourages peer assistance. | The teacher consistently provides discussion opportunities, scaffolds joint product from discussion, and encourages peer assistance. |
| 5b **Presents Open-Ended Questions**  
- Encourages brainstorming and creativity (e.g., sentence frames)  
- Emphasizes multiple views  
- Asks for more possible responses  
- Asks about their subjective views or feelings | The teacher rarely presents open-ended questions. | The teacher sometimes presents open-ended questions, but only rarely asks for additional responses and/or subjective views or feelings | The teacher regularly encourages brainstorming, multiple perspectives, additional responses, and subjective views or feelings |
| 5c. **Observes and Listens Closely**  
- Pauses to observe or listen  
- Checks own understanding of student contribution  
- Detects non-verbalized needs | The teacher does not observe and listen closely to students. | The teacher sometimes observes and listens closely by checking own understanding, but rarely detects non-verbalized student needs. | The teacher regularly observes and listens closely, checks own understanding, and detects non-verbalized student needs. |
| 5d. **Orients to Others’ Ideas**  
- Asks to respond to another’s idea (e.g., “I agree with...”)  
- Assists connections to peer contributions  
- Encourages to elaborate on another’s ideas  
- Fosters shared ownership of ideas | The teacher rarely orients students to one another’s ideas. | The teacher orient students to one another’s ideas, but rarely fosters shared ownership of ideas | The teacher often asks students to respond to and elaborate on another’s idea, assists connections to peer contributions, and fosters shared ownership of ideas |
| 5e. **Construct Ideas Together**  
- Build one another’s contribution  
- Provide one another feedback  
- Assist peer contributions  
- Negotiate to arrive at shared solution (multiple? understandings) | Students rarely construct ideas together. | Students sometimes coordinate to construct ideas together, but only rarely negotiate to arrive at a shared solution. | Students often coordinate to construct ideas together and negotiate to arrive at a shared solution. |
| 5f. **Shared Enthusiasm**  
- Eagerly take talk turns to explore ideas  
- Pause to observe and listen  
- Ask a peer for clarification  
- Contributions engender enthusiasm | Students are rarely eager to explore ideas together and do not share enthusiasm. | Students sometimes explore ideas together, but only rarely experience shared enthusiasm | Students regularly explore ideas together which fosters shared enthusiasm |
Appendix B: Questions to Elicit Teacher Noticing Using ICEP Rubric During Self-Reflections

1. What went well about the lesson? Identify several positive features.
2. Why did these positive features go well?
3. What have you learned about your teaching? To what extent are these features strengths in your teaching?
4. What did not go so well about the lesson? Identify several features.
5. Why did these features not go so well?
6. What have you learned about your teaching? To what extent are these features shortcomings in your teaching?
7. Taking questions 3 and 6 together, how can you capitalise on your strengths and change your shortcomings in your next lesson? (King and Barry, 1998, p. 409)