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Does creativity have a place in classroom discussions? Prospective teachers' response preferences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine prospective middle and secondary teachers' preferences for unique versus relevant student responses during classroom discussions. Results indicate that, on average, prospective teachers ($N = 70$) preferred relevance to uniqueness in student responses. In addition, results of regression analysis indicate that prospective teachers' preference for unique responses varied as a function of grade level and academic subject area. Finally, analysis of written explanations revealed nuanced reasons for prospective teachers' preferences ranging from viewing unique responses as potentially distracting to viewing any response as acceptable because of a desire to encourage student participation. Implications for future research and teacher education are discussed.

Keywords: Creativity; Teaching for creativity; Teacher development

1. Introduction

Creative thinking is a key competency for the 21st century. Indeed, creativity has been viewed as the ultimate economic resource (Florida, 2004) and as essential for addressing complex individual and societal issues (Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004; Runco, 2004a). Creativity involves the ability to offer new perspectives, generate novel and meaningful ideas, raise new questions, and come up with solutions to ill-defined problems (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

Classroom discussions provide an ideal forum for students to develop their creative thinking skills. Indeed, teachers can support students' creative thinking by encouraging and rewarding students' novel ideas, unique perspectives, and creative connections (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004). For instance, during a discussion of how to use the school library to gather research for a science project, a teacher could actively pursue rather than dismiss a student's speculation that school libraries will be obsolete 10 years from now. Similarly, a teacher might attempt to cultivate, rather than quickly refocus, a conversation amongst students regarding an unexpected connection made between an historical event and the theme of a highly popular, futuristic video game.

Unfortunately, in many classroom discussions, novel ideas are not always well received. Indeed, because novel ideas are unanticipated ideas, such ideas often are dismissed by teachers. For instance, Kennedy (2005) found in her observations of classroom discussions that teachers "habitually" dismissed unexpected student comments and ideas. The habitual dismissal of unique ideas spells trouble for the cultivation of creative thinking.

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Although creativity requires a combination of uniqueness and relevance (Amabile, 1996; Plucker et al., 2004), too much emphasis on relevance can be problematic. For instance, Runco (2004b) has argued that students' creative potential might go unnoticed if too much emphasis is placed on whether unique ideas have immediate relevance. Of course, this does not mean that students should never be taught how to balance originality with relevance and appropriateness. Indeed, a key aspect of creativity enhancement involves providing students with informative feedback so they can develop their capacity to determine how and when to appropriately express their ideas (Beghetto, 2005, in press). However, if teachers place too much emphasis on relevance—stressing the importance of demonstrating one's competence and avoiding mistakes—students may be too fearful to share novel ideas. As Nickerson (1999) has observed:

> Timidity is not conducive to creativity. Fear is... a major reason why children hesitate to express their ideas, especially perhaps unconventional ones... Fear of failure, fear of exposing one's limitations, and fear of ridicule are powerful deterrents to creative thinking (pp. 413–414).

Students' fear of exposing their limitations may be exacerbated or allayed depending on whether they view classroom discussions as viable opportunities for taking the intellectual risks necessary for creative expression. As such, teachers must take active steps to establish a classroom environment in which students feel safe taking such risks (Tighe, Picariello, & Amabile, 2003). This starts with teachers themselves being accepting of unique student responses, even if those responses are only somewhat relevant to the conversation.

Research is needed that examines teachers' preference for the kinds of ideas shared during classroom discussions. Perhaps the best time to examine such preferences is when prospective teachers are enrolled in teacher preparation programs. In this way, problematic beliefs can be identified and addressed and adaptive beliefs and practices can be reinforced and supported. As such, the aim of the present study was to examine prospective teachers' preferences for novel and relevant student comments during classroom discussions.

2. Research questions

The following research questions guided the investigation: Do prospective middle and secondary teachers prefer student responses that are predominantly relevant or predominantly unique during classroom discussions? Do prospective teachers' characteristics (i.e., gender, grade level, academic subject area) account for variations in their response preferences during classroom discussions? What types of explanations do prospective teachers offer for their response preferences?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants consisted of 70 prospective middle (6th–8th grade) and secondary (9th–12th grade) teachers who were enrolled in a graduate seminar on learning and assessment at a mid-size University in the Pacific Northwest. The majority of the sample was female (63%), Caucasian (91%) and intending to teach at the secondary level (51%). Participants identified themselves as intending to teaching in one of five academic subjects: science (15.7%), math (18.6%), social studies (25.7%), language arts (24.3%), or second language (15.7%).

3.2. Instruments and procedures

Data were collected from two on-line surveys[1] designed to elicit characteristics of and beliefs held by prospective teachers. Students received course credit for completing both surveys. The first instrument included open-ended and selected response items aimed at gathering demographic and background information about prospective teachers. Four items on the first survey asked prospective teachers to report their gender, ethnicity, desired grade level to teach

[1] The surveys served as pre-assessments of topics to be covered later in the course and therefore included items beyond the scope of the present study (e.g., beliefs about learning, assessment, and student motivation).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for items and scales

Variable	M	S.D.
(1) Uniqueness preference score ($\alpha = .72$)	3.24	.72
Unique, but not relevant for the given conversation	2.99	.94
Unique and somewhat relevant for the given conversation	3.71	.76
Somewhat unique but not relevant for the given conversation	3.00	.97
(2) Relevance preference score ($\alpha = .67$)	3.63	.64
Relevant for the given conversation and somewhat unique	4.23	.77
Relevant for the given conversation, but not unique	3.54	.77
Somewhat relevant for the given conversation but not unique	3.13	.93

Note. $N = 70$.

(middle[2] or secondary), and primary academic subject that they intend to teach (e.g., math, science, language arts, etc.).

The second survey (consisting of open-ended and Likert-type items) was administered midway through the ten week course. Items on this survey focused on eliciting prospective teachers' perceptions about their current and future use of classroom discussions as an instructional strategy. Participants were instructed to rate how ideal particular types of student responses were during a typical classroom discussion in their academic content area. Participants completed a series of Likert-type items ranging from 1 (*not at all ideal*) to 5 (*extremely ideal*) that measured their general preferences for unique versus relevant student responses.

Two scales were created to reflect participants' preferences for uniqueness and relevance. Scales were created from prospective teachers' mean ratings on six items measuring their responses preferences. Specifically, a *uniqueness score* was derived from the mean ratings on three items that represented predominantly unique responses ($\alpha = 0.72$). The three items from that scale were "Unique but not relevant for the given conversation," "Unique and somewhat relevant for the given conversation," and "Somewhat unique but not relevant for the given conversation." The *relevance score* consisted of mean ratings on three items reflecting predominantly relevant responses ($\alpha = 0.67$). The three items from the relevance scale were "Relevant for the given conversation, but not unique," "Relevant for the given conversation and somewhat unique," and "Somewhat relevant for the given conversation but not unique." Descriptive statistics for the items used in the study are presented in Table 1.

Participants were also presented with an opportunity to explain their ratings for each item by completing an optional text box. Approximately two thirds of respondents provided at least one written explanation for their uniqueness ratings ($n = 46$, 66%) or their relevance ratings ($n = 43$, 61%). The average written response rate, across the six items, was 55%.

4. Results

4.1. Overall preference

Prospective teachers' overall response preference was examined using a paired sample *t*-test. Cohen's *d* was calculated to measure the effect size for between group comparisons. Results indicate that the prospective teachers had a significantly greater preference for relevance in student responses (M = 3.63, S.D. = .64) as compared to uniqueness (M = 3.24, S.D. = .72), paired-sample $t(69) = 4.69$, $p < .001$, $d = .57$.

4.2. Prospective teachers' characteristics and response preferences

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between prospective teachers' characteristics and their uniqueness and relevance preference scores. Characteristics included dummy-coded variables representing

[2] The middle level category included prospective teachers who indicated a preference for only the middle grades (6th–8th) as well as prospective teachers who had had not yet decided ($n = 10$, 14%). Those who had not yet decided were classified into the middle level because they had not ruled out that particular grade level.

Table 2
Summary of regression analyses predicting response preferences

Variable	Uniqueness					Relevance				
	B	SE *B*	*β*	R^2	*p*	*B*	SE *B*	*β*	R^2	*p*
Characteristics				.24	.01				.08	.47
Science	.60	.27	.31		.03	.15	.27	.09		.57
Social studies	.93	.24	.57		.00	.23	.24	.16		.34
Language arts	.72	.25	.43		.01	−.07	.25	−.05		.76
Second language	.78	.27	.40		.01	−.09	.27	−.05		.74
Gender	−.14	.18	−.09		.43	.00	.17	.00		.99
Grade level	−.35	.16	−.24		.03	−.25	.16	−.19		.12

Note. Teacher characteristics were dummy coded: subject area (0 = math and math served as the comparison for the remaining four subject areas), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), and grade level (0 = middle/undecided, 1 = secondary).

the various academic subject areas (math was coded 0 and served as the comparison for the remaining four subject areas), gender (0 = male, 1 = female), and grade level (0 = middle/undecided, 1 = secondary). Results of the analyses are presented in Table 2.

As displayed in Table 2, results indicate that prospective teachers' characteristics explained a significant amount of the variance (24%) in the uniqueness preference score, $F(6, 63) = 3.35$, $p = .006$; but not in the relevance preference score, $F(6, 63) = .940$, $p = .473$. With respect to the uniqueness preference score, findings indicate that prospective teachers who planed to teach math or teach at the secondary level were significantly less likely to value uniqueness in student responses during classroom discussions.

4.3. Analysis of written explanations

In an effort to examine potential differences in explanatory comments between prospective teachers who held higher versus lower preference for uniqueness and relevance, their preference scores were classified into high and low groups (using the percentile rank function in SPSS 13). Specifically, participants with uniqueness scores in the top 50th percentile were classified into the *high uniqueness* group ($n = 42$, M = 3.71, S.D. = .41) and those with scores in the bottom 50th percentile were classified into the *low uniqueness* group ($n = 28$, M = 2.54, S.D. = .45). Similarly, participants with relevance scores in the top 50th percentile were classified into the *high relevance* group ($n = 40$, M = 4.08, S.D. = .41) and those in the bottom 50th percentile were classified into *low relevance* group ($n = 30$, M = 3.04, S.D. = .36). Next, explanations offered by prospective teachers were examined and coded.

Codes were developed, using a method of constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), from prospective teachers' explanations of their uniqueness preference ratings and relevance preference ratings. Coding labels represented "in-vivo" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) descriptors found in the written explanations offered by respondents. A graduate student (trained in the coding procedure) served as a second rater. A coding guide was developed and refined through an iterative process of independent coding and discussion of discrepancies. Consensus estimates (CE) of inter-rater reliability were calculated (using procedures described by Stemler, 2004) and yielded acceptable levels of consensus (>.70) between raters on the classification of prospective teachers' explanations for their uniqueness preferences (CE = .93) and relevance preferences (CE = .86).

Four codes were used to classify prospective teachers' explanations for their uniqueness preferences. Those four codes were: *potential distraction* (e.g., explanations that characterized unique responses as intentionally distracting, taking discussions off-topic, lacking merit, or something to be pursued at a later time); *worth pursuing* (e.g., explanations that characterized unique responses as demonstrating deeper levels of thinking, taking conversations to a higher level, or capable of being expanded on by the teacher); *value participation* (e.g., explanations that characterized unique responses as welcome because of a desire to encourage and reinforce students' participation in discussions); and *other* (e.g., an unintelligible explanation that was difficult to categorize in one of the three previous groups).

Four codes were also used to classify prospective teachers' explanations for their preference ratings of relevant comments. Those four codes were: *Lacking depth or independent thought* (e.g., explanations that characterized relevant responses as undesirable because they lacked uniqueness, depth of thought, creativity, or independent thinking); *good starting point* (e.g., explanations that characterized relevant responses as a welcomed or expected starting point for

Table 3
Example explanations and frequency distribution of coding categories

Coding category	Example explanations
Unique responses	
Potential distraction	■ "Comments of this type may be intended to distract from the discussion" (M10) ■ "I would probably like to stay on topic, but maybe it would be something we could pursue at a later time" (S05) ■ "I do not find too much merit in these types of comments" (M03)
Worth pursuing	■ "Well, Social Studies encompasses so many different facets of learning and discussion, if a student can give a unique response, the discussion can take various tangents that may not be completely related to the topic but it shows they are thinking" (SS14) ■ "I'd say some of those comments can be extremely important. They can push discussions to new levels of thinking and debate. I think without those types of comments, conversations stay on a very surface level" (SS16)
Value participation	■ "I value participation, and I think that an engaging discussion often leads to off-topic, yet still valuable contributions" (SL10) ■ "I value all of my students' comments and questions, even if they are off-topic or not relevant" (LA16)
Relevant responses	
Lacking depth or independent thought	■ "I am glad they can relate the information, but I would like to have the students begin to think for themselves" (M02) ■ "These ideas could be conveyed just as easily through a worksheet. I am looking for creativity in a discussion." (SS07)
Good starting point	■ "At least I know they are on track with the lesson" (S05) ■ "Someone has to say the obvious" (M12) ■ "I think that's a starting point for many students, and their decision to contribute is extremely valuable, even if it is not 'original' to me. I'm content with this place for students, but I would hope that they would push themselves further" (LA17)
Value participation	■ "Students need to feel comfortable making all sorts of responses. . . It doesn't matter that the response is not unique. . ." (S11) ■ "Active participation is key. While unique responses are ideal, I feel that students know they can share ideas or opinions even if they are not particularly unique" (Sl10)

Coding category	Uniqueness preference (%)		Relevance preference (%)		Grade level (%)		Academic subject (%)	
	Low ($n=19$)	High ($n=27$)	Low ($n=21$)	High ($n=22$)	Mid. ($n=22$)	Sec. ($n=24$)	Math ($n=8$)	Other ($n=38$)
Unique response								
Potential distraction	74 (14)	–	–	–	18 (4)	42 (10)	63 (5)	24 (9)
Worth pursuing	11 (2)	52 (14)	–	–	46 (10)	25 (6)	–	42 (16)
Value participation	–	44 (12)	–	–	23 (5)	29 (7)	25 (2)	26 (10)
Other	16 (3)	4 (1)	–	–	14 (3)	4 (1)	13 (1)	8 (3)
Relevant response								
Lacking depth	–	–	52 (11)	5 (1)	–	–	–	–
Good starting point	–	–	33 (7)	59 (13)	–	–	–	–
Value participation	–	–	–	36 (8)	–	–	–	–
Other	–	–	14 (3)	–	–	–	–	–

students); *value participation* (e.g., explanations that stressed the importance of welcoming or encouraging students' participation even if the contribution was not unique or novel); *other* (e.g., an unintelligible explanation that was difficult to categorize in one of the three previous groups). Codes, frequency distributions, and example explanations are presented in Table 3.

4.3.1. Distribution of frequency of codes

As presented in Table 3, results indicate that prospective teachers who held a lower preference for uniqueness most frequently viewed such responses as "potential distractions." Conversely, prospective teachers who held a higher preference for uniqueness most frequently viewed uniqueness as "worth pursuing." Prospective teachers who held a higher preference for relevance most frequently viewed such responses as a "good starting point" whereas those who held a lower preference for relevance most frequently viewed such responses as "lacking depth or independent thought."

Finally, with respect to subject area, prospective math teachers most frequently viewed unique responses as a "potential distraction" whereas prospective teachers representing other subject areas most frequently viewed such responses as "worth pursuing." A similar pattern was found between prospective middle and secondary teachers, with prospective secondary teachers most frequently viewing unique responses as "potential distractions" and prospective middle level teachers viewing such responses as "worth pursuing."

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to explore prospective teachers' response preferences during classroom discussions. On the one hand, findings from the present study provide support for the numerous reports that teachers typically view novel (or otherwise unexpected) responses as disruptive (Aljughaiman & Mowrer-Reynolds, 2005; Westby & Dawson, 1995). Indeed, findings of the present study suggest that prospective teachers generally preferred relevance over uniqueness in students' responses during classroom discussions. Moreover, analysis of prospective teachers' written explanations revealed that those who held a lower preference for uniqueness most frequently viewed such responses as potential distractions.

On the other hand, results of the present study go beyond previous research by providing new insights into prospective teachers' responses preferences. Specifically, results of analyzing written explanations highlighted various reasons for prospective teachers' preferences, including: believing that relevant responses were a good starting point, welcoming any responses because of a desire to promote student participation, and viewing novel responses as worth pursuing but also worrying that such response might take discussions off-topic. In addition, results of regression analysis revealed that prospective teachers' preference for uniqueness varied as a function of grade level and subject area. These findings are discussed in the sections that follow.

5.1. Themes and nuances in response preferences

Analysis of written explanations highlighted common themes and subtle nuances in prospective teachers' response preferences. For instance, although there were prospective teachers who clearly preferred relevant responses because they believed unique responses were little more than intentional distractions (e.g., "Comments of this type may be intended to distract from the discussion" M10), there were others who placed high value on relevance not because they devalued novelty, but because they viewed relevance as a necessary starting point. For instance, a prospective language arts teacher explained:

> While I want to hear students pushing themselves to make unique additions to the class conversation, the preliminary steps to that are often making somewhat relevant though not unique comments. (LA06).

Some prospective teachers explained that encouraging and reinforcing participation was their primary reason for welcoming relevant or novel student responses. For instance, a prospective second languages teacher with a high preference for relevance explained, "any contribution is welcomed. . .active participation is key" SL10). Similarly, a prospective language arts teacher with a high preference for uniqueness, explained: "If a student can bring up something unique but not relevant I still commend them for their participation. Obviously they are attempting to engage me and other students. They are attempting at making a contribution" (LA10).

Other prospective teachers explained that they wanted students to go beyond providing expected responses during classroom discussions, because they were looking for deeper levels of thinking, originality, and independent thought from their students. For example, a prospective social studies teacher with a lower preference for relevance explained:

> I would rather that students come up with their own ideas, even if they were less relevant. That way I could tell that they were at least engaging in some sort of thought process and not regurgitating something they heard earlier (SS01).

Analysis of written explanations also revealed that some prospective teachers held a desire to encourage unique student responses and, at the same time, felt concerned that such responses may go beyond reason or be used to intentionally take a discussion off-topic. For instance, a prospective social studies teacher explained that although he valued uniqueness because "tangents allow students to deepen their understanding and learning" he also stressed that

such tangents must be kept "within reason" (SS15). Similarly, a prospective language arts teacher who highly valued uniqueness harbored concerns about students using unique comments to take her off-task:

> As a new teacher, I fear getting manipulated to get 'off task' but I think when students feel comfortable enough to offer their thoughts, even if they seem way off target, this can give me a valuable insight to what they are getting out of the lesson (LA11).

Taken together, these findings illustrate that although the results of the present study parallel previous research by suggesting prospective teachers generally favor relevance over uniqueness and, in turn, are more likely to view unique responses as potentially disruptive, subtle and nuanced variations exist within prospective teachers' responses preferences.

5.2. Grade level and subject area variations

The findings of the present study also highlight potentially important grade level and subject area variations in prospective teachers' preferences for uniqueness. Specifically, results of regression analysis indicate prospective teachers' preference for unique student responses varied as a function of subject area (lower for prospective math teachers) and grade level (lower for prospective secondary teachers). Moreover, analysis of written explanations revealed that prospective math teachers and prospective secondary teachers most frequently viewed unique student responses as potential distractions, whereas prospective teachers of other subject areas and prospective middle level teachers typically viewed unique responses as worth pursuing.

Findings from the analysis of written explanations suggest that grade level and subject area difference may have stemmed from prospective teachers' perceptions of their pedagogical skills and the perceived constraints of their curriculum. For instance, explanations offered by prospective middle level teachers and those who intended to teach subjects other than mathematics suggest that they viewed unique responses as "worth pursuing" because they believed, as long as they had enough skill and flexibility, they could explore and expand upon unique responses. For instance, a prospective science teacher explained, "A unique comment is usually appreciated in science class. Most everything can be manipulated into a science learning moment if a teacher is quick on his/her feet" (S09). Similarly, a prospective middle level social studies teacher explained, "I applaud original ideas. I would hope to be flexible enough to explore their comment" (SS06).

Conversely, analysis of written explanations offered by prospective math and secondary teachers suggest that they viewed unique responses as potentially disruptive because they felt there was little room for "going off track" in their curriculum. For instance, a prospective math teacher explained, "In math staying focused on the problem at hand is very important" (M08). Similarly a secondary language arts teacher explained that even though there may be potential value in going off-track to pursue tangents, the purpose of class discussions was to stay focused and build toward something:

> Going off track into tangents can sometimes be valuable, but a goal of discussions in language arts classrooms is often to learn to build on each other's responses to work towards something." (LA02).

It is not surprising that some prospective teachers expressed concerns that pursuing unique student responses might take discussions off-topic. Indeed, in some cases, such concerns may be justified. For instance, as one prospective second language teacher explained:

> While, I always would like my students to share what is on their mind, there have been occasions in which a student has made random comments which were not in the least bit relevant. I acknowledged their comment; however, we began to get off-track because of it (SL02).

In many other instances, however, dismissing novel ideas is problematic. As Kennedy (2005) has explained, "The problem with dismissals is self-evident. . .they give students a clear message that some ideas won't be talked about, even if they seem relevant and important to students. Dismissals clearly discourage students from investing intellectual energy in their learning" (p. 120).

Given that creative expression requires a classroom environment in which teachers encourage and model creative thinking (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2004), a general belief that unique ideas should be dismissed is highly problematic. For example, consider the prospective math teacher who views learning mathematics and creative thinking as antithet-

ical. This becomes problematic if the teacher later goes on to enact this belief in instructional practices that represent mathematical problem solving as a recipe-like following of memorized procedures aimed at achieving predetermined outcomes (listed in the back pages of a textbook). Not only would such practices undermine opportunities to cultivate creative thinking in students but would also misrepresent the domain of mathematics; obscuring the beauty, excitement, and complexity of the advanced work in that domain. As such, subsequent research should be aimed at examining how to best identify and address such beliefs before they take root and manifest into problematic, creativity-stifling instructional practices.

6. Limitations

Several important limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of the present study and will need to be addressed in subsequent research. First, all data were based on participants' self-reports. Moreover, because surveys were administered in a learning and assessment course and the second survey was administered mid-way through the course, data may be limited by respondents' desire to provide socially acceptable responses. As such, subsequent research is needed to provide more in-depth investigations into prospective teachers' response preferences. Specifically, subsequent studies will need to address potential limitations of self-report data (e.g., include the use of behavioral observations of teaching practices in conjunction with survey research) in order to verify the consistency and accuracy of the present findings.

The study was also limited by the use of data from instruments that included items beyond the scope of the present study (e.g., prospective teachers' beliefs about learning, assessment, and student motivation). Although the alphas for the scales used in the present study were adequate, subsequent research should be aimed at establishing construct validity and developing more comprehensive and focused measures of response preferences.

Finally, with respect to findings based on the analysis of prospective teachers' explanatory comments, the small and heterogeneous sample limits the generalizability of those findings. As such, follow-up studies will need to sample from larger and more diverse populations of prospective teachers in order to verify the consistency, adequacy, and generalizability of the present findings.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Implications for practice

At this point, much additional empirical work is needed prior to drawing strong conclusions or making specific recommendations for practice. Still, the findings point to several general considerations for supporting prospective teachers' professional development. For example, teacher educators might help prospective teachers consider how their beliefs about the value (or lack thereof) of novel student responses may influence their subsequent instructional practice and, ultimately, the creative expression of their future middle and secondary students.

Teacher educators can also help prospective teachers develop their competence in supporting students' creative thinking by stressing the importance of encouraging creativity as well as developing strategies for teaching students how to self-regulate creative expression during classroom discussions (see Beghetto, in press). It is no secret that prospective teachers draw most heavily on the models and images of classroom discussions that they themselves have experienced and that such models often emphasize recitation of correct answers (Parker & Hess, 2001). Given that creativity involves the combination of uniqueness and relevance within a particular context, teacher educators can help prospective teachers recognize these combined elements of creativity and encourage them to draw out more from their future students during classroom discussions than simple recitation of facts.

In order for this to happen, prospective teachers will need to be provided with opportunities in their teacher preparation programs to consider and construct new images and models for classroom discussions. For instance, teacher educators can provide cases, examples, and field-based experiences in which prospective teachers actively consider how they might react to students who offer a wide range of responses during classroom discussions. This would entail developing the skills and dispositions in prospective teachers such that they are willing to encourage and support their future students in expressing ideas that are both unique and relevant for the given conversation. When prospective teachers develop these skills and dispositions, they will be a step closer to creating classroom environments in which all of their students feel welcome, valued, and capable of offering meaningful contributions.

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