Homelessness in Schools and Society: Engaged Practice in School Serving Organizations  
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Office hours  
Room 3210 D  
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Wednesdays  
Mondays  
10:30-11:30,  
10-11  
and by appointment  
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Class Meetings:  
Mondays 1-4pm School of Education, room 2310

We will use email and the course Canvas site to communicate with you; we encourage you to do the same with us, and with others in the class. Please check your email regularly for announcements, information, and updates. We expect you to be up-to-date on all course communications when you come to class.

Course Focus and Goals
In this course, students will build upon what they know about U.S. schools and the institutions that serve public schools through practicum work in one such organization. A through line of the course is the issue of economic and racial inequality, and the ways that poverty and homelessness disproportionately affect people of color. The course will focus on the issue of homelessness and its connection to schooling. It will serve students who are interested in learning how to support schools and communities, but who might not necessarily see themselves as teachers.

Students will acquire hands-on experience at Avalon Housing, a non-profit organization that runs two family housing centers for homeless families in Ann Arbor: Carrot Way and Pauline Housing. They will study and experience the ways that Avalon Housing serves and supports children, schools, and their communities. Undergraduate students in the course will learn about homelessness and the way homelessness impacts children and their learning. They will work a number of field hours at Avalon's after school program and focus on in-depth projects addressing authentic problems Avalon is working on across a number of their areas of expertise: schooling, community support, advocacy, real estate development, law and policy.

In addition, fundamental to this course is a school-based placement: as understanding the real-life, practical work of teaching and learning in public schooling is imperative to any sophisticated understanding of the ways in which other institutions and agents might support that work.
As such, students will complete a subset of field hours in the elementary school attended by children who live at Carrot Way and Pauline Housing. Through these experiences, students will develop understandings of the linkages between work being done in a non-profit agency and work being done in public schools, as well as the need for substantive cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional work that supports the needs of the homeless population.

We will investigate four basic clusters of questions:

A. Foundations in Homelessness
In this section, we will seek to understand the foundational background of homelessness and schooling. We will study the degree to which homelessness affects prek-12 students in the US, as well as the impact of homelessness on students’ outcomes. We will uncover and interrogate the assumptions we bring to the study of poverty and inequality and the degree to which homelessness is/is not portrayed as a racialized experience.

B. Partnering across Institutions
In this section, we will seek to understand the ways that workers in different fields and across institutions can collaboratively serve the needs of homeless populations. We will highlight methods of partnership across organizations and with homeless families that are inclusively designed, so as not to further stigmatize already marginalized populations.

C. Homelessness and Inequality
In this section, we will investigate the ways that racism, sexism and heterosexism impact the experience of those affected by homelessness. While we will begin by attending to the differential rates of homelessness and poverty for different subgroups, such as single mothers and LGBTQ youth, we will shift our gaze to the differential access to resources, social services and capital experienced by these groups.

D. Policy and Practice for Change
In this final section of the course, students will build upon their learning throughout the course regarding the life experiences of homeless populations, their marginalization in society, and the racial inequality evident in the overrepresentation of people of color and LGBTQ youth in the homeless population. Students will build upon this knowledge to inform their design of policy and practice across three disciplines: health care, the justice system, and welfare and social service.

Assignments
1. Class Participation
Attendance Expectations: Attendance and participation are expectations in this class as a form of professionalism. We expect you to attend every class, to arrive on time for a prompt start, to stay till the end, and to participate in and contribute to class. It is vital that you attend every class session if at all possible. If you cannot be present for a class session, let us know by e-mail by 8:00AM the day of class. Acceptable absences include absences due to religious holidays; please let us know at the start of the semester if you will miss class for this reason. More than two
absences from the class will make successful learning of the material in the course challenging and put you in danger of not being able to complete the course successfully. As always, participation points will be deducted for absences and late arrivals. Three absences—excused or unexcused—is grounds for failing this course.

For any class session that is missed, you must complete makeup work. This will consist of a one to two paragraph summary of each assigned reading for that day and a one to two paragraph reflection on the way that each article affects your thinking or your teaching practice. In addition, you are responsible for speaking with a classmate about any further information that you missed, including handouts, lecture and discussion content, as well as updates to assignments and field experiences. You must turn in any make up work within 1 week of your absence. Failing to complete makeup work will result in further point deductions from your participation grade. Attendance, participation and preparation contribute 20 points toward your final grade; however, your participation grade will be penalized for any unexcused absences.

Preparation Expectations: You are responsible for completing all readings, written, and/or reflection tasks before the class session for which they are assigned. Occasionally, there will be in-class free writes that will require you to reflect on the way that the readings enrich or complicate your understanding of course themes. We expect that your writing will demonstrate a careful analysis of the required readings and a sincere attempt to “puzzle” over the focus issues. These responses will be considered evidence of preparation for class. In addition, being prepared for class requires bringing all needed materials, including assignments and readings with you to each class session.

We expect that all assignments for this course will be turned in on time. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, please contact me via email prior to the submission deadline. Late assignments will be penalized one grade per day that they are late (i.e. from an A to an A-, an A- to a B+, a B+ to a B, etc.).

Participation Expectations: While attendance, preparation and participation are important for what they signal in terms of professionalism, as students of education you are aware that they have further more important implications for a learner’s development. Much of our learning will take place through interactions in class. This is not a lecture-based course; active learning is the objective. By engaging with each other in discussions, explanations, critiques, and clarifications we contribute to our own and each other’s learning. The richness of this learning community is something to which we all have the responsibility to contribute; all of your interactions in class should be responsible, timely, thoughtful, and respectful. Although students are encouraged to volunteer their participation in class, we will also call on students in order to maximize classroom opportunities to hear from ALL students.

2. Fieldwork
Students will complete a number of field hours in the Avalon Housing afterschool programs at Carrot Way Housing or Pauline Housing, as well as either Eberwhite Elementary School of A2STEAM K-8 School, all located in Ann Arbor. During these field hours, students must be dependable, punctual and flexible, as well as willing to fully engage and participate in the field setting. This means students must make an effort to roll up their sleeves and get involved. Students should be prepared to learn more than to teach and to be ready to provide what the partnering agency needs, even if that differs from expectations.
3. Weekly Reflection Papers
Students will be grouped into trios at the beginning of the term. Each week, one person per trio will submit a double-spaced three-page (approximately) paper connecting their experience on site with the themes, readings or discussion in class. The other two members of the trio will provide substantive feedback on the paper. For the following week, the responsibilities for writing and responding will rotate. Students will submit their papers, with their partners’ feedback, by the beginning of class. Each week the student who is writing the response will share his/her paper with her partners by Saturday, and the partners will then provide their feedback no later than Monday 9 a.m. Trios will use CANVAS project groups to do this work with each other and to submit it to the course instructors.

In writing and responding to these papers, consider the guiding questions included in the course schedule (see below). These questions are designed to pick up on the major themes of the class, thus they take up the following key issues: (1) awareness of self, privilege, and identity; (2) seeing and building upon the assets of others, especially assets that might be often undervalued or invisible, (3) taking on issues of racism, heterosexism, economic inequality, and injustice, (4) working with and partnering in substantive and respectful ways. In these short reflections, it will be critical that you engage the questions and any one of these foundational themes directly. One of the things we are working on together is creating brave spaces. Practicing doing so in writing is one way to begin to wrestle with recognizing the privileges that we experience and attending to the role of race and ethnicity in American society.

Beginning the week of January 23, students will also be engaged in fieldwork where they support the afterschool program at Carrot Way Housing or Pauline Housing or at an elementary school. Thus, the weekly reflection paper should seek to integrate developing understandings across the field and the course texts. Students may consider the following additional guiding questions to support this integration:

- Reflect on a situation or a reading that encouraged or challenged you to practice personal self-reflection and self-correction to assure your continued professional development and learning.
- How can we cohere and integrate theory and practice? Watch for and then analyze an instance or series of instances that occurred in your practicum site that a reading(s) helps you to better understand, or vice versa.
- What are the challenges and opportunities we face as we work to view ourselves as learners, and to value and learn from others, especially those who have been marginalized?
- Where are there opportunities to engage in practices that advance social and economic justice in everyday interactions? Look for and interrogate these, making use of our readings, as well as what you learn on-site.
- Where are there opportunities to use research evidence to inform practice? Looking again for opportunities to merge theory and action, look for and create opportunities to work in ways that are informed by research and integrity.
Final Project

The final assignment will be a group project that will be completed in a small group (3-4 students). For this assignment, you will work to envision and design a solution to an authentic problem that will be posed by our colleagues at Avalon Housing. Early in the semester, a panel of Avalon Housing professionals will visit us and will highlight their work on the following three issues: health care, the justice system, and welfare and social services. In this visit these professionals will highlight these topics, the work that Avalon does on these, and the ways in which these affect their clients and their clients’ work in schools. They will then pose a set of authentic problems for us to work on over the course of the semester. They will return to our class in sessions 11, 12, and 13. In that session you will present your draft solutions, and they will give you feedback, helping you to refine, elaborate, and enrich your solutions. Taking into account these additions, you will produce a final project which you will then submit to both your course professors and our Avalon Housing partners.

Course Activities

To investigate these questions, we will read; analyze and interpret texts, evidence, and experience; work and think with others; and write. Below we describe our explicit goals for your engagement with each of these modes of learning.

Reading: We will read a wide variety of texts, including empirical, conceptual, and historical work about schools, teaching, learning, and about different people’s experiences of all of these. To develop the resources and to probe different types of sources, we will also read fiction and journals of culture and ideas, newspapers, philosophy, and even dictionaries. We will examine artifacts of popular culture, including films, cartoons, and advertisements. The work of the class will depend on reading interactively, on bringing both collective and individual goals to reading, considering, and reconsidering texts. In its most straightforward expression, this involves bringing questions to think about while preparing to read something, reading a text, and reflexively placing what one has read in the context of both the texts and one’s own experiences. You are also resources for one another, both as a function of your differences and one another’s responses to what we read.

Analyzing and interpreting: We will ask you to make and appraise arguments and interpretations. Creating thoughtful arguments requires making conjectures and offering justification for them. Sometimes justification comes from the texts—specific references to an argument that an author has made well. At other times, justification is based on the logical analysis of a term or set of ideas. Using the dictionary can help in scrutinizing terms and their nuances or etymology. Still other arguments are grounded in data. One goal this semester is to extend and apply your analytic and interpretive skills in the context of questions about education.

Working and thinking with others: Building the culture of the class so that genuine inquiry is possible will take all of our efforts. Because we rely on everyone’s contributions, one responsibility you have is to come to class with the readings prepared, and to bring questions, insights, and issues. We will be doing work in class that is interactive, and takes advantage of working with others. It is not easy to make this up if you do not come to class. We will also take attendance.

We will work together to develop the norms for the class. How we listen to one another, assist with the formulation of an interpretation, question, and challenge will affect the quality of what we can do together. Listening carefully, treating ideas with respect and interest, raising and responding to
questions, sharing the floor—all these will matter in constructing an environment where satisfying and challenging intellectual work can take place. Listening generously requires that you assume others’ ideas and claims are made for good reasons, and it is crucial to thinking well. Another part is to be skeptical, to consider what is missing or logically flawed. Using both—generosity and skepticism—contributes to careful unpacking of ideas and to good thinking.

Writing: This course involves a significant amount of writing of different kinds. Writing is an important vehicle for exploring and clarifying ideas, for trying out interpretations and arguments, and for representing ideas and communicating with others. The course will provide occasions to focus on and develop new aspects of your writing, and the writing assignments are structured to provide guidance and resources, as well as the opportunity for comments and suggestions.

These four kinds of work—reading; analyzing and interpreting texts, evidence, and experience; working and thinking with others; and writing—are more than ways to learn the material of this course; they are also among its goals. To be clear, we want your experiences in this course to help you improve your capacities with each of these, learning new ways of thinking, using language, and reasoning, and new skills in your engagements with others who are different from you.

Grading and Evaluation
Your grade for this course will be based on the following distribution:

- In Class and Field Practicum Participation (30%)
- Triweekly Papers (30%)
- Paper Responses (10%)
- Final Project (30%)

Grades are intended to give you a sense of the quality of a particular piece of work: roughly speaking, a B means that you have done a good job with the writing, the ideas, and the organization of the work; a C conveys that the work lacks some important qualities and has some problems, while an A means that the work is exemplary in some key ways: the writing is particularly clear, the ideas thoroughly treated, and the organization of the presentation well considered and effective.

A few comments about evaluation in this course: We want your experiences in ED218 to contribute to your growing capacity to do excellent work. To support that, we are asking you to analyze, consider alternative perspectives, write, construct and consider arguments, and talk.

You can use your work in this course to help you to improve your sense of what good work consists of, and how to produce it. This includes writing good sentences and paragraphs, using words carefully, and treating ideas with discipline and respect. We will strive to make these standards as concrete as possible, and to make visible strategies for achieving them. As you develop your sensibilities, you will be able to do more and more as your own critic and editor.
One obvious reason to take writing seriously is that your career as a student depends on it. Whatever field you enter, you will not be able to earn your degree unless you can write good papers and exams, complete projects, and write up labs clearly. Evaluation is a tool in learning and teaching. Providing scaffolding for your work, and direct and focused feedback on what you produce, are concrete ways to help you develop skills and sensibilities, and to be successful in your studies here at the University of Michigan.

A second reason to take your work seriously is that the ability to write and communicate is fundamental to your effectiveness personally and professionally. Good use of language and clarity of thinking is unfortunately less common than it ought to be. Much writing is clumsy, obscure, and littered with jargon. Some problems are technical or literary: incorrect grammar, a passion for the passive voice, and needless words. Many other problems are intellectual: arguments that wander, implausible assumptions, paragraphs that do not cohere, and a failure to consider other views respectfully. People who communicate in such ways are less able to make connections with others, to be persuasive about things they care about, or simply to think well.

Please bear in mind that our comments will be directed towards particular things you have produced, not about you. Improving your work is a joint endeavor, composed of what we can offer you by way of help and feedback, and how you use our guidance and that of your classmates.

Policy on Original Work: Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. You may obtain copy editing assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own, or be explicitly attributed to another. An exception is group work, which is assumed to be collaborative, involving all group members. See the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs website (http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/examples.html) for definitions of plagiarism, and associated consequences. Any violation of standards for academic integrity will result in severe penalties, which might range from failing an assignment to failing the course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course—the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach—may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. We will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

Norms for Use of Technology in ED218
We understand that you use your laptop to take notes, and we will post slides and other resources that you might wish to use to organize your making records of work in class. However, there are also moments when we expect everyone to be engaged in something that does not involve the use of the computer and we expect you not to be distracted by something on yours at those times. We expect you to not catch up on email, Facebook, or complete other tasks or explorations during class. Finally, please do not use your phone to text or for other purposes during class. Your engagement in the course is crucial for your learning, and the learning of your colleagues, and is a large part of your class participation grade.
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<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Guiding Questions/Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Readings (available on Canvas)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<td><strong>Session 1: Jan 9</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Part 1: Foundations</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Facts on Homelessness</td>
<td>• Which groups are affected by homelessness? What do the demographics of the homeless population mean for issues of economic and racial injustice?&lt;br&gt;• What are the impacts of homelessness?&lt;br&gt;• Notice the “quiet statistics” around minority overrepresentation in the demographics of homelessness – though many authors note in statistical and demographic sections of their work the disproportionate numbers of people of color who are homeless, their written analyses are rarely racialized. Begin to conjecture: why do these authors not speak directly to race and ethnicity? We will continue to contend with this question throughout the semester. Making note of this and speaking to it together will help us in our efforts to have brave discussions together in this class (and beyond).</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/minorities.html">http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/minorities.html</a>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Hidden in Plain Sight: website and videos <a href="http://www.gradnation.org/report/hidden-plain-sight">http://www.gradnation.org/report/hidden-plain-sight</a></td>
<td>Weekly Writing Reflection 1A&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Field hours at Eberwhite and STEAM schools</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2: Jan 23</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Part 1: Foundations</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Homelessness and Schooling Policy&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Guest Speaker(s): Ann Arbor Public Schools representative(s)</strong></td>
<td>Reflect on the aspirations and goals of public schooling in the US generally, then, using this as a frame, consider:&lt;br&gt;• What responsibilities do schools have to homeless children and families, according to federal regulations?&lt;br&gt;• Does McKinney Vento guarantee that all students will have the same opportunities in school to transform their potential for positive outcomes? If not, what gets in the way of this guarantee?</td>
<td>Julanelle &amp; Foscarinis (2003). Responding to the School Mobility of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: The McKinney-Vento Act and Beyond.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Weiss &amp; Dimitriadis (2008). Dueling Banjos: Shifting Economic and Cultural Contexts in the Lives of Youth</td>
<td>Weekly Writing Reflection 1A&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Field hours at Eberwhite and STEAM schools</td>
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• What roles can schools have in either ameliorating or reproducing inequality? To respond, reflect upon the way that Weiss and Dimitriadis consider the link between success in school and the marginalization of many children, especially children of color.

SESSION 3: Jan 30
Part 1: Foundations
Homelessness and Schooling Policy

Guest Speaker(s): Experts: Welfare, Justice, Healthcare (Lauren Velez, Vivek Sankaran, Kimberly Thomas)

On this day we will begin to consider the child as an individual, but also as she/he is nested inside of a family that itself is nested in and across communities that vary in their resources and the provision of these resources to families and individuals. The following guided questions ask you to consider the individual, the family, and the community and its institutions.

• How and in what ways do the high rates of isolation (sketched by Miller) impact children’s opportunities differentially along lines of race and class?

• Now consider the trauma experienced by homeless families (including violence, extreme poverty, conflict, health challenges, substance abuse). What are the ways in which homelessness affects “fragile families,” and how families can be supported to have success in multiple contexts?

• Considering self: How do we read about the experience of multiple traumas and not see these as the totality of the community?


Green (2016). The Complicated Task of Identifying Homeless Students, The Atlantic

IN CLASS READING

Weekly Writing Reflection 1B
Field observation at Eberwhite and STEAM schools

Session 4: Feb 6
Part 2: Partnering

• What are the immediate and long-term needs that educators need to be attentive to in order to serve


Weekly Writing Reflection 1C
### Implications for Educators

- How can teachers learn to hear and to see what might be invisible to them? In answering this question draw upon the work we’ve done to date to pay attention and manage our own identities and privilege and to see with generosity.  


### Session 5: Feb 13

**Part 2: Partnering across Institutions**

- What challenges do outreach workers face in working with homeless populations? What reasons for mistrust of the workers could exist?  
- How can we attend to and be aware of our own racial/cultural/linguistic/socioeconomic/sexual identities? How do we use them and also be aware of them in different context?  
- What role does our cultural/class/identity play in this context? In the context of university classrooms?  
- How do we manage our identities and build trust?


Weekly Writing Reflection 2A | Field work at afterschool program

### Session 6: Feb 20

**Part 2: Partnering across institutions**

- How can school settings provide access and opportunities to learn to homeless students and families that are inclusive and non-marginalizing?  


Weekly Writing Reflection 2B | Field work at afterschool program

### Session 7: March 6

**Part 3: Homelessness and Reflect back on our discussion on the first day of class regarding what we termed the “quiet statistics” on race and ethnicity in the literature on homelessness. How might the analytic construct of the “opportunity gap” be**


Buckner, Bassuk & Weinreb (2001). Predictors of

Weekly Writing Reflection 2C | Field work at
<table>
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<th>Inequality The Achievement Gap</th>
<th>used to frame analyses, discussion, and possible solutions to the racial, ethnic and gender inequalities prevalent in homelessness?</th>
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<td>• Paying attention to the power of language: what is the difference between the achievement gap and the opportunity gap? What are the implicit assumptions about children and students in the term &quot;achievement gap&quot;? What are the effects – both on the assignment of culpability as well as our ability to imagine and build solutions – when we shift the language to “opportunity gaps”? Consider the critical ways in which these constructs affect children of color in disproportionate numbers. • What are the implicit assumptions about children and students in the term &quot;achievement gap&quot;? What are the effects – both on the assignment of culpability as well as our ability to imagine and build solutions – when we shift the language to “opportunity gaps”?</td>
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<td>Academic Achievement among Homeless and Low-Income Housed Children.</td>
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<th>Session 8: Mar 13</th>
<th>Reflect back on our discussion on the first day of class regarding what we termed the “quiet statistics” on race and ethnicity in the literature on homelessness. In what ways do these readings differ in their orientation to race and inequality as compared to our original encounters with “quiet statistics”?</th>
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<td>Weekly Writing Reflection 3A</td>
<td>Field work at afterschool program</td>
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Return now to our discussion in session 4, when we considered the importance of individuals’ nestedness in families and communities. Fertig and Reingold highlight the importance of policies that fortify social support for alleviating and avoiding instances of homelessness. How can policies and programs that nurture social support be designed to support families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness, which, as we have learned, results in significant isolation? Consider the experience of Benita within this framing. What facets of her experience manifest her limited access, as a single black mother, to social services?

- What do these sets of readings imply for the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate some groups and/or create or enhance privilege and power for others?
- Considering self: how can we learn to recognize and communicate an understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences?

### References

### Session 10: Mar 27

**Part 3: Homelessness and Inequality**

**Sexual Minority Youth and Homelessness**

Return to our discussion from week 4, regarding the trauma faced by homeless populations and extend this to include an orientation to heterosexism and the traumatic experiences of sexual minority youth. Notice and interrogate the ways in which youth of color are also highly represented within this population. Consider again, how do we read about the experience of major trauma and not see this as the totality of a community? How does one go about reading a series of troubling data and not assign deficits to groups? How do we talk about the real challenges that communities face, and not have that represent the totality of that group?

**IN CLASS READING:**

**Weekly Writing Reflection 3C**

Field observation at Eberwhite and STEAM schools

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### Session 11: Apr 3

**Part 4: Policy and Practice for Change**

**Guest Expert: Health Care**

Build upon what we have discussed throughout the semester regarding the life experiences of homeless populations, their marginalization in society, and the racial inequality evident in the overrepresentation of people of color and LGBTQ youth in the homeless population. How does this foundation inform your understanding of the need for high quality health care policy and practice for the homeless population?

**IN CLASS READING:**

**Weekly Writing Reflection 3C**

*No Field Work*