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Rethinking 21st Century Diversity in Teacher Preparation, K-12 Education, and School Policy

Theory, Research, and Practice

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Foreword: Rethinking and Enacting 21st Century Diversity in Hard Times

In this exhilarating volume, *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity in Teacher Preparation, K-12 Education, and School Policy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Suniti Sharma, Althier Lazar, and a group of courageous and invigorating activist scholars and intercultural workers critically and creatively rethink and enact 21st century diversity in teacher preparation, K-12 education, and school policy. With demographic changes in the United States, the student population in K-12 schools is becoming increasingly diverse, multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multiracial. This welcome increase in diversity opens the field of education to a range of exciting possibilities but also sets in motion attempts to curb the growth in multiculturalism across the United States.

The US Census Bureau (2010) reports that in 2010 foreign-born population represented 12.9% of the total US population (308.7 million) with Latin America and the Caribbean accounting for 53.1%, Asia 28.2%, Europe 12.1%, and the remainder coming from other areas of the world map. In 2010, the Hispanic population made up 16% of the total US population, Black or African-Americans represented 13%; Asians (including the Middle East) represented 5% of the total, while immigration from Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America also increased (US Census Bureau 2012). In addition, over 22 million people were domestic migrants who changed their state of residence between 1995 and 2000. Further, it is estimated that by 2060, the US foreign-born population will reach nearly 19% of the total population (417 million), while people of color will increase from 37.3% in 2012 to 57% in 2060 of the US total population.

Immigration and migration diversify communities and neighborhoods and, inevitably, schools. The number of immigrant children between the ages of 5 and 20 living in the United States grew from 3.5 million in 1970 to 9 million in 2010 representing 22% of the school-aged population. The enrollment of newcomer students in elementary and secondary schools has grown sevenfold since 2006, marking a 21.6% increase between 2014 and 2015. It is projected that students of color will make up 54% of the US school-age children by 2025 (Musu-Gillette et al. 2017).

Diversified schools, communities, and neighborhoods engender new ways to think about and enact 21st century diversity in teacher preparation, K-12 education,

and school policy. At the same time, unprecedented challenges that impact education have soared since Donald Trump's presidency. Trump and his administration have put into action "draconian, enforcement-based policies and executive orders" (Huerta 2017) that have given way to an outbreak of hate speech, harassment, bullying, and violence targeted at those who identify as Latino, Black, Muslim, Jewish, LGTBQ, and women – individuals and groups that signify cultural and linguistic diversity across the United States. The present administration's enforcement policies and executive orders continue to perpetuate "an isolationist and white nativist philosophy, hearkening back to the more oppressive periods of U.S. history" when individuals and groups with diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and sexual orientations "[lack] basic civil rights, privileges and freedoms under the law" (Huerta 2017, p. 1).

As Mica Pollock (2017) observes, "schools with significant numbers of African-American and Hispanic students and immigrant students of color" (p. 426) experience what many teachers describe as trauma, fear, bigotry, anxiety, physical harm, emotional breakdown, division, tension, loss of trust, and hopelessness. The outbreak of hate speech, harassment, bullying, and violence following the 2017 presidential election that targets minoritized individuals and groups in the United States affects the daily life children of color live and the schools they attend (Southern Poverty Law Center 2016, pp. 6–10). *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* is a call to educators and researchers to resist the oppressive force against diversity perpetuated by the current administration that contradicts the multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multiracial landscape of education. *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* is a call to educators and researchers to intervene in this present moment and make their voices heard in support of 21st century diversity in hard times.

The authors of this book urge intercultural workers to join hands with researchers, teachers, administrators, parents, students, community workers, policy-makers, and educational stakeholders to "rethink teaching and learning to create equal opportunities for all" (chapter "21st Century Diversity, Educational Equity, and Transformative Change"); "decolonize knowledge" (chapter "Not Everyone Gets a Seat at the Table!: Responding to the Language Games of Diversity") and "decolonize research" (chapter "A Political Ontological Approach to Decolonization of Ethnographic Research in Education"); "assuage social and political tribalism" (chapter "Embracing the Otherness of Others: An Approach for Teacher Educators to Assuage Social and Political Tribalism"); "include Indigenous knowledge and counter-narratives to provoke change" (chapter "Decolonization, Counter-Narratives and Education of Two Native Women in Higher Education"); "transform discomforting experiences into multicultural awareness for disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline" (chapter "How Preservice Teachers Transform Pedagogical Discomfort into Multicultural Knowledge for Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline"); "go beyond race, ethnicity, class, and gender" to "bridge the gap between African refugee parents and K-12 teachers" (chapter "Bridging the Gap Between African Refugee Parents and K-12 Teachers: Expanding the Meaning of School Diversity"); "foster diversity in music education" (chapter "The Song-Hunting Project: Fostering Diversity in Music Education"); humanize the English as a Second Language (ESL)

curriculum and pedagogical praxis (chapter "Phenomenology as a Path to English as a Second Language (ESL) Praxis, Curriculum and Theory-Making"); develop a professional learning community to "explore three pillars of transformative pedagogy, knowing self, knowing students, and knowing practice" (chapter "Getting Comfortable with the Uncomfortable: Conversations About Race, Culture, and Transformative Pedagogy in an Urban-Based Professional Learning Community"); invent space to study and learn from "cultural experiences" of teachers and students rather than to be imprisoned in "a limiting standardizing curriculum" (chapter "Teachers' Storied Cultural Tensions of Curriculum as a Standardizing Practice"); "reposition art education within educational equity in K-12 urban schools" by exploring "how teachers and students experience art" (chapter "Repositioning Art Education Within Educational Equity in K-12 Urban Schools: A Partnership Between Philadelphia Public Schools and the Barnes Foundation"); and "engage differences in the digital age by learning with/from three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, female YouTubers" (chapter "Engaging Difference in the Digital Age: Learning with/from Three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, Female YouTubers").

Each chapter in this volume calls upon us, the readers, to rethink how we theorize, research, and participate in 21st century diversity and conceptualize teacher preparation, K-12 education, and school policy aimed at equitable education for all K-12 students and beyond. Henry Giroux (2017), writing as an educator and public intellectual in an op-ed in Truthout, calls for "thinking dangerously in authoritarian times" (p. 1–13). Giroux states "At the core of thinking dangerously is the recognition that education is central to politics and that a democracy cannot survive without informed citizens. Critical and dangerous thinking is the precondition for nurturing the ethical imagination that enables engaged citizens to learn how to govern rather than be governed" (p. 3). *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* responds to Giroux's provocative question: "What work do educators have to do to create the economic, political and ethical conditions necessary to endow young people and the general public with the capacities to think, question, doubt, imagine the unimaginable and defend education as essential for inspiring and energizing the citizens necessary for the existence of a robust democracy" (p. 3)?

In carrying forward the work of Giroux and several other educational scholar activists, I invite readers to join the authors of *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* in asking: What shall we do to promote the 21st century diversity in teacher preparation, K-12 education, and school policy in the United States in an era of intolerance, violence, hatred, fear, and injustice? What shall we do to protect human rights of people who live in oppressive shadows when they are demonized on the basis of their religion, ethnicity, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation? How do we use our voice in teaching, research, and scholarship to protect and promote 21st century diversity in teacher preparation, K-12 education, and school policy when millions of undocumented immigrants are treated as "terrorists" and "criminals"? How might we renew our commitment to cultivate and enact multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual, and multiracial spaces both in and outside education?

The authors featured in *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* call upon us to transgress epistemological, methodological, sociopolitical, cultural, and linguistic bor-

ders to cultivate generations of intercultural workers in troubled times. *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity in Teacher Preparation, K-12 Education, and School Policy* in hard times demands volunteer exile (He 2010) from commodified (Illich 1970), acquisitive (Schubert 2009), and deskilling societies (Apple 1986) to make the impossible possible (Ayers 2016). As educators we have a voice collectively and individually and will keep the boundless human potential of cultural humanism evolving, keep questioning and challenging authoritarian and dominant narrative, fight against all forms of oppressions, seek a humanizing condition in between contradictions and complexities, and develop a clear vision of love, justice, and education (He 2016; Schubert 2009).

Rethinking how we reconceptualize 21st century diversity in hard times calls for radical imagination (Anyon 2005; Freire 2007; Greene 1995) that keeps "an optimism of the intellect" (Harvey 2000, p. 6) alive and generates possibilities. Participating in 21st century diversity calls for teaching against the grain (Simon 1992) by evoking "different histories and different futures" that "substantiates… ambivalence while problematizing certainty" (Giroux 2007, p. xiii). Enacting 21st century diversity in hard times demands engagement in solidarities and joined efforts to move beyond boundaries, transgress orthodoxies and bureaucratic procedures (Giroux 2017, p. 3), develop strategies and pedagogies for "challenging forms of domination," and create "more equitable and just public spheres within and outside of educational institutions" (Mohanty 1989, p. 207).

Rethinking 21st century diversity thrives on passionate involvement, strong commitment, and unfaltering advocacy for disenfranchised, underrepresented, and invisible groups and individuals. This passion, commitment, and advocacy cannot be cultivated in isolation. It calls for a movement of community organizing where teachers and educational workers teach against the grain, work together as allies, and take seriously the predicaments of the oppressed, suppressed, and minoritized groups and individuals. This advocacy translates into ideas, languages, and strategies that enact educational and social change for equity and social justice for all communities. This expanded community embodies possibilities and creates hope that we can enact a more equitable gathering place for differences, where we might live more robustly, develop our human capacities more fully, and become humane and peaceful in teaching, learning, inquiry, and our everyday life. *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity* is a book about possibility and hope; it is a timely reminder to consciously participate in learning, teaching, inquiry, and life in an increasingly diversified, complicated, and contested world.

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Antía González Ben is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI, where she investigates international K-12 music as a curriculum reform strategy in the United States. Antía holds a bachelor's degree in elementary music education (2009) and a

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Hodan Hujaleh was born and raised in Ottawa. As the daughter of Somali immigrants to Canada, she grew up immersed in Somalia's rich and vibrant culture, which inspires her to express herself using comedy, music, and arts. From a very young age, Hodan knew self-expression through singing and acting was her calling. She was first introduced to Specs and Veil with the team's video, Somali Problems, in which she portrays a Somali mother. Hodan was drawn to making these videos due to the lack of representation she experienced growing up. Making and sharing videos has allowed their team to connect with hundreds of other young Somali youth and has inspired many to create their own videos.

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21st Century Diversity, Educational Equity, and Transformative Change

Suniti Sharma and Althier M. Lazar

Abstract This chapter serves as an introduction to the book, *Rethinking 21st Diversity in Teacher Preparation, K-12 Education, and School Policy: Theory, Research, and Practice*. In engaging with diversity, the authors of this book lend a fresh perspective to how we understand diversity in K-12 contexts by considering not just what diversity means but also how it matters, where, for whom, and to what effects. The authors comprise a diverse intellectual and global mix of education faculty, school leaders, policy researchers and K-12 teachers. How the authors identify, articulate, and respond to diversity from distinct theoretical orientations, research methodologies, and teaching philosophies is also a response to the age-old debates: What is the purpose of public schools? Who is being served by public schools? Whose knowledge counts? Who defines what knowledge counts and for whom? Where does K-12 diversity fit into these conversations and debates? How do we prepare teachers for teaching K-12 diversity? The authors' response to these questions is timely and offer diverse perspectives on how to rethink teaching and learning aimed at educational equity and equal opportunity for all students.

Keywords Diversity · Educational equity · K-12 education · Teacher preparation · Identity and power · School policy

1 Diversity and Educational Equity

In the field of education, the term 'diversity' is an ever-changing and evolving category, concept, approach and vision. Competing discourses on diversity point to its growing complexity as a response to the demographic changes across K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. As a concept, diversity has become synonymous with cultural difference measured in terms of divergence from White, Anglo cultural identity associated with Western European societies and widely accepted as

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the normative frame of reference. Any difference from this normative framework is considered a deviation and falls into the catch-all term, diversity. As a category, diversity denotes the politics of identity along specific lines of difference, namely, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. In academic discourse, such differences are operationalized as 'self,' and 'other' wherein the self is the quintessential White, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied, English-speaking male while all else is the diametrically opposite, diverse other. As an approach, diversity is positioned as a social and institutional challenge; one that is in need of a working solution. Such solutions are coded in educational policy and implemented in school practice through ESL classrooms, alternative schooling, and the school-to-prison pipeline. As a transformative vision, diversity encompasses a theoretical concept for engaging with difference, a political category for addressing inequities, an approach to complex demographic changes and a pathway to educational equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Embedded in each of these frameworks for understanding diversity is the assumption of an identity of the self and the claim to power and privilege that comes with it. Conversely, identifying the 'self' points to the diverse 'other' and the problematic assumptions that accompany it. As educators and researchers, whether we view diversity as a category, concept, approach or vision, definitions are critical as they shape our understanding of a network of associated terms, processes, and outcomes in education. The positions we take in how we define diversity is enacted in our practices with consequences for all participants and stakeholders invested in education futures. When educators question each of these frameworks, they are also problematizing the dominant discourse on diversity that operationalizes a network of associated terms such as – assimilation, acculturation, multiculturalism, standardization, achievement gap, English language learner, equal opportunity, educational equity, and social justice.

In engaging with diversity, the authors of this book, *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity in Teacher Preparation, K-12 Education, and School Policy: Theory, Research, and Practice*, lend a fresh perspective to how we understand diversity in K-12 contexts by considering not just what diversity means but also how it matters, where, for whom, and to what effects. The authors comprise a diverse intellectual and global mix of education faculty, school leaders, policy researchers and K-12 teachers. How the authors identify, articulate, and respond to diversity from distinct theoretical orientations, research methodologies, and teaching philosophies is also a response to the age-old debates: What is the purpose of public schools? Who is being served by public schools? Whose knowledge counts? Who defines what knowledge counts and for whom? Where does K-12 diversity fit into these conversations and debates? How do we prepare teachers for teaching K-12 diversity? The authors' response to these questions is timely in the current political climate when the inclusion of cultural, racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity is under siege by the political discourse of making America great through protectionist policies that threaten minority presence across the United States.

Positioned within competing visions of the American educational experience teacher education and educational leadership programs continues to emphasize

multicultural, multilinguistic, multiethnic diversity as critical to preparing teachers and school professionals for 21st century classrooms. In contrast, policy and practice in many K-12 public schools especially those serving multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and racially diverse populations articulate diversity in the language of the achievement gap, English language learners, special education and the school-to-prison pipeline (Winn and Behizadeh 2011). This gap between teacher preparation on the one hand, and educational policy and classroom practice, on the other, is reflective of how the field of education responds to diversity in contradictory ways that celebrate diversity, recognize the pluralism of cultural difference, and also expect assimilation, acculturation, and universalization.

In K-12 discourse, instructional goals, school mission, and educational vision articulate firm commitment to diversity and equity which is a criterion for measuring their institutional effectiveness. At the same time, categories point to a determinate norm that claims to honor diversity through programs such as affirmative action but renders impossible the attainment of such claims. For example, the federal government recognizes categories of race, class, and gender to be able to gather data for addressing inequities through policy initiatives and affirmative action. Accordingly, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2003 requires state-funded schools to report test scores along with student demographics with the rationale of addressing educational inequities suffered by racial, ethnic, gendered and linguistic minorities. What is problematic with categories defined in policy or the implementation of affirmative action to address inequality and discrimination reaffirms the dominant group and culture as the institutional norm. The legal use of categorical terms such as race, class, and gender protect diverse others/group identities from discrimination; however, social and political usage draw lines of inclusion and exclusion between majority and minority. The blurred lines between the legal, social and political use of categories enable education to uphold the dominant culture's power and privilege circulated through related discourses such as normalization and standardization which in reality become instruments for assimilation, exclusion, and oppression.

Whether the expectation from diversity is assimilation into the proverbial melting pot, a celebration of pluralism or standardization of the curriculum, each of these responses sets in motion a series of processes with social and material consequences for those who are at the receiving end – diverse others. In this sense, traditional response to diversity is not a move toward educational equity but a systematic, hierarchical structuring of differences normalizing differential treatment under the rhetoric of diversity, educational equity and social justice (Au 2009). The critical question to ask is, how might the field of education rethink diversity as a practice of equity and social justice? Diversity in education cannot be separated from equity and social justice; however, it is fraught with complexity and specificity that demand unpacking of historical injustices accompanied by a complex series of culturally grounded responses, frameworks, and pedagogies.

In *Rethinking 21st Century Diversity*, the authors engage with diversity to offer a complex range of theoretical responses, methodological frameworks, and pedagogical transformations that offer unique insights into diversity in educational contexts. Specifically, the authors provoke the question, what theoretical, pedagogical, epis-

temological and methodological promises, perils and provocations do 21st century diversity in K-12 education incite? Each chapter expands our knowledge of diversity that goes beyond traditionally understood categories such as race, class and gender differences. While the authors recognize race, class, and gender as critical intersections of cultural differences, they advocate inclusive education for 21st century diversity in K-12 classrooms that also include the experiences of new refugees from Africa, students who are multilingual learners of English, Native American women, Muslim youth, and students whose intersectional differences propels them into the school-to-prison pipeline.

2 Discourses and Trends in K-12 Diversity

Demographic discourse is one measure of studying the scope of complex diversity that demand renewed response from the field of education. Based on school census data of 2015, the National Center for Education Statistics (2015) projected that 50.4 million students would attend public elementary and secondary schools in the fall of 2016. This projected number would constitute 24.6 million White students, 7.8 million Black students, 13.3 million Hispanic students, 2.7 million Asian/Pacific Islander students, 0.5 million American Indian/Alaska Native students, and 1.5 million students of two or more races. These numbers of non-White students in K-12 urban public schools are projected to continue to rise through 2025 (National Center for Education Statistics 2016a, b).

Research across the social sciences documents segregated urban schools with a high percentage of racial and ethnic minorities who are predominantly African American, Hispanic or Latino are at the receiving end of urban blight, gentrification and low socio-economic prospects (Anyon 2005). Also, many urban public schools serving culturally non-dominant communities are inadequately funded, poorly equipped with technology, and spend little on school and family services such as counseling and language resources for parents who do not speak English when compared with suburban schools serving predominantly white students (Lipman 2011). Students from underserved communities mostly ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic minorities are likely to have teachers who completed an alternative certification program rather than a rigorous four-year teacher education program, more likely to be taught by substitute teachers, and most likely to experience school closure (Darling-Hammond 2006). The existing inequities are further exacerbated by national and global events that have implications for local communities and schools.

Recent events in Charlottesville provide evidence of blatant legitimizing of hate group speech by White nationalists and Nazi sympathizers proclaiming “White Lives Matter” which continue to spew hate against racial and ethnic diversity in the name of preserving the First Amendment. Other national events, however disparate they may seem that contribute toward discourses on diversity in education include the terror attack of 9/11; hurricane Katrina, the economic recession of 2008, first Black President of the U.S., followed by a divisive 2016 presidential election. In the

global arena the Arab spring; the violence in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria; genocide in Somalia, Sudan and Central African Republic, drug and gang wars in Mexico, and civil unrest in many parts of Latin America continue to be felt in local communities.

The economic crash of 2008 has brought many families below the poverty line. Hurricane Katrina affected 120 schools out of 126 in the region following which 16 schools closed for good, 30 were reorganized, and students changed an average of five schools in the next 10 years (Kamenetz 2015). The drug war in Mexico, violent crime in Central America and civil unrest in Latin America have led to increased immigration into the U.S. accompanied by a parallel increase in resentment against immigrants. The Arab spring along with the war on terror in the middle east and parts of Africa have displaced thousands of families giving way to the refugee crisis and subsequent backlash against refugees.

Besides national and global events, ideological beliefs, political power, social bias, institutional policy, and public perceptions are intimately related and have the potential to reinforce discrimination against cultural diversity and difference and widen the equity gap. The case of Flint is a troubling example of how multiple discourses translate into intentional racism and discriminatory policies against underserved communities with devastating effects on specific minoritized groups and the education of their children. In Flint, Michigan, water supplied to mostly Black and Hispanic communities and the schools that serve them, contained high levels of lead with full knowledge of local officials. Of those affected, 51% were African Americans, 16.6% were Hispanic, and 2.4% were White although African Americans comprised 14%, Hispanics 4.4%, and Whites constituted 76.6% of Michigan's population. Equally troubling, lead poisoning affected large numbers of children who were subsequently diagnosed with irreversible health issues such as physiological and neurological damage as well as behavioral problems and learning disabilities that have led to students' school expulsion (Guyette 2016). Flint is not alone; the American Civil Liberties Union Racial Justice Program (2017) has active cases and ongoing court-enforced settlements against institutional racism, segregation, and criminalization of children of color in public school districts through school disciplinary practices that are discriminatory and unjust.

School disciplinary measures indicate the teaching profession is implicated in discriminatory practices against minoritized students urging educators to be mindful and reflective of their classroom interactions. A state-wide longitudinal study on seventh-grade public school students across Texas conducted through 2000, 2001, and 2002 found that 60% of students in the study experienced school suspension or/and expulsion, or/and detention which disproportionately affected African American and Hispanic students and significantly increased their chances of dropping out or being incarcerated (Fabelo et al. 2011). Only 3% of the disciplinary decisions were based on student behaviors for which state law mandated suspensions and expulsions; the rest were discretionary decisions of administrators and teachers. The report concluded Texas reflected a national trend on how school disciplinary policies are misused against minoritized youth and recommended policymakers across the country convene educators, juvenile justice experts, and child welfare

professionals to examine school policies and practices, end unfair practices and develop equitable approaches to education.

Calling for equitable school policy, Valenzuela (1999, 2002) notes the history of schools in the U.S. and their educational practices continue to be subtractive of the cultures, experiences, and languages of students and children of color. In her study of Mexican immigrant students and Mexican American high school students' school experiences Valenzuela (1999) holds school structure, policy, and day to day classroom practice responsible for erasing students' culture reflected in how and what students are taught. She argues that cultural assimilation, a covert goal of schooling, is subtractive of the cultures of Mexican-origin youth contributing to their experience of educational disaffection and low academic achievement. Valenzuela provides evidence that the Texas framework on educational policy, standardized testing, and school accountability for reform is not informed by the cultural history or ethnic experiences of students but used for social control in the larger project of assimilation rather than as analytical categories of difference for addressing inequities or designing culturally responsive pedagogies.

Outside obvious discrimination in schools, minoritized youth are disadvantaged in other insidious ways. For example, the Charter School Movement operating under the guise of educational reform and school choice claims to benefit diversity but admits students on a highly selective process that lacks transparency (Simon 2015). Although legislation approval for most charter schools is granted for working-class communities that serve African Americans and Latinos, the selection process ensures the population of these schools does not reflect the demography of the neighborhoods in which they operate (Simon 2015). Public schools, on the other hand, are legally obliged to educate all students regardless of their cultural background, home language or grade level.

Discriminatory enrolment practices in schools are an outrage against the communities in which they are located making a strong case for advocacy and action to reinstate the 'public' back into public education. Several scholars critique the current trend of school privatization and the charter school movement for promoting neoliberal educational practices that are driven by economic exploitation rather than economic equality (Hursh 2009; Lipman 2011). Instead, Lipman (2004, 2005) conceptualizes a transformative framework for rethinking public schooling as a democratic practice of educational and economic equality centered on real issues that impact students' lives followed by systemic action to resolve some of the most pressing concerns in education.

Educators invested in rethinking K-12 schools aimed at educational equity recommend preparing teachers and school professionals with competencies for working with culturally diverse students. In a study of peer-reviewed articles published from 1985 to 2007 on preservice teachers' perceptions of cultural diversity, Castro (2010) notes preservice teachers struggle to develop a complex understanding of diversity issues, lack critical consciousness on equity and privilege issues and fail to recognize structural and institutional barriers to equity. Castro also notes, many preservice teachers are unable to identify oppression, hold diversity responsible for the challenge of teaching in urban schools, exhibit lower expectations of African

American and Native American students, maintain strong beliefs about meritocracy and individualism, and prefer teaching in White suburban schools. According to Castro's research, on a superficial level, preservice teachers support social justice but lack critical consciousness of the ability to be self-reflexive of their White identity and challenge racism.

In her critique of the prevailing approach in social justice education in schools of education across the U.S., Applebaum (2010) holds "white privilege pedagogy" (p. 4) for being complicit in promoting inequality and ignoring how race, privilege and power combine to maintain White identity as the status quo. Applebaum advocates "white complicity pedagogy" (p. 4) wherein teacher education students and faculty acknowledge their complicity, understand how whites benefit from the system, and facilitate cross-racial dialogue. Similarly, Darling-Hammond (2001) recommends teacher education programs focus on transforming the mindset of future teachers by creating experiences that help them identify privilege and exclusion, recognize structural and institutional racism, and conduct an in-depth analysis of systemic inequities affecting the realities of diverse populations. Darling-Hammond rejects traditional approaches to teacher preparation and recommends schools recruit qualified teachers with content and pedagogical knowledge combined with cultural competency for teaching particular cultural or ethnic groups.

Ladson-Billings' (1995) framework for teacher preparation focuses on developing culturally responsive teaching competencies in future teachers so that they can work with students from different cultures and backgrounds. According to Ladson-Billings, teacher preparation programs should educate future teachers to be able to help students whose educational, economic, social, political, and cultural futures are uncertain; teach in the real world rather than teach in an unrelated way; legitimize and include students' life experiences in classroom curricula; develop a broad conception of literacy; participate and engage students to resist the status quo; and acknowledge their own politics in teaching and learning. Affirming Ladson-Billings' advocacy for culturally responsive teaching, Nieto (2012, 2013) elaborates culturally responsive teachers develop a mindset and disposition that respects and honors students' cultures, experiences, and histories which is reflected in their curriculum, teaching approaches, and expectations they have of students. Nieto recommends preparing teachers who engage in critical self-reflection on how their values, biases, and strengths affect the effectiveness of their teaching of students from diverse backgrounds and can enact curricula, pedagogical, and dispositional changes to make teaching and learning culturally responsive.

According to Boyd et al. (2016), teacher preparation programs are more "'about'—about theories, about people, about schools without involving our students in the act of social justice" (p. 172). Rather than focusing on the 'isms,' such as racism or classism, Boyd suggests five components to preparing teachers to teach for educational equity and social justice: Preservice teachers examine autobiographical experiences to interpret new information through their personal, socially constructed lenses; engage with systemic injustices and the social construction of identity in relation to how and what we teach; critical analysis of media to understand how dominant knowledge is maintained; analyze why and how students

struggle with classroom content; and, directly engage in research and social justice projects.

When rethinking frameworks in teaching and learning, Lather (2004) and Dimitriadis (2012) remind educators to pay close attention to how we conduct research and engage in social justice education in the light of the evidence-based research movement established by the National Research Council that narrowly defines what counts as scientific research in education. Lather calls this move a "conservative attack on education" (p. 3) by neo-liberal states and academic capitalism to restore the social and cultural order predating demographic diversity. According to Lather, the federal government's move to legislate a narrow definition of the scientific method and what counts as scientific research is aimed to curb proliferation of research methodologies emerging out of cultural studies and related fields associated with giving voice to diversity and the production of alternative knowledge outside the status quo in what counts as school knowledge.

Advocating scholarship that values knowledge from the social science, Lather (2004) advocates, a "counter science" (p. 5) or counter-narratives to the dominant narrative in education. We hope the chapters in this book provoke thought that complicate the dominant narrative in education, offer counter-narratives that resist the status-quo and invite readers to rethink our approach to diversity in teacher preparation, K-12 education, and school policy. We also hope the chapters open theory, research and practice to the possibilities in different perspectives, methodologies, and approaches necessary for working through complex issues when preparing teachers for 21st century K-12 classrooms.

3 Theoretical Discourses on Neoliberalism, Coloniality, and Decolonization of Knowledge

The first section of this book, *Theoretical Discourses on Neoliberalism, Coloniality, and Decolonization of Knowledge*, addresses teaching and learning in relation to the politics of culture, power, and global diversity from different theoretical approaches that inform education. Diversity as cultural identity circulates as a political signifier of difference that is reinforced through each of these discursive sites – society, schools, law, media, education – what Foucault (1977) calls, technologies of power. In spite of laws against racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination inequalities based on race, gender, and class differences persist within institutional practice showing the continued gap between how diversity is theorized and policed and how it is practiced.

As the authors of this section suggest, any research that engages with diversity and educational equity works with the theoretical and methodological assumption that diversity operates on multiple registers in local, national and global contexts and circulated in educational discourses and school practices for organizing knowledge. Therefore, research and analysis of cultural diversity or response to the politics of identity should be on multiple registers that match the complexity, intersectionality,

and heterogeneity of what it means to be diverse. The authors deconstruct the language games that reassert dominant cultural norms, address the silencing of Native American women's voices in the field of education, advocate decolonizing of educational theory and research, and explore the phenomenon of what it means to be a student of English as a second language. Each author problematizes the dominant discourse in education by examining how the intersection of culture, power, and global diversity redefines our understanding of diversity and difference as markers of inclusion and exclusion and advocate educators go against the grain, if need be, to cultivate inclusive spaces that are multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual.

In chapter 2, *Not Everyone Gets a Seat at the Table!: The Language Games of Diversity and How to Subvert Them*, Jonathan Mark Torres and Nicole Capriel Ferry, rethink diversity by reading the silences of history wherein double readings and misreadings are forms of retrieval of excluded and subalternized knowledge as a practice of teaching and learning. Decentering the dominant discourse on diversity, Torres and Ferry offer a provocative reading of how social justice movements are positioned in the language of equality and inclusion to become co-opted to ensure white-supremacist, patriarchal, heterosexual and capitalist dominance. With this reformulation of conservative agendas under progressive rhetoric that serves racist, xenophobic, and sexist ends, Torres and Ferry prompt educators to develop pedagogies that convey the importance of diversity and equality while at the same time critique the language games played by those who use progressive narratives as a Trojan horse of social justice. At the same time, the possibilities in resistance, agency, and transformation are realized when we prepare future teachers for the growing complexity of interdiscursive language games by empowering them to navigate educational settings that are becoming simultaneously more diverse and exclusionary.

From a research perspective, in chapter 3, *A Political Ontological Approach to Decolonization of Ethnographic Research in Education*, Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores and JoAnn Phillion, advance the conversation on the inclusion of diversity beginning with the decolonization of knowledge that is traditionally valued in education, particularly, the production of knowledge in the field of educational research. Fúnez-Flores and Phillion argue educational research perpetuates deficit perspectives toward the cultural other; therefore, teacher preparation programs must decolonize knowledge and prompt preservice teachers to unlearn their assumptions and beliefs about diversity. According to Fúnez-Flores and Phillion, a political ontological ethnographic approach carries many implications for education research that informs knowledge valued in K-12 contexts and how "other" stories and enactments emerge. Fúnez-Flores and Phillion call on schools, colleges of education, and the research community to be able to disrupt the homogenizing force of traditional forms of knowledge production, co-construct knowledge across cultures, and engage in decolonization as an ongoing project of educational research.

Combining research and classroom practice, in chapter 4, *Embracing the Otherness of Others: An Approach for Teacher Educators to Assuage Social and Political Tribalism*, Sonja Varbelow challenges the current political climate of divisiveness and partisan discourses that have erupted in the present time. Varbelow

argues that although many scholars view partisan politics as a consequence of the 2016 presidential election campaign; such divisive sentiments and ideologies are hardly new grounds in the search for social identity, domination, and power. According to Varbelow, to understand how segregation exists in spite of increasing globalization, educators must engage future teachers in examining the origins of their bias and offer learning experiences with opportunities for analyzing bias and bridging differences across cultural divides. Using several examples from diverse, interrelated fields such as psychology, anthropology, and education, Varbelow offers analyses of personal and societal bias in contemporary times, explores the purpose of education, and delineates an approach to combating bias and developing an awareness that includes engagement of the self to understand the diverse other.

In chapter 5, *Decolonization, Counter-Narratives and Education of Two Native Women in Higher Education*, Angela M. Jaime and Taylar Stagner speak of the lived experience of navigating the complex terrain of diversity in education as Native women educators. According to Jaime and Stagner, unlike the discipline of American Indian Studies which has contributed to advancing the history of Native people, the field of education lags behind with little or no inclusion of Native voices and experiences in classroom content and pedagogy or conversations about diversity in higher education. This troubling absence of Native voices and experiences is visible in the perpetuation of the stereotyping of Native people reflected in textbooks used in schools and colleges and diversity discourses in educational contexts. Jaime and Stagner offer several examples of school textbooks that present inaccurate information about the Native history and portray the diversity among Native cultures and experiences as a master narrative of a homogeneous population. The authors recommend educators preparing teachers for K-12 classrooms engage preservice teachers with Critical Race Theory (CRT), theories of decolonization, and increase their awareness of microaggressions against Indigenous people as a starting point for provoking change toward greater inclusion of diversity in educational contexts.

4 Critical Research on Teacher Preparation, K-12 Classrooms, and Educational Change

In the 21st century, K-12 education has seen significant changes, notably, policy reforms introduced at the federal level that include NCLB, the CCSS, and the ESSA. Each of these reforms comes with an increased emphasis on standardized testing and accountability that has paved the way for conditional funding for public schools. Federal policy reforms have also contributed toward a significant number of urban school closings and privatization of public education with a push for more charter schools that further disadvantages students who attend the most under-resourced schools, thereby, widening the equity gap (Apple 2012). This gap is sustained by the conservative discourse on meritocracy, cultural assimilation and core knowledge without critical analysis of historical conditions and systemic injustices that have created inequities. For example, the discourse on standardized curriculum

reform initiated by E.D. Hirsch' Core Knowledge Foundation (Gewertz 2010; Hirsch 1999) and adopted by many schools across the country has served to silence diversity in school knowledge and K-12 curriculum content. Similarly, the war against social welfare, affirmative action, same-sex marriage and feminism promoted by right-wing conservative commentators such as Dinesh D'Souza (2002, 2008) attempt to roll back the hard-won gains of the Civil Rights of the 1960s. Another example of a conservative discourse that aims to curb diversity is the war against immigration that blames immigrant communities for the cause of the failure of city schools that continue to be reproduced in school policy and practice with consequences for minoritized groups and their educational futures.

In the section, *Critical Research on Teacher Preparation, K-12 Classrooms, and Educational Change*, the authors resist conservative forces that undermine diversity and continue the work of the civil rights movement of the 60s that ushered new spaces for inclusion and equity. The authors call for change in educational policy, school curricula and classroom practice to represent the hard-won cultural, legal and political recognition of various forms of diversity. The authors question the historical and specific conditions that make inequities possible and prompt inquiry into the intimate connection between the history of education, state and school policies, education's key frameworks, and practices and assumptions about self and diverse others. The importance of preparing teachers for 21st century classrooms lies not in the possibility that we move toward a single vision or unified theory of diversity. Rather, the chapters in this collection illustrate how debates in education reflect the extent of diversity in students' actual educational experiences and the need to include a multiplicity of approaches to differing knowledges and cultures when trying to prepare teachers for 21st century diversity. In the field of education, a critical place to start is teacher preparation where the majority of preservice teachers are White, with little experience analyzing their own identities and dispositions about diversity.

In chapter 6, *How Preservice Teachers Transform Pedagogical Discomfort into Multicultural Knowledge for Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline*, Suniti Sharma presents a collective case study of how preservice teachers transform discomforting experiences into multicultural awareness for ending the school-to-prison pipeline. Sharma notes that traditional discourses in multicultural teacher education emphasize the inclusion of K-12 diversity in content, pedagogy and classroom practice. She also notes that contemporary political discourse on 'make America great again,' 'build the border wall,' and 'ban refugees and immigrants' are an attack on public education aimed at curbing multiculturalism across the United States. In her research and teaching, Sharma uses discomforting experiences as a tool for provoking self-reflection in preservice teachers, raising awareness of the link between K-12 diversity and educational inequities, and developing multicultural pedagogies that are inclusive of the background knowledge and experiences of all students. According to Sharma, pedagogical discomfort combined with experiential learning served as powerful tools for connecting preservice teachers to the diverse knowledge and cultural background of students and promoting self-reflexivity and equity-mindedness in preservice teachers.

Expanding the conversation on how we prepare teachers for 21st century classrooms, in chapter 7, *Bridging the gap between African Refugee Parents and K-12 Teachers: Expanding the Meaning of School Diversity*, Wangari Gichiru explores ways to bridge the gap between African refugee parents from Somalia and the Congo and US American teachers to deepen our understanding of student diversity among recent immigrants groups. Gichiru found that African immigrants reject assimilation into the dominant norms of parenting and school expectations; however, they respond positively to collaborative and reciprocal approaches when their voices are part of the decision-making process of schools. Gichiru's study is significant as it addresses a gap in the literature on the experience of involuntary immigrants, particularly, African refugees in the U.S. and complicates the notion of student diversity, which goes beyond race, ethnicity, class, and gender to include differences in family structures, parenting processes, and educational involvement.

An example of research addressing the absence of diverse voices in K-12 education is chapter 8, Antía González Ben's *The Song-Hunting Project: Fostering Diversity in Music Education*. González Ben argues that the domination of White, Anglo culture as the default frame of reference parallels a lack of diversity in music education in the U.S. According to González Ben, White, female, and high-income students are overrepresented in K-12 music education courses, particularly in high school, whereas students from low socio-economic backgrounds and non-native English speakers are significantly underrepresented. In her chapter, González Ben presents The Song-Hunting Project, in which students, parents, and music teachers from a dual-language elementary program create a collaborative and diverse songbook. The students record their parents singing in Spanish and English and interpret the lyrics as a way of learning about diversity and difference and building community across cultures. The Song-Hunting Project is a pedagogical example of how schools might promote diversity in school curricula and bring students, parents, and teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds into a shared space via music education.

In chapter 9, *Phenomenology as a Path to English as a Second Language (ESL) Praxis, Curriculum and Theory-Making*, Weena Gaulin explores ESL students' lived experience and discusses the politics of naming students whose home language is not English. Gaulin also examines contemporary trends in ESL teaching and offers ways to address the politics of ESL teaching and learning. Gaulin argues that ESL students comprise one of the fastest growing diverse groups on school campuses; however, educational policy and research have yet to catch up with how to respond to demographic changes in linguistic diversity. Gaulin's research explores the experience of ESL students in an intensive English program to inform teachers of instructional, curricular and theoretical practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive. In contrast to more traditional and technocratic approaches focusing solely on second language achievement and fluency measurement, Gaulin's phenomenological research offers relational insights into ESL students' lived experience – a provocative curricular promise for the success of linguistic diversity – one that K-12 schools must rethink, address and employ.

5 Transformative Practice for Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

Scholars have pointed that educational researchers bear a responsibility to the communities served by the schools they study when they do not make diversity issues and majority-minority relations a significant part of their scholarship (Valenzuela 2002). Such forms of silences further marginalize underserved minority communities making researchers complicit in the perpetuation of social inequality. Teacher education has also been critiqued for focusing on coursework that does not include critical analysis of socio-cultural, historical and political conditions of schooling and their complicity in imparting a subtractive education to minority children (Valenzuela 2002). In advancing the conversation and addressing some of the gaps, the chapters in the section, *Transformative Practice for Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century* recenter culture as the axis of classroom interaction and provide evidence of transformative pedagogies in K-12 classroom practice that point to educational change. Transformative pedagogues go beyond prescribed curricula to develop pedagogies attentive to larger socio-cultural issues such as race, social class, and poverty and the role they play in the educational lives of students, parents, and communities and create humanizing and caring pedagogies inclusive of student and parent voice (Faltis and Abedi 2013).

In chapter 10, *Getting Comfortable with the Uncomfortable: Conversations about Race, Culture, and Transformative Pedagogy in an Urban-Based Professional Learning Community,* Althier Lazar and Danielle Nicolino advocate going beyond the scripted curricula within the current environment of accountability where most K-12 students from culturally non-dominant and under-served communities are being educated in academic content knowledge with little to no connection to their knowledge traditions, heritage or discourse patterns. Lazar and Nicolino write about the experiences of four urban teachers who participated in semester-long Professional Learning Community (PLC) designed to raise awareness of the pedagogical promise of students' cultural knowledge for effective teaching and learning. Participation in PLC prompted teachers to delve deeper into students' cultural backgrounds and use this knowledge as the foundational building block of classroom pedagogy. The authors also discovered White teachers' resistance to conversations about race, which prompted them to reconceptualize future PLCs around an initial period of trust-building followed by a long-term and recursive cycle of inquiry about self, others, and practice.

Using narrative inquiry, in chapter 11, *Teachers' Storied Cultural Tensions of Curriculum as a Standardizing Practice* Candace Schlein, Christa Wenger and Sara Crump contest the notion of a standardized curriculum and testing as a form of top-down policy mandate aimed at universalizing knowledge, homogenizing student diversity and implementing unifying measures in school policy and practice. Schlein, Wenger and Crump explore the experiences of teachers to highlight storied cultural curricula tensions and identify a systemic conflict between increase in school diversity on the one hand and the hidden curriculum of the standards move-

ment, on the other. By highlighting teachers and students' lived educational experiences in response to standardization of school curricula and measures, namely, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS), the authors contest policy mandates that homogenize students at the cost of diversity denying the possibility for agency and change.

With art education as a critical marker of response to diversity, in chapter 12, *Repositioning Art Education within Educational Equity in K-12 Urban Schools: A Partnership between Philadelphia Public Schools and the Barnes Foundation*, Carolyn Berenato puts art education on the front line of debates in educational policy and curricula reform. Drawing from Dewey, Berenato purports art education as central to democratic citizenship and asserts art-based education as a transformative process based on experiences that foster active engagement with cultural diversity. According to Berenato, art education as a curriculum resource is deeply embedded in inequities with a steady decline in arts education as a school policy prompted by federal and state budget cuts, emphasis on STEM education, and the discourse on accountability and standardized testing. Berenato notes that collaborations between schools and organizations that support art, such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Barnes Foundation are pathways to transformative teaching through art-based pedagogies and cross-cultural knowledge.

In chapter 13, *Engaging Difference in the Digital Age: Learning with/from Three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, Female YouTubers*, Diane Watt, Kayf Abdulqadir, Fartousa Siyad, and Hodan Hujaleh prompt educators to reflect on the experience of Muslim students who have grown up on the American continent post 9/11 and subsequent increase in Islamophobia. While the authors speak of the perspectives of Muslim female youth in Canada, their study has implications for K-12 education in the U.S. where Muslim youth remain misunderstood and stereotyped across the social and educational landscape. Watt, Abdulqadir, Siyad, and Hujaleh provide a window into the lived experience of Muslim female students who are visible by traditional Islamic covering yet absent in school curriculum compelling them to negotiate their identities within the complex intersection of family expectations, mass media representations, and school discourse. The chapter urges educators to explore the pedagogical uses of videos shared face-to-face and online to provoke classroom conversations on local and global diversity as they intersect with race, gender, class, ethnicity, and religion.

6 Repositioning Educational Equity for Diversity

Rethinking 21st Century Diversity continues the conversation on diversity as a discursive and transformative site for interrogating the dominant narrative within traditional schooling, and questioning received knowledge and taken-for-granted assumptions that foreground our teaching and research practices. Each chapter in the collection repositions our response to 21st century diversity and educational equity to offer transformative possibilities for fighting discrimination against cultural and linguistic diversity. Collectively, the authors advocate taking risks in our

teaching to go against the grain if need be, and use our research tools to complicate how we understand and interpret politics, history, and philosophy in the present context of K-12 schools and beyond.

In chapters 2, 3 and 5, Torres and Ferry, Fúnez-Flores and Phillion, Varbelow, and Jaime and Stagner open the conversation on rethinking how we understand diversity by bringing attention to some of the most pressing issues and debates of our time – theoretical discourses on neoliberalism, decoloniality, and decolonization of knowledge play out in educational contexts. The authors remind us how conservative agendas use renewed forms of colonization to recenter Whiteness as the norm and maintain power and privilege or limit diversity through assimilation and subordination to the dominant culture.

Driven by ongoing changes in classroom diversity the authors of this book make a strong case for a concurrent shift in educational policy and school practice. In chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, Sharma, Gichiru, González Ben, and Gaulin argue when 'diversity' is normalized in school policy as a category for labeling students who are different, education is complicit in discrimination against difference. Addressing the school-to-prison pipeline, teaching refugee populations, the absence of diversity in the music curriculum, and teaching of English as a second language signify the perils of educational policy and its failure to respond to demographic changes that affect who, what, and how we teach. The authors call upon educators, researchers, and policymakers to recognize differences among, between, and within students to reformulate school policy for equity and social justice.

This collection on rethinking 21st century diversity expands the literature on teacher education and school leadership by offering theoretical approaches, critical research, and transformative pedagogies responsive to complex cultural diversity. In chapters 10, 11, 12 and 13, Lazar and Nicolino, Schlein, Christa Wenger and Sara Crump, Berenato, and Watt, Abdulquadir, Siyad and Hujaleh make a strong case for pedagogies that promote self-reflexivity as critical tools for educators to question prejudices, stereotypes and injustices and co-produce knowledge that is contextual and relational without succumbing to deficit perspectives or universal ontologies. The authors reposition questions on what counts as knowledge within their classrooms highlighting the use of pedagogies for educational change. In recentering student experience at the core of teaching and learning, the authors urge educators to reconceptualize their teaching philosophies and classroom pedagogies aimed at equal educational opportunities for all students.

Rethinking 21st Century Diversity speaks with students and faculty committed to taking up contemporary issues in teacher preparation, K-12 diversity, and school policy and their connection to other pressing issues such as educational reform, closing the achievement gap, and transformative classroom practice for educational equity. We also hope this collection engages researchers in fresh inquiry, theorization, and interpretation of what counts as knowledge in educational contexts, where and when diversity counts, and how to make diversity count. In closing, we urge education students, teacher educators, teachers and school leaders, policymakers, educational reformers, and social justice activists to continue the complicated conversation on rethinking K-12 diversity so that educational equity is the starting point, rather than the goal of education.

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Part I
Theoretical Discourses on Neoliberalism, Coloniality, and Decolonization of Knowledge in Education

Not Everyone Gets a Seat at the Table!: Responding to the Language Games of Diversity

Jonathan T. Torres and Nicole C. Ferry

Abstract Teaching issues of diversity, privilege, equity, and equality occupies a precarious but indispensable position given the increasing tensions between so-called "liberal" institutions of education and conservative politics. Over the past decade, as social justice movements have gained momentum, we have simultaneously witnessed the language of equality and inclusion become co-opted for the purposes of ensuring white-supremacist, patriarchal, and capitalist dominance. With this reformulation of progressive rhetoric to serve racist, xenophobic, and sexist ends, how do we as educators communicate to students the importance of diversity and equality while simultaneously critiquing the language games played by those who use progressive narratives as a Trojan horse of social justice? This chapter was generated from the experiences of two teacher educators, who are also scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis. They propose subverting rhetoric launched against social justice efforts—repackaging the Trojan horse and sending it back—in order to reconfigure language of inclusion/exclusion, equality/equity, and free/hate speech. The purpose of preparing future teachers for the growing complexity of interdiscursive language games is to empower them to navigate educational settings that are becoming simultaneously more diverse and yet more restricted in terms of the conversations that can take place.

Keywords Diversity · Equality · Critical discourse analysis · Teacher education · Poststructuralism · Language

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Pretend you have no idea that Donald Trump is the president of the United States. Blot it out of your tired mind for just a moment and consider the following August 24th, 2017 headline in *The Washington Examiner*: "Steve Bannon, Ann Coulter, Milo Yiannopoulos invited to Berkeley's 'free speech week'" (Mayfield 2017). Hush your suspicions and it might seem a bit utopic. As if Hegel was right to think that the narrative of history would result in greater human freedoms. Or, you might say to yourself, "Finally! Conservatives get it!" Such a headline associating individuals who have for years dismissed concerns of underrepresented people with free speech at UC Berkeley would have been unheard of in 1964. At that time, Berkeley students were holding landmark protests against university administration for restricting the organization of groups beyond the already authorized Democratic and Republican student clubs. Students felt as though these clubs did not adequately address civil rights issues, and rallied against the administration's censure of information about racial inequality on campus. Yet, when reading headlines like the one in *The Washington Examiner*, one might wonder: who is currently benefiting from UC Berkeley's established legacy? (Yes, now you can turn your suspicions back on.) The likes of Ann Coulter, Milo Yiannopoulos, and others associated with The Alternative Right (Alt-Right), "groups and individuals whose core belief is that 'white identity' is under attack by multicultural forces" (Southern Poverty Law Center n.d.), do not advocate free speech in an effort to expand the verbal freedoms for the historically disenfranchised. Instead, these individuals have repeatedly claimed that if free speech is truly free, they should have the right to publicly express their 'conservative' views, regardless of the fact that their views are either underscored by, or explicit of, racist, sexist, ethno-nationalist, and overall bigoted ideologies. What we are seeing is not an alignment of social justice goals, but rather a battle of appropriation and situated meanings in language use that threatens long held ideals of inclusion, diversity, and fairness.

There are multiple frameworks for examining the ways in which power is constituted and reproduced through language. Feminists have pointed to how patriarchy is secured through the othering discourses inherent in the "woman" word and category (de Beauvoir 1953; Butler 1990), while critical race theorists have shown the importance of recognizing subaltern voices in order to challenge the historical silencing and disenfranchisement of people of color (Spivak 2003). Progressive activism and scholarship have continued to gain momentum, and by extension public attention, however, we are witnessing a troubling role reversal. Over the past decade as social justice movements have made exceptional progress in challenging inequities, we have simultaneously seen the language of equality and inclusion become co-opted for the purposes of ensuring white-supremacist, patriarchal, and capitalist dominance (Carroll 2001; Duggan 2003; Ferguson 2012; Melamed 2011). 'Equality' has come to mean that Straight Pride accompany LGBTQ pride events; that White History Month accompany Black History Month; and that programs like Mexican American Studies be suspended for 'discriminating' against whites (Strauss 2017). Most dangerously, 'equality' has manipulated poststructuralist paradigms of 'multiple realities,' 'subjectivity,' and 'fluctuated meanings' for the purposes of pushing rhetoric like 'alternative facts' and 'fake news.' One of the ways this strategy is

apparent is in the call for intellectual 'diversity' at institutions of higher education by satisfying a quota of conservative educators (Fish 2004).

For several years, Stanley Fish (2004) has warned of conservative language games, which he called a "Trojan horse of a dark design" (p. B13). Using 'political correctness' as an example, Fish (2004) shows how conservatives repackage progressive language to sway public opinion:

> The right did this in the old-fashioned way, by mastering the ancient art of rhetoric and spinning a vocabulary that, once established in the public mind, performed the work of argument all by itself. The master stroke, of course, was the appropriation from the left (where it had been used with a certain self-directed irony) of the phrase "political correctness," which in fairly short order became capitalized and transformed from an accusation to the name of a program supposedly being carried out by the very persons who were the accusation's object. That is, those who cried "political correctness" hypostatized an entity about which they could then immediately complain. This was genius. (p. B13)

As Fish and others have implied, the banner of free speech and equality is being carried by those who seek not to protect the most vulnerable in society but those with the most power and privilege. In fact, historically dominant groups are now repositioning themselves as victims (Carroll 2001). This, of course, is nothing new. But while power tends to reproduce itself in a neoliberal system (Hall 2001), the deployment of progressive rhetoric against itself presents a unique problem for critical activists and educators.

In an effort to respond to the co-option of diversity and language games of conservatives and the Alt-Right, this chapter was generated from the experiences of two teacher educators, who are also scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Using CDA as a theory and a method within social justice pedagogical practice, we, as authors of this chapter, propose subverting rhetoric launched against social justice efforts, repackaging the Trojan horse and sending it back in order to reconfigure languages of inclusion/exclusion, equality/equity, and free/hate speech (Derrida 1983; Fish 2004). To begin the discussion, we debrief the current neoliberal educational context and the various rearticulations of diversity which have surfaced under the marketplace mentalities of schooling. We will then review critical discourse analysis as a pedagogical practice, and detail two entry points with which to use these practices and repackage diversity education by injecting conservative stances—a Trojan Horse returned. First, we will discuss the importance of illustrating the difference to students between unfounded opinions or beliefs and scientific truths or ideas. While postmodern, critical, or diversity scholars have for so long advocated for multiple truths and reality as subjective, we propose educators co-opt the language of science, fact, and evidence in their curriculum while still demonstrating the pitfalls of affirming an 'objective reality.' Second, we propose that diversity educators challenge the current narratives of inclusion and equality through drawing a moral line which resists the inclusion of anyone or anything which works to harm the most vulnerable in society. It is the attempt to ensure inclusive or progressive aims through exclusionary logics. Overall, the purpose of this chapter is to inspire prolonged discussion about how we as educators, in an era where truth is confused with opinion, can navigate teaching diversity curriculum even when challenged by its logic and rhetoric.

1 Defining Knowledge in a Neoliberal Context: The Purpose of Schools and Diversity

In tracing the history of U.S. education, critical scholars have illuminated how the institution has been used as both a means of control *and* liberation (Illich 1973; Giroux 2011). Of particular interest to educational researchers has been the *neoliberal* transformations of the education system to align with market values and logics over the past 30 years (Darder 2012; Duggan 2003; Ferguson 2012). Sometimes thought of as "capitalism on steroids" (Brown 2015, para. 19) or even "casino capitalism" (Giroux 2011, p. 2), neoliberalism as an economic principal centers the market as the arbiter of equality and freedom. Neoliberalism advances open and unencumbered global trade, and advocates for privatized, often outsourced services in place of government involvement (Besley and Peters 2007; Harvey 2005; Melamed 2011; Peters 2001). More than just a set of abstracted, economic policies though, neoliberalism has also reconfigured our social, institutional, emotional, and cultural terrains as well, saturating all aspects of life, government, and society with marketplace values and rationale. The way we understand and approach education and schooling is no exception.

Indeed, as a "market ideology turned social philosophy" (Melamed 2011, p. 138), neoliberalism has created an educational structure where school enrollment is seen as an investment where 'getting your money's worth' is the priority of education, and shopping for schools in the same way you do cars is the norm (Suspitsyna 2010). During the neoliberal reconstruction of education in the late 1970s and 80s, pressures for the U.S. to remain dominant and competitive in the emerging global market engendered a new interest in education as a "basis for future economic growth" and initiated a "redesigning [of] the system so that it meets the needs of business and industry" (Besley and Peters 2007, p. 171). Schools were encouraged to shift their attention away from social or cultural impacts, to one of economic ends (see Besley and Peters 2007; Bousquet 2008; Melamed 2011; Suspitsyna 2010). As a result, new stories continually emerge of corruption in school districts as administration has been replaced by "the locust-like plague of CEO-style university leaders" (Blacker 2013, p. 13). Indeed, education from K-12 to colleges and universities have undergone transformations that align them more directly with corporate identities so that they operate as businesses and on behalf of businesses. According to this viewpoint, education should only serve to create "knowledgeable workers," or "standing reserves," as Heidegger (1977) put it (p. 20). In part, what we have seen as a result is a renewed austerity in education where the enormous rise in tuition ensures a "new era of debt servitude, even serfdom" and "where the very future possibilities of the young become existential carrion for the insatiably gluttonous financialized 'vulture' capitals" (Blacker 2013, p. 12).

In K-12 education, specifically, we find schooling is often discussed solely as an economic issue. Positioned as a needlessly expensive cost, with teachers' unions carrying the majority of the blame, privatized charters with the freedom to choose your school are in turn hailed as the solution. Furthermore, within a neoliberal

discourse, public schools become the target of unfair accountability efforts, which further marginalizes vulnerable student populations (Kozol 2012). 'Accountability' takes on a wider, more sinister role in a neoliberal context, and particularly with regards to schools. Rather than ensuring quality education, accountability is often used to excuse the proliferation of standardized tests and continuous assessment, leaving little time for any exploration, trial and error, construction and imagination. As a result, education has come to operate less like a place of discovery and more like a factory, complete with either actual barricades (e.g., Trump's promised wall, barbed wire fences) or intangible ones like acceptance quotas or vouchers that keep 'in' privileged students and keep 'out' at-risk students who could compromise quality control (Bauman 2007, p. 79).

An obvious effect of these practices, according to Kozol (2012), is a return to racial and class segregation. As might be expected, many schools' response to the experience of widespread segregation is a rhetorical one; one which under the banner of neoliberal ideology reconceptualizes issues of social justice and diversity in particular ways over others. Although neoliberal logic is often conceptualized as working *against* culture, it, in fact, often works *through* culture by co-opting cultural identities and social justice initiatives for corporate gains and interest (Duggan 2003). For instance, after years of criticizing the red-tape brought about by environmental regulations, such as limiting carbon emissions and toxic wastes from power plants, business leaders are touting the surge of 'green companies' and 'clean coal' that promise to produce goods in ways that are sustainable knowing that such a 'moral' stance makes them more appealing to an ever-growing 'progressive' consumer base (Blacker 2013). In education, under neoliberalism we often find the co-option of diversity initiatives that promote equality and inclusion for profit and branding within the institution. For example, in 2000, the University of Wisconsin—Madison was caught photo-shopping the face of a black student onto the cover of their university application booklet to make the image of students at a football game appear more racially diverse (Prichep 2013). Such a practice of featuring a high number of students of color on promotional materials is a typical marketing strategy for predominantly white universities across the United States. Hence, despite the progressive efforts, what comes to count as 'diversity' in education leaves much to be desired.

As universities enact laissez-faire attitudes about on-campus hate speech, athletics receiving more funding than multicultural services, and the elimination of programs like Women's and Ethnic Studies, we find that it is not only from ostensibly well-meaning institutions that diversity narratives are misused. Rather, from all sides, be it conservative, the Alt-Right, or other associated members, we find that the deployment of particular rhetoric recasts equality and diversity to serve exclusionary, even violent, ends. For example, the rhetoric of 'safe spaces' and 'trigger warnings' have recently become used by those with conservative viewpoints to argue that their Women's or Ethnic Studies courses make them feel unsafe for having their particular views (e.g., Gesiotto 2017). While trigger warnings are not an inherently bad pedagogical tactic (in fact they have roots in queer and feminist movements of the past) what we witness in our classrooms (as students and teach-

ers) is how under neoliberalism such cries have been reshaped, misused, decontextualized, and depoliticized; ultimately becoming disconnected from the original political activism from whence they came. As Ann Pellegrini (2014) explains, "The admirable goal behind student initiatives for trigger warnings is to create more breathing room in the classroom and minimize students' pain" (Pellegrini 2014, para. 7). However, the question posed by Pellegrini and other critical theorists in a recent blog series on safe spaces and trigger warnings (i.e., Duggan 2014; Halberstam 2014) is who's pain, trauma, or discomfort is most important? The depoliticization of this discourse forgets that rarely is any space on campus or otherwise actually safe for minoritized students. In fact, the one place on campus that emphasizes systemic discrimination and acknowledges the pain many students have experienced (Women's or Ethnic Studies classrooms) is now the most maligned for allegedly being discriminatory in the neoliberal university.

In this sense, "[t]rigger warnings are alarm codes of neoliberalism" (Pellegrini 2014, para. 2) because they rely on an individualistic approach to trauma as opposed to focusing on the structural and systemic markers of vulnerability and violence (Halberstam 2014). There is a difference between trauma and discomfort or trauma and inconvenience. Halberstam (2014) notes that the vast amount of thorough research on trauma seems to be discarded or ignored in the now-popular practice of what she calls the "politics of the aggrieved" (Halberstam 2014, para. 8). As such, "people reduce the resurfacing of a painful memory to the catch-all term of 'trigger,' imagining that emotional pain is somehow similar to a pulled muscle—as something that hurts whenever it is deployed, and as an injury that requires protection" (Halberstam 2014, para. 9). As Halberstam (2014) argues, such insistent and pervasive employment of triggering has "over-simplified" (para. 8) definitions of trauma and consequently belittled and undermined those who have experienced more serious and even debilitating forms of violence and emotional injury. Hence, what is desirable in neoliberal institutions is the erection of symbols (e.g., multi-million dollar cultural centers) that, while pretty to look at, inevitably leave the imbalances of power and privilege dispersed throughout the institution unchecked. Any form of power reified rather than redistributed, as universities can create diversity centers over *there*, and then simultaneously ignore the whiteness (for instance) of most spaces across campus.

What is at stake is the very language of inclusion and diversity. In the current context, diversity is seemingly used against itself. By shrouding diversity in rhetorical language games, the resulting confusion of significations empties the term of any useful meaning; in short, it becomes an abstract debate rather than an applicable ideal. In light of this challenge, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an appropriate methodological response because it critically examines the power of language. The remaining sections will provide some insight into what CDA might look like in pedagogical practice. We will analyze uses of language that have served the purpose of discrediting social justice education initiatives and offer pedagogical responses to these challenges. The central question guiding the discussion is this: How do we empower students to navigate educational settings that are becoming simultaneously more diverse and yet more restricted in terms of the conversations that can take place?

2 Critical Discourse Pedagogies

Recognizing that in the neoliberal context, diversity and social justice become reartículated and recast through particular uses of rhetoric, we suggest employing several strategies typical of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as pedagogical practice. Although often conceptualized solely as an analytic strategy, CDA's tools are not just helpful to researchers, but also critical educators. Specifically, a poststructural CDA can help interrogate power structures that shape and are shaped by language. Counter to most Modernist research poststructuralism sees theory *as a* methodological intervention. A poststructural CDA, then, operates from the position that theory is a method in that theory *acts*; it interrupts, and it makes visible dominant discourses and power/knowledge relationships that have taken on ideological and commonsensical guises. For example, using theory to make visible white privilege, to reveal the means, behaviors, or affect, interrupts its operation which is sustained in large part by remaining invisible to those who have it. In this sense, CDA can be considered a theory, a method, *and* a useful pedagogical strategy for critical educators looking to address issues of privilege and power.

'Discourse' in this version of critical discourse analysis represents the relationship between language, situated meanings, and power. We conceptualize discourses as not only the micro verbal exchanges between two parties, but also the larger relationships of power at both the macro and micro levels, those which come to constitute how we understand our realities and our selves. Assuming then that language is not a benevolent abstraction, but is always already enmeshed in power, this form of CDA openly adopts a political stance as well (Fairclough 2001; Gee 2011; Wodak 2001). We also argue that CDA is not only a strategy for mapping the space of power/knowledge in the constitution of discourses, but it is "a form of critique" in itself (Sarup 1993, p. 59). Michel Foucault, the poststructuralist with whom the concept of 'discourse' is most closely aligned, argued that history was discontinuous and fragmented. Foucault suggested that we "not only look for those events that stand out clearly as seen from the present, but also for those constructions, strategies, and practices that for some reason, never distinguished themselves" (Anderson 2003, p. 21). To do a CDA then is to critique the way we usually recount historical events, and history itself, as linear and continuous. It is to challenge the recounting of history and in doing so challenge the foundation on which our contemporary consciousness is built. Thus, CDA as a pedagogical practice is unabashedly political; nevertheless, it seeks to provide some form of intervention, recommendation, or pedagogical redress.

Therefore, in the context of the current discussion, CDA as a pedagogical strategy requires students to engage in the following process:

1. Examine the particular discourses that shape the identities of their communities and themselves.
2. Question and critique those discourses as well as the role they play in reproducing the values shaped by those discourses.

3. Open up possibilities for new uses of language and narrative to disrupt the monopoly on meaning.

Education of this kind, while not new (Hooks 1994), is nevertheless a great threat to neoliberal expansion. Since this pedagogy is situated within a neoliberal context, attention to the specific language of neoliberalism, such as the words it uses, reconfigures, or avoids, is an important part to consider when rethinking diversity education. Indeed, Fairclough (2000) suggests CDA as a "resource" against neoliberalism because it recognizes not only the part language "figures in hegemonic struggles," but also how "struggles against neo-liberalism can be partly pursued in language" (p. 148). Understanding the neoliberal mission helps us also to understand how language games have muddled attempts for a social justice educational curriculum.

One does not have to look very far to see evidence of the threat posed by such critical pedagogies. A simple Google search will yield headlines like "How Liberals Ruined College" (Powers 2015) and "Liberal professors brainwashing college students" (Sweeney 2016). According to most Fox News pundits, the most insidious thing that can happen to someone going to college is that they become a socialist; or, worse, they become a feminist (e.g., Singman 2017). Such concerns illustrate that not only is diversity positioned as a threat under conservative logics, but also exemplifies the attempts made to repackage liberal language to threaten the field of critical or diversity education. There is a lot to complain about regarding universities: tuition is too high, the administration is grossly overpaid in comparison to faculty, spending on projects and athletic programs is out of control, sexual assault is still a regular occurrence. But why are conservatives most worried about students becoming socialists and feminists? Because such discourses carry meanings that directly oppose the neoliberal narrative. The threat is an ideological one, and effectively teaching diversity is the neoliberal advocates' biggest fear. Remembering that "ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible," educators need to expose students to the language games played in society and prepare them to deconstruct language at every level (Fairclough 2001, p. 71). This is especially true considering that knowledge is not objective, free from the relational ontologies of those who construct it. The current socio-political turn of the country demands people know how to discern truth from fake news, information from invention, and fact from commercial. However, being acutely aware of our language does not mean we must censor dangerous speech acts. On the contrary, being acutely aware means bringing the speech acts to the center of the curriculum, staring them down, and teaching students how to notice every word deployed and to question every logic.

Progressing this kind of awareness depends on a CDA pedagogy that illuminates the neoliberal diversity language games and attends to students' development of critical literacy skills. Next, we will provide examples of how educators can disrupt traditional diversity education approaches, replace the illusion of a comfortable neutrality with the knowledge of power's relationship with language, and challenge the prevailing misuse of progressive language.

2.1 A Scientific Method for Social Justice

As practitioners and researchers of CDA, we ultimately perform a similar repackaging of language. The first CDA strategy explored here is to confront students' conceptions of the relationship between beliefs and truths (always lowercase 't,' always plural) in diversity education. What we propose is the co-option of a science discourse to substantiate not only poststructuralist claims but to also respond to the degradation of truths effected by neoliberalist rhetoric. What makes this strategy possible is acknowledgement that poststructuralist researchers do have a method for how truth is constructed. It has never been 'anything goes.' Rather than pretending that a researcher has the ability to fully distance themselves from the study so as not to impose their own beliefs and allow for the results to merely reflect material reality or Truth, critical scholars recognize that *all* research (including those conducted in the sciences) is ideologically and politically entangled, and as such can serve to maintain the status quo and/or become a form of intervention. As Patti Lather (2001) asserts, "research which is openly value based is neither more nor less ideological than mainstream positivist research" (p. 350). Rather than apolitically (re)presenting the world, Lather (2001) proclaims, "we no longer need to apologize for unabashedly ideological research and its open commitment to using research to criticize and change the status quo" (p. 352). In place of an 'objective' scientific method poststructural scholars, particularly feminist ones (Fine 1994; Harding 1987; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005), have provided alternative conceptualizations of science and validity that maintain rigor while acknowledging the fallacies of Enlightenment ideals, such as Lather's (1993) conceptions of "Derridean rigour/rhizomatic validity" (p. 680). In the context of classroom practice, what might be more beneficial to educators is to therefore draw attention to the methods and conditions by which ideas become truths. What transpires as a result is a call to return to the roots of a scientific method while also maintaining our roots in a poststructuralist paradigm that allows for the construction of multiple truths. These next few paragraphs will illustrate what we mean by such an approach.

It is very common for diversity educators to encounter students who find their class content to be that of 'opinion' or 'belief.' As opposed to Biology or Math courses which are seen as teaching the 'facts' or 'objective' scientific data, those in the Liberal Arts disciplines and educators who explore identity and relationships of power in their courses know all too well the disregard for their content as serious and evidence-based. Course evaluations reveal complaints that the instructors are 'opinionated,' 'biased in their teaching,' or 'not inclusive of all viewpoints.' While an ostensible goal of education is to expose students to a variety of perspectives, and critical educators have advocated for the acknowledgment of multiple realities and 'truths,' what these criticisms of diversity education reveal is the dangerous belief that knowledge can, and should, be convenient. In part, diversity educational content is often framed as 'opinion' as a way to demand the presence of other viewpoints without scientific validation (Kopplin 2015). But more than that, what this

widespread, baseless attitude toward diversity education speaks to is a larger cultural problem where issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. are devolved to the level of opinion. In other words, if you have an opinion (no matter how uninformed) on such issues, the current populist culture in the West tells you that it matters just as much as knowledge that has been historically and analytically formed. Also, you have as much right to share your feelings of truth as a teacher who has spent years studying the formations of knowledge relevant to the teacher's expertise. For instance, Starbucks recently led the RaceTogether initiative that invited customers to talk with their baristas about racial issues (Wahba 2015). The fact that these baristas may have zero background knowledge in the systems of race and racism in America was apparently not of concern. It is hard to imagine that Starbucks would lead a campaign that invited customers to talk with their baristas about astrophysics. It seems an absurd request because we expect that in order to talk about that subject individuals would need to have spent years reading, thinking about, or researching astrophysics. The point we want to make here is that a foundational challenge to diversity education is that 'diversity' is not seen as residing on an equal axis with all other fields of education.

And we often share this example with our students. In our experiences teaching diversity in the teacher education program at a land grant university in Washington State, we have used CDA to encourage students to deconstruct existing truths for their legitimacy, uses, and effects. One way of framing this lesson is by articulating the process by which notions of truths come to light. José Ortega y Gasset (1964) offers a framework by illustrating the difference between opinions and ideas. For him, "An idea [is different from an opinion when it puts] truth in checkmate. Whoever wishes to have ideas must first prepare himself [*sic*] to desire truth and to accept the rules of the game imposed by it" (Ortega y Gasset 1964, p. 71). It is critical for students to grasp that opinions alone are not ideas. Only opinions that have been interrogated, analyzed, validated through some kind of scientific method can be called ideas. Simply spouting thoughts because one thinks they matter is dangerous to the constructions of truths, which is central to education. Ortega y Gasset (1964) goes on to say warn that:

> under the species of Fascism there appears [...] a type of man [*sic*] who does not want to give reasons or to be right, but simply shows himself resolved to impose his opinions. This is the new thing: the right not to be reasonable, the "reason of unreason." (p. 73)

Although originally written in 1964, Ortega y Gasset's comments ring all too true in the current Trumpian culture where reality seems to be disregarded for what *feels* right or for what one *wants* to be right. In 2005 comedian Stephen Colbert termed it 'Truthiness,' where "The quality of seeming or being felt to be true, even if not necessarily true" (Oxford English Dictionary 2016). From our leaders misrepresenting the number of people at an inauguration despite photo evidence (Hunt 2017), or dismissing biology to perpetuate rape myths (Gentilviso 2014), the multiplicity of truths is now mobilized to destabilize democracy and continue the degradation and violation of women and/or people of color.

Dissolving differences between fact and fiction takes a particular role in diversity education. Commenting on, the problems of feelings becoming facts, Pellegrini (2014) asserts:

> When feelings become facts, it becomes difficult if not impossible to distinguish between, say, feelings of unfairness and practices of unfairness. If you belong to a group that has traditionally enjoyed unquestioned social dominance, any expansion of fairness for historically marginalized groups — such as people of color, LGBT people, and non-Christians — might feel like a loss, might feel "unfair," when your taken-for-granted social privileges and legal position are suddenly challenged. (para. 13)

The claim that needs to be made to students is that unfounded opinions have very little place in education, especially opinions that explicitly target the most vulnerable in society in order to sustain unequal power. Indeed, while students need to learn to work within the tensions of multiple truths, they must also be trained to navigate a dangerous culture of "alternative facts." The difference between a paradigm that allows for multiple truths and one that espouses alternative facts is that the former still holds each truth to some kind of scientific or well-researched analysis so that each truth is not regarded as 'equal,' while the latter is a label for 'anything goes' rhetoric. Alternatively CDA, works to challenge the 'anything goes' assumption and argues for scientific rationale, even if for so long poststructuralists and others have spent tireless hours disproving a singular objective reality.

This is precisely the challenge faced by many K-12 educators. In many parts of the country, schools protect opinions proposed by flat-earthers, holocaust deniers, climate change deniers, creationists, and American exceptionalists. As a result, science teachers are instructed to acknowledge flat-earthers (Greene 2017), while as historians must confront holocaust deniers (Hare 2017). Students who have not been trained in CDA might accept these opinions *as* scientific truths solely because they are learning those opinions *in* school. Students can easily become confused when the tradition in schooling has been one where debates are seen as too aggressive, politics too messy, and to uphold tolerance as the standard instead of the starting point is commonplace. The issue is not about gathering all the opinions people can imagine and then having a polite discussion, it is about education that upholds standards of criticism, interrogation, and science. Social justice curriculum, like Math or English, has undergone scientific processes that led to the construction of accepted truths. Students need to be shown that civil rights, issues of gender, of cultural identity, and topics of diversity are also backed by evidence that can be traced to historical events.

So here is where we co-opt conservative discourse. We make clear to our students that we do not care about their opinions (and of course after reading this section we hope it is clear that we do not mean this as harshly as it sounds). What we are doing is drawing a line in the sand, so to speak, so that the liberal ideal of inclusion has clear boundaries and limitations. Although critical scholars have for so long argued for the inclusion of multiple truths and perspectives, we advocate to reify a zero-tolerance policy in regards to issues such as sexism or racism. By leaving inclusion

infinitely open, it becomes susceptible to collapse, as we are currently witnessing. Here is the central focus of education to which the authors call attention: schools have every right to exclude opinions, not because educators disagree with them but because they have no foundation in the intellectual process of transforming opinions into ideas. The danger of including all opinions in K-12 education (e.g., teaching Creationism alongside evolution, teaching the life of Jesus alongside historical figures) is the threat to ideas that have undergone rigorous processes of interrogation, analysis, formulation, and critique. This potential outcome of non-critical inclusion is the dissolving of scientific knowledge to pretty much allow all opinions as equally valid, completely disregarding the process of factual analysis necessary for truths to be soundly constructed. While we as critical educators prefer to promote a multiple-perspective-platform and have spent much time critiquing the facade of science, what this current cultural treatment of diversity education, as well as a fake news culture, has invoked in us a desire to advocate for science, for some semblance of truth. In other words, we argue that the same standards which are applied to the 'hard' sciences need to be applied to issues of diversity education, moving the notion of social justice out of the realm of opinion and into the space of content knowledge that has been shaped by historical and factual analysis.

2.2 Not Everyone Gets a Seat at the Table

The line drawn is not just an ideological one but also a moral one. Of course, this is a false dichotomy, like separating fact from fiction, but what is important in any diversity educational curriculum is separating the individual from the systemic. Currently, the overwhelming imperative is to focus on the individual at the expense of systemic analysis, the present at the expense of the past. You hear it in the insistence to think only of the here and now often; that history is 'over' or has been 'overcome.' We see this, for example, in the suggestions that we are now in a 'post-feminist' landscape because women have won the right to vote, or that we are 'post-racial' because we have now had a black president (McRobbie 2009; Wise 2010). This focus on the present and historical amnesia makes sense in a neoliberal culture where individualism is key. Jodi Melamed (2011) refers to this production of reality as *neoliberal multiculturalism*, where neoliberal practices work to situate "the equality of the free market as the most fundamental expression of equality, and to make the diversity of goods, services and capital flowing across national boundaries stand for the best manifestation of multiculturalism" (p. 139). Suggesting that equality has already been won for traditionally marginalized identities, mythologies of meritocracy are reinvigorated, as the market is seen as inherently objective, color-blind, and fair, leaving it up to the individual to achieve their own success (Melamed 2011). The prevailing understanding then is that inequitable conditions like race, economic status, or social class can all be overcome if one works hard enough.

Alternatively, the CDA pedagogical strategies called for in this chapter echoes what Ta-Nehisi Coates (2014) evoked in his call for actual reparations. Reparations, he states, would:

> mean the end of scarfing hot dogs on the Fourth of July while denying the facts of our heritage. Reparations would mean the end of yelling 'patriotism' while waving a Confederate flag. Reparations would mean a revolution of the American consciousness, a reconciling of our self-image as the great democratizer with the facts of our history. (Coates 2014, p. 124)

As Coates insists, understanding American history is necessary in the pursuit of rectifying social injustice and avoiding the dangerous thought that those who currently hold the majority of wealth and privilege are earned, contemporary manifestations. Rather, the accumulation of wealth and the ideology of privilege is the result of difficult pasts that require analysis in order to understand how such pasts have shaped the present moment.

This means situating every topic of education in its historical and political contexts, as it is critical to resisting the language games of the alt-right. Consider how the term "equality" has been repackaged by white supremacists to demand progressives welcome their existence. On the surface, they have a case. Without analysis, one would think that if we are going to honor the spirit of equality, then the white supremacists should have their marches as well. Of course, once you examine such a claim critically, considering how equality movements have had at their foundation the goal of supplanting the brutal dominance of white supremacy, it becomes clear how 'equality' has been manipulated. It becomes clear how 'equality' claims made by groups like Neo-Nazis actually erase history. Also, it becomes painfully ironic considering these same groups impugn progressives for erasing history by wanting to remove statues of Confederate soldiers. Undergraduate students, however, have not been trained to analyze language this way, and most curricula do not make room for this training. It is now up to educators to disrupt the systemic cultivation of historical amnesia under the guise of 'moving on.'

We propose one way of subverting the strategy of historical amnesia by co-opting the conservative initiative of exclusion. Currently, the federal government is looking into dismantling affirmative action laws, restricting immigration, and preventing voters of color from democratic participation (Chung 2018; Liptak 2017; Savage 2017). It is time for education to do the same, ideologically speaking. Educators are indeed the administrators of culture. For all the criticism teachers receive for 'indoctrinating' students, turning them into liberal-minded cry-babies, not much has been said in defense. At the very least, a shy denial is made. It is time for educators to own this criticism and admit that is exactly what we do. Yes, we encourage our students to care about the environment. Yes, we encourage our students to reflect on how they have benefited from or have been cheated by history. Yes, we seek to inspire in students compassion for anyone who is a victim of injustice. And yes, we train students to question those responsible for the reproduction of injustices. Not every idea gets a seat at the table. The thought of teaching concepts related to white supremacy simply to 'include everyone' is not only absurd but also extremely dangerous for all

the reasons mentioned above. Somehow, it has become difficult for educators to enter this territory and engage topics that are potentially uncomfortable despite the availability of historical and scientific evidence. As a result, instead of brazenly progressing the critical education Freire (1972) had in mind, we are witnessing a rise in hate speech activity on college campuses nationwide.

3 Discussion and Conclusion

We can confidently state that the one vision of diversity that should never be realized is education that regards everyone's opinion as equal and valid. It is up to educators to drive us past this phase in which truth is conflated with opinion and all opinions are said to matter regardless of the methods used to arrive at said opinions. For instance, while we as authors can intelligently discuss discourse analysis, neither of us should be asked to explain astrophysics; and yet, currently issues of social justice are up for debate by anyone regardless of background, training, and experience. Think about a room full of biologists laughing if we the authors attempted to state that osmosis does not exist. This might not seem as controversial as a room full of diversity educators chastising someone who says racism is over because we had a black president. One might dare to say that the method used to form an opinion matters more than the actual opinion.

Because knowledge is shaped and communicated through language, teaching without paying attention to the histories, situated meanings, and consequences of our words is potentially harmful. Knowledge is never neutral. It is time we start preparing our students for an age of unfounded belief, disregarded science, invented facts, and distorted truth. In many ways, we are experiencing the most dangerous misuse of postmodernism. The exploitation of language for harmful political purposes has made this experience possible. If we continue to teach our students from the viewpoint that we are eliminating bias, remaining objective, and creating a neutral space, we are leaving our students vulnerable to the ways knowledge is masked and repackaged for insidious motives. In fact, teaching this way has allowed conservatives to take progressive platforms like political correctness and intellectual diversity, slightly alter their meaning, and then use the platforms against progressives. Their strategy of countering social justice initiatives for their self-empowerment is tired but true. It seems progressives always come up on the losing end of this gambit. They let political correctness fizzle, went silent on intellectual diversity, and currently stumble on the recent co-option of free speech and diversity education.

The idea that knowledge is, by itself, liberating is misguided, for knowledge, like any other construct, is not inherently neutral. This misguided notion has led to the visceral, but inaccurate, responses to heinous acts of violence by spouting that supporters of dangerous movements like Neo-Nazism are largely 'uneducated.' Continuing to hold such a view ignores the fact that people like Stephen Miller and Richard Spencer both graduated from top universities and many more, Spencer included, have sought graduate degrees. Therefore, it is not a question of outreach,

but one of practice. Educators will continue to lose the language games to conservative actors who seek to delegitimize social justice education by reducing it to 'perspective' over 'knowledge' if they continue to treat pedagogical practice as neutral. Instead, it is now crucial to interrogate the processes by which beliefs become ideas, opinions become scientific knowledge, as well as the genealogy of history that has not only created the present moment but also the ways we recount history.

As the authors of this chapter, we firmly believe it is the obligation of teachers to find ways to situate their content as one possible constructed truth. At the same time, teachers must also illustrate the historical, factual, or theoretical evidence that support the possibility of the constructed truth. Educators currently face a potential false dichotomy: stick to the singular fact or welcome second (and third, fourth, fifth…) opinions. The purpose of this chapter is to provide recommendations for including a critical literacy curriculum in all K-12 classrooms. Ideas of social justice, particularly definitions of diversity, are rapidly changing, already being reset, rethought, and repurposed. Due to the imbalance of power detailed throughout this chapter, the changing usage of 'diversity' favors dangerous discourses, like neoliberalism, that benefits particular groups, like the Alt-right. The response from teachers should be an emphasis on critical literacy, regardless of content, to demonstrate the complexity of meaning and knowledge and to retain authorship in the shifting discursive battle for social justice language. Teachers must prepare themselves as well as their students to recognize rhetorical Trojan horses when they are used to hijack the signification of diversity, especially during this vulnerable moment of transition into a more socially just educational system.

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A Political Ontological Approach to Decolonization of Ethnographic Research in Education

Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores and JoAnn Phillion

Abstract This chapter addresses the relationship between modernity and the coloniality of being and knowing, and argues for a political ontological ethnographic approach to conceptualize "culture" as politically dynamic. This ethnographic approach to the production of knowledge in educational contexts seeks to disrupt cultural depictions of inferiority, demythify modernity's dominant narrative, discourses, and practices by engaging in a sociology of absence and emergence. A political ontological ethnographic approach carries many implications for education research that informs knowledge valued in K-12 contexts in that it underscores the ways in which "other" stories and enactments enter conflicting relationships in the politically charged institutional spaces of schools.

Keywords Modernity/coloniality · Decolonization · Political ontology · Ethnography · Educational research

Nonwestern peoples and communities first portrayed in travelers' tales were later represented in the anthropological tradition within colonial constructs of identity, culture, and knowledge. In the anthropological tradition, early ethnographers represented non-western peoples as diametrically opposite to the construction of a geopolitical Western identity in terms of the colonized and the colonizer (Mignolo 2011, 2012). According to Mignolo, the geopolitical Western identity is both a colonial and philosophical construct of the ontological white self as civilized, powerful and knowledgeable conversely representing the cultural other as ahistorical, devoid of knowledge worth knowing, and lacking economic and political organization. The colonial construct of the self and other continues to inform several disciplinary fields in the arts, humanities, natural science and the social sciences, including education.

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In education, the colonial construct of the self and other is reflected in pedagogical practices that have persisted in spite of the end of traditional forms of imperial colonialism and continue to be practiced in so-called post-colonial nation-states. In fact, in contemporary education, the colonial construct has taken on a more stable form through educational theory, research, and practice exemplified in the production and organization of knowledge in formal schooling as it is enacted in today's K-12 classrooms. Colonization of formal schooling and pedagogy considered 'servitude of the mind' is taken up by several scholars through the notion of decoloniality of knowledge and decolonization of the mind (Arnove 1980, p. 57) with implications for how we produce knowledge in educational research that informs pedagogies in K-12 classrooms. For the purpose of this chapter, decoloniality is the production of knowledge that disrupts the singularity of dominant Western knowledge and its influence in sustaining school practices that are exclusionary and decontextualized (Mignolo 2012). Decolonization is the process of unlearning knowledge in the Western tradition and producing and validating multiple and diverse forms knowing assigned to the label of 'other' (Smith 2013).

To understand the complexity of education in today's context requires a nuanced understanding of globalization and its colonial continuity (Jameson and Miyoshi 1998). It is common for "globalization" to be ubiquitously used in scholarly work and other media. The term conceptualizes a technologically interconnected world where the fluidity of capital and people begin to blur political borders and national identities, allowing for a harmonious world culture to come into being (Robertson and Dale 2015). Although this fluidity apparently makes it possible for a diverse society to emerge from the influx of immigration, it does not provide multidimensional understandings of the colonial histories, onto-epistemological differences, and contemporary colonial situations and encounters that continue to shape the lives of the colonized. It is not surprising that millions of people, including children, from Central America have left their countries to escape the ongoing exploitation of their land, communities, and bodies. Left with no other option, the peoples from this region cross imperially and colonially demarcated borders "illegally" to live and work in the heart of Western modernity, only to be legally, politically, and socially excluded and economically exploited, once again.

In order to reach a deeper understanding of this relatively new immigrant population, the immigration story that begins with the European immigrant in the early twentieth century should be problematized for temporal and spatial—in addition to racial—reasons. On the one hand, the compression of time and space facilitates communication and travel for immigrants and diminishes the effectiveness of colonial assimilatory practices (Grosfoguel 2004). On the other hand, due to Latin American immigrants' geographic and linguistic concentration in the United States (e.g., southwest, Florida, New York), assimilation looks qualitatively different in comparison to the "melting pot" era metaphorically used to describe the early twentieth century.

In addition to dismantling assimilatory discourses and narratives, this essay demonstrates the entanglement between the modern/colonial capitalist system and its contemporary continuity. Once modernity and coloniality are explicated, we specify

how contemporary immigration can be understood as the movement of cosmologies—i.e., the movement of knowledge-practices, concepts, conceptualizations, spiritualties, and beliefs of the world. As an intermission to the academic language used throughout the essay, we briefly present the first author's personal experience to ground the politically charged school context immigrant students face today.

We conclude by proposing a decolonial ethnography that avoids essentializing cultural identity by using a political ontological approach committed to working with the diversity among students *de Nuestra América* (Martí 1963). Political ontology, in this instance, is understood as the contestation of a universal reality, one that is always in conflict, especially within educational spaces where Western and modern reality/ontology is sustained through hegemonic knowledge-practices exemplified in the standardization of K-12 education. Rejecting universality and standardization in educational contexts, particularly research, we argue for the use of an interrogative process that makes alternative forms of educational research possible that engage in what de Sousa Santos (2015) calls the sociology of absence and emergence. According to Sousa-Santos, the sociology of absence is "the act of identifying the ways of knowing which the hegemonic epistemology produces as nonexistent" p. 115) or knowledge that is excluded and silenced. The sociology of emergence is the pragmatic attempt to unveil diversity in knowledges that is fighting to be heard and seen.

1 Modernity/Coloniality

> Like many Indians and Mexicans…I allowed white rationality to tell me that the existence of the "other world" was mere pagan superstition. I accepted their reality, the "official" reality of the rational, reasoning mode which is connected with external reality, the upper world, and is considered the most developed consciousness—the consciousness of duality. (Anzaldúa 1987, p. 36)

> It is necessary to speak of philosophy as non-philosophy, to turn philosophical discourse against itself...to change the problematics...to make a political change in theory…recognize various forms of 'doing' philosophy, various "practices" of philosophy...open up problematics that might produce new theoretical and practical intentions...assume a political position that makes possible an "other" discursive strategy, "other" philosophical work, and opens "other" spaces of theoretical production. (Subcomandante Marcos, as quoted in Walsh 2012, p. 11).

Scholars thinking with Du Bois' (2008) "peculiar sensation" of colonial difference, such as Gloria Anzaldua and Rafael Guillen, are challenging modernity's central narrative by demythifying the rationality that sustains it. The former disrupted rationality's naturalized inevitability through pictographically powerful indigenous, mestiza, and feminist narratives. The latter provided "other" ways of thinking, doing, and coexisting as demonstrated by his involvement in the revolutionary projects led by the Mayan communities in southern Mexico. Intellectuals, activists, and indigenous movements from what is now called Latin America are at the forefront

in disrupting the modern/colonial project and its metamorphosed neoliberal monstrosity of global capitalism (Escobar 2010). They are disrupting what Harvey (2005) defines as the neoliberal ideological "theory of political economic practices proposing that human well-being can be best advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, unencumbered markets, and free trade" (p. 2).

Two critical concepts that need explanation are the coloniality of being and the coloniality of knowledge, which are central to decolonial theory and integral to the arguments that follow. The groundbreaking work of Maldonado-Torres (2004, 2007) on the coloniality of being deconstructs and reconstructs Heidegger's foundational ontology to understand its fundamental premise and its darker colonial underside. He considers Heidegger's foundational ontology as a philosophy of power that is, according to Immanuel Levinas, 'ultimately complicit with violence' (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 241). It is, in Heideggerian terminology, the *Dasein* who shall project himself onto the world once fully realizing his authenticity and inevitable death —a *projection* fueled by the "discovery" of the so-called "new world" which has seen its most recent ontological projection in late global capitalism.

Maldonado-Torres contrasts Heidegger's *Dasein* with Fanon's *Damne* (Fanon et al. 1963) as the colonial ontological difference ignored by Heidegger and future continental philosophers. Ontology, seen through Western philosophy, therefore, either completely ignores those who lie at its exterior borders (peasants, indigenous, Black, homeless, women, and LGBTQ) or essentializes and de-historicizes the colonized *Damne*. The *Damne*, as Fanon (1967) spatially conceptualized, lie in the zone of nonbeing and dwell on the other side of the abyssal line where the wretched of the earth are hidden from the blinded panoptic view of Western philosophy. This Western outlook manifests itself most clearly through institutionalized educational norms, standardized forms of knowledge, and universal pedagogies and models validated in K-12 school contexts. By universalizing one form of knowledge, ontological diversity within k-12 schools becomes an obstacle to be overcome instead of endorsed.

The second concept, the coloniality of knowledge, extensively elaborated by Walter Mignolo (2011, 2012) inverts the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum—I think, therefore I am*—into "*I am where I think*" (Mignolo 2011, p. 92). The Cartesian statement privileges and attempts to universalize the mind and body dichotomy, leaving ontology (I am) and epistemology (I think) devoid of diversity, contextuality and corporeality of becoming. Mignolo's statement, privileges the locus of enunciation (the body politics and geopolitics of knowledge), allowing for diversity, corporeality and contextuality to be incorporated into knowledge that is valued and validated by privileging the knower and not the objects to be known (p. 112). From where one speaks, thinks, knows, and lives becomes the onto-epistemological and ethical focal point of departure from universalizing Western ways of being and knowing. Mignolo additionally makes a connection between the coloniality of being, knowledge, power, and language by stating that,

> 'Science' (knowledge and wisdom) cannot be detached from language; languages are not just 'cultural' phenomena in which people find their 'identity'; they are also the location where knowledge is inscribed. And, since languages are not something human beings have but rather something of what human beings *are,* coloniality of power and of knowledge engendered the coloniality of being….' (as quoted in Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 242)

To understand the intricate relationship between language, knowledge, being, and power, Mignolo uses Anzaldua's borderlands concept to situate the places where decolonial border thinking emerges and ruptures through the dominant modern/colonial narrative. It is a double consciousness (Du Bois 2008) of sorts with an additional epistemic and ontological component that goes beyond the "white gaze" of colonization by making the coloniality of knowledge and being its locus of analysis. In other words, it is the Indigenous, the *campesino*, the poor, the Black life that will always matter, the woman, the Muslim, the LGBTQ, and the so-called "nobodies" who resist this gaze to be "somebody" (Hill 2017). The tensions between colonization and coloniality of knowledge is a necessary struggle both as a metatheoretical (Dhareshwar 1998) project to study, critique, and deconstruct Western forms of knowledge, and in educational research and school practice to create new ways of thinking, doing, being, and becoming from multiple contexts and diverse experiences.

An often-used concept to work from epistemological radical differences is border thinking. Mignolo (2012) admonishes, however, that border "is an overused word (e.g., border writing, border culture, border matters)" that does not always refer to the ontological and "epistemological frontiers" that are marching their way toward the very heart of knowledge production with a stake in hand (p. 5). It should be clarified that border thinking is not inevitable when a person self-identifies with a particular "culture" and is living in the midst of another. Rather, it is the point of crisis and action when the colonized question the dominant frame of reference, disrupt universal ontologies and create new knowledge as acts of resistance. It is from the realization of this alterity or radical difference that the colonized can think from the borders and do *otherwise*.

To disrupt the modern/colonial matrix of power, thinking from a decolonial position goes beyond academic critique. It guides us to look for the places where other knowledges and ways of being (re)emerge from their colonized positions to challenge the dominant modern/colonial world system. The aim is to make other ontologies and epistemologies appear in the conceptual space, and to show that alternative forms of knowledges have always been present despite being systematically repressed. Mignolo (2011) argues that "there is no modernity without coloniality", for the latter is a constitutive component of the former (p. 85). This means Western European and Anglo-American canon, discourses, and practices are universalized/naturalized through the exclusion of all other ways of being and knowing, including the marginalized regions, peoples, and histories within their own territorial borders. What the decoloniality of knowledge attempts to achieve, therefore, is to disrupt the singularity of dominant Western knowledge and its influence in sustaining school practices that are exclusionary and decontextualized.

Modernity and coloniality should thus be understood as "two sides of the same coin" or, better yet, as two co-emerging and co-sustaining global projects (Mignolo 2011, p. 66), which have only changed imperial hands at the cost of maintaining other ways of being and knowing at the margins. As stated by Aparicio and Blaser (2008), "this means that the performance of a modern world…necessarily involves keeping at bay the threat posed to it by the existence of worlds that do not operate on the same assumption" (p. 64). To maintain this performativity and erasure, schooling and the miseducation of youth is integral in this process. It is this pedagogical practice of making invisible "other" knowledges, often dressed as multiculturalism, that needs to become the focus of our research and pedagogical counter practices if we are to engage in a sociology of emergence. From this outlook, contemporary educational contexts can be understood as the ongoing contestation between what Williams (1977) had termed the residual, dominant, and emergent. Where we position ourselves and how we navigate in these conflicting spaces is crucial in linking the pedagogical components of coloniality and the pedagogical imperative to decolonize.

Decolonial ways of thinking additionally require a multifaceted understanding that goes beyond the political economy paradigm (Grosfoguel 2007). It is not to say that politics and economics are no longer important. Rather, it is the centrality of this Eurocentric analysis (e.g., Marxist and liberal) that is questioned, for it tends to delimit the political and economic by using the nation-state and capitalism as the dominant unit of analysis. Consequently, diverse political and economic systems are left unmentioned, however residualize they may be (see the anthropological work of Herzfeld 2001). Although a politico-economic perspective is not disregarded, the coloniality of power, as articulated by Quijano (2000), is relevant as it brings to the forefront global capitalism's colonial constitution. He additionally elaborates how patterns of control and hierarchical racial/patriarchal/cultural/heteronormative configurations based on the nature/culture ontological duality, conceptualized by anthropologists as the "Great Divide," continue to permeate and saturate Western thought and practices (Aparicio and Blaser 2008, p. 63). This great divide sustains modern ontology and its instrumental rationality promoted through curricular structures that crown European "Man" as the only thinking and historical *Being* divinely (Christianity) and then secularly (modern sciences) responsible for knowing and dominating the savagery of nature (Wynter 2003). Thus, contesting the dualist modern ontology of the colonizer and colonized is to give discursive visibility to diverse knowledges and open education to pedagogical possibilities in multiple ways of being, becoming, doing, and knowing. A decolonial project in educational research requires a pedagogical-methodological commitment and engagement with knowledges and experiences that goes beyond critique toward a future of difference, multiplicity, and diversity.

2 Colonial Encounters

Now that modernity/coloniality has briefly been explained, the migrating peoples from Latin America deserve a nuanced understanding in how they are reconfigured and racialized according to the colonial legacy of the United States. The immigrant groups not configured into the White imaginary, according to Grosfoguel (2004), are reconfigured into what he calls the national colonial subjects—i.e., Black, Chicano, and Indigenous—who continue to feel the colonial wound. Afro Latin@, mestizos, and indigenous peoples coming from Latin America, for instance, are configured into these racial categories respectively. By nuancing how immigrants are reconfigured racially, colonial encounters taking place in schools can better be understood. It is in schools where "othered" and racialized people interact with whiteness and where the seductions of modernity are promised yet hardly ever fulfilled.

Schools are the places where over 80% of teachers are white (U.S. Department of Education 2016), and where Latin@ (Indigenous, Mestizo, Black, and White) students are taught to abandon their ways of knowing and becoming through the epistemicidal (and, we might add, ontological) curriculum imposed onto them (Paraskeva 2016). It is crucial for educators, therefore, to be cognizant that the pedagogical practices used in the classroom, whether they are research-driven educational practices or not, a price is still paid when the knowledge embedded in the curriculum remains intact. Unquestionably, there is no other place where Western modernity's imbued whiteness clashes so strongly with the colonially configured immigrants as frequently. Thus, educators must depart from this reality and question the knowledges they are instruments of passing on, and commit to their students, their communities, and their knowledges (opposed to their cultural perspectives).

The current school context can be looked at through the colonizer/colonized dichotomy. However, this does not provide a deep understanding of intersubjectivity, where students also make a collective impact on those who surround them and the institutions that attempt to mold them into dominant knowledge constructs characterized by individualistic and meritocratic paths to school success. Instead of using a dialectical approach to see the tensions, antagonisms, and contradictions at play, a Dusselian analytical approach should be used to understand how students interpolate the immaterial conceptual spaces by engaging in political acts of resistance aimed at classroom curricula and content (Dussel 1996). Indeed, the "places defined by the interaction between modernity and coloniality are the places where the colonial difference is being played out in a constant conflict." (Mignolo 2011, p. 162). K-12 schools are such places and sites where colonial exchanges and resistance to colonization of knowledge take place on a daily basis.

3 Intermission

I AM?

Jairo: (once he notices his son's teary eyes as he comes in through the door, he asks) What's wrong?

Son: (finds it hard to speak) People keep saying we'll be kicked out.

Jairo: Who's saying that?

Son: The kids on the bus said that if Donald Trump wins, we'll have to go back to our original place. That Mexicans will have to go back. A boy next to me asked everyone on the bus to raise their hands…to raise their hands if they wanted Trump to win. Almost everybody raised their hands. The kids started telling me and another girl we would be kicked out.

Jairo: How did that make you feel?

Son: I feel sad. I don't want to leave *Papi*. That means we are gonna be separated.

Jairo: *Hijito mío,* did you know you were born in the United States?

Son: I was?

Jairo: Do you know you're a United States citizen?

Son: I am?

The dialogue between my son and me took place on September 14th, 2016, a couple of months before the presidential elections. The last question my son asked has guided the theoretical explorations of this essay. Although he obviously does not know what a US citizen is, the ontological question, "I am?" stood out to me the most. In other words, whether he is worthy enough to belong to the privileged White citizenry of the United States, the modern form of man, is what will eventually percolate into his thoughts slowly, where his subconscious will begin to absorb coloniality, only to sediment into the coloniality of being.

Like my son, I grew up with similar experiences. In 1992, the infamous year that marked 500 years of settler colonialism and neocolonialism as well as many decades of civil war in the region, my mom, my two older siblings, and I began our migration North from our humble village in Honduras. After having crossed the vast Mexican territory undocumented, and after having walked through the swampy region between Tijuana and San Diego undocumented once again, I remember looking out the window while inside a small white pickup truck's camper as I headed to my future home in East Los Angeles. What struck me the most was the immensity of it all. Cement, in all its forms, is what I lucidly remember. Retrospectively, Los Angeles looked and felt like the cities portrayed in dystopian novels and movies, where the enjoyment of the natural world was to remain hidden, relentlessly trapped by the unstoppable force and expansion of modern civilization.

Juxtaposed to the *campesino* village life, this metropolis was a world unlike ours. It was a world we would learn to navigate through—a shadowy world designated for the wretched of the earth (Fanon 1967). Without knowing it at the time, the colonial demarcations would begin to configure us into the inferior national categories

already in place (e.g., illegals, aliens, wetbacks, lazy, beaners, criminals, and even Limited English Proficient). Throughout my schooling everything reminded me of the inferior categories that excluded my family and me from the privileged "ethnoclass" of modernity and all of those seduced along the way (Wynter 2003). Refuse it or be seduced by it, that is the question we all ask. I tried to refuse it. I left the United States in 2010 to permanently return to Honduras.

After 18 years, I had finally returned to the village and family that had always been waiting. I was happy to know I would not be able to come back to the United States. I think 18 years of undocumented status was enough. To be honest, I was exhausted from living a carceral existence in the United States. It seems, however, that I will continue to travel from South to North and North to South. Now, after being away from the United States for over 6 years, I find myself, as Jose Marti illustrated, living in the monster's entrails once again. Also, as if history were a broken record playing a sociopathic melody, my son, though a US citizen, is configured similarly, as another disposable and deportable brown body.

4 Politically-Charged School Context

From racist chants to threats of deportation directed at the "illegal" kids, as the previous dialogue depicts, children in the United States are increasingly exposed to unsafe, hatred-filled, racist, and xenophobic environments and discourses as soon as they enter school. For immigrants, these verbal attacks are not to be understood solely through discursive and textual abstractions, for what they represent is the material reality of *being* part of an unwanted racialized group—a fact of life that constantly threatens them and their families. This threat is well known, and many immigrants also know very well the suffering it causes when they are forcefully separated from their family.

This threat is also strong enough to convince the first author's eight-year-old son to believe he does not belong in the country in which he was born. It is disconcerting to know, moreover, that immigrant children and children whose parents are immigrants (documented or undocumented) are perceived as unwanted, disposable, and threatening to the greatness and purity of "America." The discourse to "make America great again" entails targeting the most oppressed and vulnerable sectors of society, and it is nothing more and nothing less than an ontological colonial project. That is the price to pay when you are a colonially configured immigrant, unlike the European immigrants who eventually were granted human status.

An event that reveals the polarization of schools took place during the *Day Without Immigrants* protest on February 16th, 2017. Many Latin@ students across the country, in solidarity with immigrants who did not show up to work, decided not to attend school to demonstrate their opposition towards the resurgent anti-immigrant, racist, and xenophobic discourses and actions. The response some teachers made to student absences varied from solidarity to blatantly racist comments. As the Washington Post (Phillips 2017) reported, some teachers in California

were placed on administrative leave after their inappropriate comments were discovered on social media. These comments form part of the colonial imaginary and political climate that supports acts such as these. Although derogatory and pathologizing comments depicted Latin@ students as lazy drunks, they only reveal the tip of the iceberg. One teacher stated that the absences prove how "great" America could be "without all this overcrowding" caused by Latin@s. These comments, therefore, are representative of a broader historical, racist, xenophobic, White supremacist, and colonial context in which the United States finds itself.

If we fast forward to September 2017, the promises to purify "America" become more real with the rescindment of the Differed Action for Child Arrivals immigrant policy (DACA). Despite the cruel intentions, it unleashed hidden energies. If the student protests are seen superficially, it might only show the struggle to maintain "legal" status within the territorial confinement of the United States. However, the voices speaking against the brutal threat of deportation and the actions taken by those affected by the rescindment of DACA are challenging territoriality on the one hand, and, on the other, are enacting a story which transgresses the racial, colonial, imperial, and neoliberal discourses sustaining the modern nation-state. Essentially, who is a citizen is much more than a document indicating whether a person is legally able to reside in a country.

It is, rather, a struggle that screams its nonwestern humanity to the world—a cry made out to those distant and not so distant ears willing to listen. The high school students speaking at political rallies, for instance, express more than mere words. As one DACA high school student passionately yelled out to the crowd at a rally in Indianapolis, they are yelling, screaming, and crying out after so many years of their parents' humble silence, a silence no longer viable in the political context in which they live. Students who refuse to remain silent bring hope and open the path to decolonization, one that allows subjugated knowledges to enter the discourse.

It is during these crucial moments when oppositional groups can either find themselves in a state of despair or in a state of political hope that leads to action for educational change. It is only with hope combined with radical praxis that can potentiate education's efforts toward a decolonial imaginary (Freire 1972; Hooks 2003; Pérez 1999; Walsh 2012). Important questions that come to mind are the following: How do students challenge coloniality? How does the immigrant presence in schools help deepen our understanding of the ways knowledge reproduction imposed by a narrowed curriculum leads to ontological conflicts? To answer these questions, working from and with the enacted stories of diverse forms of resistance to domination that sustain colonization is of critical importance.

Immigrant communities inhabit historical, political, and educational spaces where languages, knowledges, and ways of being and becoming are in constant flux and provide the impetus for a decolonial pedagogy to emerge. Schools are places and spaces where colonial encounters take place and where conflictual relations are constantly unfolding in curricula, pedagogical and institutional exchanges. For example, schools that view students for whom English is a new language as a challenge try to "fix" perceived challenges in the education system through ELL

programs and market-oriented bilingual programs aimed at eliminating linguistic diversity of immigrants new and old.

How can educational research and curriculum theorizing make a shift from privileging dominant forms of knowledge to opening the field to transdisciplinary practices informed by work that is politically engaged, committed, and decolonial? Researchers genuinely willing to create a decolonial "pedagogy of engagement" need to use ethnographies not centered around cultural and linguistic uniformity but around decolonial ontological and epistemological possibilities (Walsh 2012, p. 21). The following section provides a conceptual framework grounded in a political ontological approach to ethnographic research and the production of knowledge that inform education with implications for K-12 schools.

5 Decolonial Ethnographic Educational Research

Thus far in this chapter, the debate has been (de)framed from its colonial philosophical, theoretical, and ideological underpinnings. Changing the content of the debate, in other words, would have left the terms sustaining coloniality in place. To change the "terms of the conversation", necessitated going beyond an epistemic disobedience or de-linking from Western modernity's universalist rationality that informs the production of knowledge (Mignolo 2011, p. 38). It is worth asking, then- where do educational researchers stand in the process of decolonization? As authors of this chapter, we argue for the use of a political ontological ethnographic approach in how knowledge is produced in educational research to inform K-12 school practices. We suggest that education as a discipline not only challenge and deconstruct, but use transdisciplinary approaches to re-conceptualize new ways of thinking, teaching and learning that are contextual, relative, and diverse.

By drawing on the anthropological work of Blaser (2009), Blaser et al. (2013), we propose a political ontological approach to ethnographic research can make a "foundationless foundational claim" to conceptualize "culture" more politically dynamic whereby people intersubjectively engage in reality-making practices that may lead to broader collective action (p. 551). In other words, this ethnographic approach aims at understanding how pluriversal "ways of conceiving what exists… give substance to the notion of multiple ontologies, [which means that] understanding ontology as performance or enactment [will] bring to the fore the notion of ontological multiplicity" (p. 552). A political ontological approach replaces colonial forms of cultural representation by opening educational spaces to a deeper understanding of how diverse meaning-making practices and stories are used to produce knowledge that is multiple, situated (Haraway 1988), and changing rather than universal, acontextual and fixed forms of truth.

In this educational space, the political is embodied, enacted, and narrated and, at times, motivated by forces not understood through a modern Western lens. The political forces that motivate people's doing and thinking are not always what is assumed. For instance, can #NoDAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline movement) be

understood simply as a movement fighting against neoliberal capitalist projects or are relational ontologies at play? Are DACA students simply fighting for legal status or are the years of silent *existence* beginning to push the inert political force into movement, motivating many to shout to the world that their Black, Brown, and not-quite-White bodies are not for cheap labor? These are some of the questions a political ontological approach asks without claiming in any way to having the answers. In the context of schools, it is the immigrants, the dominated, the excluded who understand, act, voice, embody, and conceptualize their existence through storied performativity.

By using storied performativity, the previous questions can be explored by looking at the relational dynamic between what is narrated and what is enacted and by whom. The purpose is not to describe or represent the cultural practices observed, but to understand how storied performativity is an ongoing and spatially unfolding ontological and epistemological process. What this means is that knowledge production grounded in diverse stories and experiences is a horizontal political process rather than a vertical process of power filtering top down. Storied performativity enables researchers to understand how people challenge and contradict the dominant narrative through these distinctly enacted stories of experience. As Blaser et al. (2013) state, "one of political ontology's concern is how to operate in a terrain dominated by conceptions of an all-encompassing modernity." (p. 553).

This terrain includes the knowledge producing spaces of schools and universities. Within this seemingly homogenous environment where a modern ontology or way of being and seeing dominates, there exists contradictions, conflicts, and politically enacted practices that form ontological conflicts, which "involve conflicting stories about 'what is there' and how they constitute realities in power-charged fields." (p. 548). Recognizing the diverse communities in which students live is integral to a political ontological ethnographic approach to produce educational knowledge.

As ethnographic researchers we should not, however, expect to see, capture, represent, or uncover the external reality of cultural practices. Indeed, Blaser et al. admonished that "ontological conflicts pose the challenge of how to narrate them without restating (and reenacting) the ontological assumption of a reality out there being described." (2013, p. 548). What this means is that great risk is involved in writing, for we, as educational researchers, can perpetuate the cultural hierarchies when writing from a position that assumes a "Culture" has a specific worldview. In other words, any depiction or description of others is not "ideologically or cognitively neutral" and carries the risk of constructing an object of knowledge (Ahmed 1992, p. 99). Indeed, many anthropologists are debating the "ontological turn" and are discussing whether "Culture" as concept perpetuates hierarchies of difference (Carrithers et al. 2010).

It is additionally argued that "epistemological relativism" (culture) continues to frame people within one external reality (Blaser et al. 2013, p. 550). That is, there are many cultures in one external world (nature) but which perceive the world/nature differently, which only serves to sustain the dualist modern/colonial ontology mentioned initially. It should be noted that what some people believe is real clashes

with the dominant discourse, yet they never pass for more than cultural beliefs, values, traditions, and customs, thereby perpetuating colonial discourses. Consequently, the reality-making and world-making practices are placed under the "Cultural" umbrella. What this means is that other knowledge-practices are categorized statically as traditions that should be appreciated but not necessarily understood as dynamically situated.

A decolonial ethnographer might enter a border dialogue (Mignolo 2011, 2012) and use the stories, concepts, conceptualizations, and political enactments understood and lived by the participants when producing knowledge. Border dialogue can vary from quotidian acts and stories of rebellion (e.g., speaking and knowing in another language) to actions and narrations explicitly directed at confronting issues collectively. As Gordon (2014) states "To be political means to emerge, to appear, to exist." (p. 9), which is exactly what a political ontological approach attempts to explore. This approach adds to decolonial 'ethnographies of resistance' and decolonizing methodologies (Smith 2013) aimed at understanding the movement of the social domain (Escobar 1992, p. 399). Thus, a political ontological approach tries to avoid many of the concepts already depicting the world, and, instead, uses actions and stories to understand how the world is conceptualized by the very people enacting said narratives.

Finally, a political ontological approach to educational research seeks to understand how the pluriverse or the "partially connected unfolding of worlds" is already in the making and in political motion (Blaser et al. 2013, p. 552). A political ontological approach situates schools and universities as colonial sites of encounter where the onto-epistemological differences are continuously at play. Education research, therefore, should not seek to reproduce pedagogies, that create the over-representation of the modern version of the human (Wynter 2003). In its place, what a decolonial political ontological ethnographic approach proposes is a firm, honest, and humble political alliance with those who enact a counter-hegemonic narrative by giving them more discursive visibility.

Researchers interested in this approach must ask themselves not only what enacted stories participants are performing but should also consider their storied performativity throughout their collaboration with participants. Researchers might ask: What narrative am I enacting or performing and how is it part of the dominant story? How am I reinforcing or perpetuating hierarchies of difference while claiming to disrupt them? How do I include participants' enactments and the way they narrate and understand them? How do their narrations and enactments reveal political ontologies and ontological conflicts? There are many more questions that could be asked, and it should be noted that inquiring in this fashion is part of the decolonial project and its invaluable performativity.

As educators and researchers, it is our ethical responsibility to work *with* the communities who are challenging and decolonizing ways of being and knowing by giving discursive visibility to their projects of resistance such as DACA student movement, indigenous movements, and Black Lives Matter movement. Thus, the political ontological approach presented in this essay adds to decolonial methodologies, shifts the conversation away from cultural perspectives and toward

deeper ontological and epistemological differences. To take other knowledge and ways of being seriously complicates the conversation around which classroom diversity revolves. Diversity no longer represents the superficial differences shown by language or culture, for instance, but rather that which is lived, known, felt, seen, enacted, and storied. A political ontological ethnographic approach, therefore, is crucial to work from and with these radical differences in order to decolonize educational experiences.

If schools are to become transformational spaces, students, teachers, researchers and community leaders will have to work together to effect educational change. To commit to what impacts students' communities, families, and friends and the forbidden knowledges used to overcome the many obstacles placed before them, means we must enact the stories we often narrate. It means, more than anything, to make collective action and the knowledges it produces a means to a decolonial future.

6 Concluding Thoughts

To sum up, ethical and political research at this crucial juncture requires us to position our professional work as a vocation. The original meaning of vocation is "to be called upon", and those who call are the people and communities always already politically positioned (Dussel 2008, p. 25). As Dussel states, "the one who is called feels 'summoned' to assume the responsibility of service" (p. 25). The researcher's responsibility is not to come up with transformative practices but to serve as a megaphone for the political enactments, narrations, ontological-epistemological conflicts people intersubjectively engage in to recreate meanings of their social, political, economic, and educational environment. By making "other" ways of being, becoming, and knowing as well as the alternative political practices and stories of resistance more visible, the field of education opens knowledge to multiplicity, diversity and change.

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Embracing the Otherness of Others: An Approach for Teacher Educators to Assuage Social and Political Tribalism

Sonja Varbelow

Abstract We live in a corrosively polarized climate where sharply divided beliefs about globalization and populism magnify existing biases. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that those who want to educate the next generation – teacher candidates – have been schooled in systems that focus on obedience, conformity, and docility. This breadcrumbs approach to education bears the danger of reproducing the status quo rather than changing it. This chapter explores the promises, perils, and provocations of curriculum regarding how we think about diversity and delineates a learning experience for pre-service teachers that allows them to identify, approach, and become the Other. The lived experience illuminates the cultural and experiential origins of their beliefs while reconciling the uncomfortable notion that bias is part of the human condition. In times where sharpened divisions intensify social and political tribalism it is essential to understand that it is the way one acts upon one's biases that determines what kind of world one creates.

Keywords Curriculum theory · Bias · Diversity · Lived experiences · Teacher education

We live in a corrosive political and social climate, which is characterized by divisiveness and tribalism. Although this seems like a phenomenon birthed during the last presidential election campaign, the need of humans to understand the self in terms of which clans one belongs to is nothing new. What seems new is the way people as individuals and as a society act upon their social identity. To understand what causes this seemingly intense segregation at times when humanity is more globalized than ever before, I will explore origins for bias and show a learning experience offered to aspiring educators whose goal it is to bridge differences and understand them as essential necessities for one's individual evolution.

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This chapter consists of three parts: Part I *Tribalism in Modern Times and the Promises of Diversity* offers explanations for personal and societal bias from psychology, anthropology, and educational philosophy. Part II *The Mission for Education Systems and the Perils of Diversity* explores the purpose of higher education amidst the divisive climate we live in. Finally, Part III *Seeking the Other and the Provocations of Diversity* delineates an approach to offer aspiring teachers the opportunity to first identify, then approach, and eventually become the Other. The chapter concludes with thoughts about the promises, perils, and provocations of diversity in the global divide that is our present.

1 Part I – Tribalism in Modern Times and the Promises of Diversity

> *Whatever the one generation may learn from the other, that which is genuinely human no generation learns from the foregoing. In this respect every generation begins primitively, has no different task from that of every previous generation, nor does it get further …* Kierkegaard 1954 p. 130.

October 2017. I am on my way to a conference on ecology in education, which focuses on the interconnectedness and relationships among all parts of our natural and social ecosystem. As we are waiting to deplane, the lady behind me feels compelled to comment sadly and loudly on how divided the country is. She ends her dismal description of present times by wishing we would come together as a nation and focus on being American. "Can't we all just get along?" I am relieved she is addressing everyone willing to listen instead of me personally because I am too travel-weary to explain why thinking of oneself as an American is the same kind of tribalism as is thinking of oneself as a liberal or a conservative. Her conclusion might have resonated particularly strongly with me because I am not a U.S. citizen. I am German and an immigrant, which complexifies a conversation on national tribalism exponentially. But her pulse check of the present political and social climate in the U.S. is an accurate observation that extends far beyond the well-protected borders of this country. In Germany, Angela Merkel won the 2017 elections while the far-right AfD[1] Party experienced a spectacular victory coming in third. Earlier this year in France, far-right Mari Le Pen conceded to Macron with a notable third of all votes. Similar populist trends in other European countries such as The Netherlands and Austria make the U.S.'s current political climate no fringe phenomenon.

What seems puzzling, though, is why this divisiveness feels so acute today when it has always existed, which is not to say that its lack of novelty devalues the importance of the phenomenon. I grew up in East Berlin during the Cold War amidst daily news of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which reflects just two examples for tribalism from recent history. One reason for why we experience today's divisiveness so

[1] AfD – Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany).

keenly is that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which ended the Cold War, and the immediately following technological revolution of the 1990s gave rise to the feeling of a global village. International disarmament, glasnost and perestroika, and the Internet brought us closer together. Germans were reunited with their brothers and sisters of the free world while America rejoiced from afar. We had a global kumbaya moment of sorts. As the ideologically divisive Iron Curtain came down, the Internet became a gateway to corners of the world previously out of reach. Now geographical distance did not equal social distance anymore. Today we are connected with each other for the big ideas through professional Facebook pages or LinkedIn, and for the mundane aspects of every day life – I regularly FaceTime with my mother in Berlin and keep connected with my Indian friends through WhatsApp. However, the way in which we connect potentially diminishes our worlds more than it enlarges them. While we include some into our global communities, we exclude others, specifically those whose fundamental beliefs differ from ours. We "unfriend" a Facebook connection for a political comment that we disagree with because it makes us feel uncomfortable. As a result, we create filter bubbles that quickly become echo chambers for our metaphorical boxes, which are defined by our biases. This trend is exacerbated by the fact that a stunning 62% of Americans get their news through social media instead of from journalist websites or TV news channels (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017). Political divisions extend to social relationships. We surround ourselves with like-minded people to the point where acknowledging the Other becomes a form of treason (Haidt 2016).

So the Internet, which has come to us at just the right moment in history, turned out to be one of the greatest ironies of modern times (Bruni 2014). The advantage came with the pitfall: while allowing us to make stronger connections with those whose worldviews harmonize with ours, we use it to segregate ourselves from those who could deepen our thinking by offering different views. This happens because we choose our communities based on pre-existing beliefs. Lukianoff (2017) poignantly notes "technological advancement has only increased our ability to achieve twenty-four hour confirmation," (p. 2). Our desire to interact with those who make us feel good about ourselves confirms our biases, and we think of the Other as an adversary who presents a threat to our worldview rather than as a fellow human being with whom we disagree.

1.1 Why We Succumb to Tribalism

We are prone to tribalism. An anthropologist would argue that this is the case because we are a social species. Individuals with social tendencies have probably survived, reproduced, and passed on those social traits better than individuals with extreme anti-social behavior. And since humans evolved in small groups, presumably competing with other small groups, any dispositions that enhance social solidarity might have presented an advantage (Yaworsky, personal communication, October 12, 2017). A psychologist might reason that tribalism is directly connected

to our innate confirmation bias, which is the notion that we instinctively highlight evidence that undergirds our beliefs. Cognitive processes function in ways that inevitably lead to a confirmation of one's hypotheses (Kunda 1990). In other words, we find what we are looking for because it fits seamlessly and effortlessly into the narrative of the world we have created for ourselves up until this point. For example, if you identify as a Democrat, every move and tweet by sitting President Trump is interpreted as a travesty and serves as proof that you were right not to vote for him. Equally, if you did vote for him, he can do no wrong.

Either consciously or subconsciously, we avoid asking the correct questions about those views that make our own seem like they do not fit into the bigger picture of the world that we have created for ourselves. Interestingly, presenting someone with facts with the goal to prove them wrong has the opposite effect. In a study with Palestinian and Israeli participants, Ginges et al. (2007) showed that the only way to overcome violent opposition to compromise is that the adversary shows willingness to compromise on what is considered his sacred values. Ginges et al. (2007) hypothesize that this is the case because such a compromise presents an equitable loss for both sides. However, it is also possible that giving up on one's sacred values signals an openness to the Other that cautiously alleviates deeply seated distrust and creates the chance for compassion to be born.

1.2 Self-Understanding and the Need to Belong

People often think of themselves in dichotomous terms such as self/Other, which reduces the self to an ego that is reminiscent of Cartesian dualism (Aoki 1993). Its focus is on how the self is inferior or superior to the Other. This results in a comparison of myself with those I[2] interact with and in reflections of how they might perceive me, which then influence how I think of myself. This understanding limits the self to the extent to which I could be more me if Other didn't tell me what *I am not*, or be the real me if Other didn't tell me what *I am*. Similarly, it is also not useful to think of self/Other intersubjectively, as a "we," because this inflates the self as a synergy of self and Other. Both views understand the self/Other dichotomy in terms of degree, which does not offer a deeper understanding of self. They sharpen divisions and exacerbate tribalism in ways that are isolating and hinder one's individual evolution.

Huebner (1963) observed that relationships are the sine qua non of human existence. The problem then is not relating to others but to do so in ways that overcome isolation. He noted that we wander through life essentially "alone … with other human beings" (p. 75), and that the purpose of all the relations we seek is to reconcile this existential aloneness. Even the non-existentialist reader might agree that we

[2] The use of the pronouns *I* and *he* is to mean "of humankind." When I used more inclusive pronouns like *s/he* and gender-neutral *they,* the complex idea of self/Other was verbally complicated without being conceptually complexified.

never really know an Other. I am a daughter and a mother of two adult children. I feel confident in my assumption that there is no other person in the world who knows my mother and my children better than I do while being wholly convinced that I do not nor ever will really know them.

Huebner goes on to describe four basic forms of social encounters: The first kind is that in which I attempt to escape my aloneness by joining a crowd. As I become part of a collective, my solitude is not brought to consciousness any longer. At the same time, my individuality is lost because the collective does not provide opportunity for me to establish my identity. As a result, I give up my freedom while my problem of overcoming my aloneness is not resolved. Next are those encounters that are characterized by failure to acknowledge the Other. This is done through categorizing and stereotyping, which denies the Other his individuality and renders him an insignificant Other. At its worst, this encounter demonizes the Other. In the third kind, I do recognize my aloneness and attempt to overcome it by making myself subservient to an Other. To be accepted, I forfeit my freedom and my individuality. As a result, I am still alone, as is the dominant partner of the relationship. Since the latter can never trust the former, both are closed off from each other.

Huebner concludes that only the fourth kind of social encounter bears the possibility for man to reconcile his solitude. For this to happen, we must both first acknowledge that each of us is alone. In other words, we do not make assumptions about each other or about how we each are perceived by the other. We then engage in conversation. Huebner differentiates between communication and conversation. The former only serves to gain information. True conversation, on the other hand, presupposes an openness to the Other that allows each to be influenced. Huebner explained,

> He who is free to converse with others retains an element of childlike curiosity about others; a curiosity based not on a desire to verify one's normalcy and worth, but on the acceptance of and awe for the complexity and mystery of human life. … Furthermore, conversation demands an acceptance and acknowledgement of the reality and value of the other person; not only of his equality but of his fraternity and solitude. (p. 78)

True conversation changes three things: me, the Other, and our relationship with each other. This is made possible when the Other sincerely knows that I am open to be influenced by him; my openness stems from me acknowledging him as a fellow human being in whom I am genuinely interested.

To this point, Aoki (1993) suggests to "embrace the otherness of others"(p. 213), which means to understand that Other illuminates different and new aspects of my self[3] and makes obvious that I am this self very much because of Other, that is because of what Other makes me understand about my self. If I embrace this understanding, I can understand my self more deeply than before. In other words, Aoki points to the need to understand that I depend on the Otherness of Others. However, acknowledging this need is characterized by tension because it challenges what I have understood up until this moment. So the first step is to accept that my

[3]The spelling of "my" and "self" as two separate words signals intention rather than an inherent quality as is the case when spelled as one word.

understanding is always temporary and destined to change with my very next encounter. This change might not undo my previously written narrative of the world, which reflects my singular reality, but it illuminates it in a different light and so makes it visible more clearly. What I can now see is a distortion, a lack of coherence, for which I have to make adjustments.

My narrative resembles my epistemology, my personal way of knowing the world. When people meet, their epistemologies meet. The disquietude that this meeting causes and the resulting sudden incoherence in my narrative make it possible for me to question what I have known so far. This is often a difficult process because I do not easily give up on the transitional meanings I have chosen to weave the whole story together. But if I do not resist the breaking up of connections between my individual narratives, I have the chance to know better. Aoki (1981) explained, "the meaningfulness of one understanding comes into view illuminated by the whole context; and the meaningful of the whole comes into view illuminated by a part" (p. 228). In this way, disquietude causes me to transform my narrative and so resembles a chance to transform my self.

The point is to think of contradictions between self and Other as a mode of human relationships whose provocative nature is pearl-producing. But the dialectic between needing an Other to understand how the self connects to humanity and using the Other to isolate the self, presents a conundrum. The problem is not the fact that, anthropologically, psychologically, or existentially, we are condemned to needing to belong; the problem is that we segregate ourselves into warring clans. Niels Bohr said that profound truths are characterized by the fact that their opposites are also profound truths, in contrast to trivialities whose opposites are absurd (Rozental 1967). With the technological revolution, we have created possibilities ad infinitum for ourselves to explore those opposing truths. Instead, however, we have allowed for tribalism in modern times to reduce the quality of human relationships ad absurdum. Historically, every generation has done that in its own way. If we have learned nothing from those who came before us, it might be because this is part of the "genuinely human" Kierkegaard referred to in the introductory quote that each generation has to learn anew, which means there is hope.

2 Part II – The Mission for Education Systems and the Perils of Diversity

> *The problem faced by teachers is how to teach in such a fashion that children become freer by using knowledge, rather than embedded in new cultural chains.* Huebner 1962/1999, p. 39.

August 2010. I am standing in front of my *Intro to Teaching* students, a freshman level course. They look at me, wholly absorbed in what I say, taking everything for gospel. These are potentially my future colleagues, and it is troubling that they take everything I say as truths to be lived by instead of questioning it. I tell them about Bertolucci's movie *The Conformist*, which tells the story of an "enlightened"

professor who was eventually assassinated by the student he mentored (Carlson 2002). The movie is set in the times of Mussolini's fascism. The professor expatriated to France where he worked with the Resistance. The student, Clerici, lost without his academic father, turned to the next best authority to tell him what is good and right and valuable and became an obedient fascist who completed his mission to murder his former mentor. It takes all of the semester, every semester, for my students to come to terms with the idea that the professor just replaced one truth with another – his. It takes much longer to grasp the idea that education is that which enables a person to question long-held beliefs and design ways to live under one's own supervision (Kierkegaard 1954).

Current pre-service teachers were schooled in a system where learning lacks transfer (Darling-Hammond 2016). Its hierarchically implemented curriculum is estranged from students' and teachers' lives and designed to further competitive ethics (Kincheloe 2008). We learn mainly from experience, and my students' experiential knowledge about school comes from them being students. The trouble is that in schools, we raise excellent sheep (Deresiewicz 2014) because we train, rather than educate, for obedience, docility, and conformity. We employ a breadcrumbs approach that guides students to where we think they should go. But these are my future colleagues, and if we always do what we always did, we'll always get what we always got. And even if that had been spectacular, it would make progress all but impossible.

If kindergarten-12th grade education keeps people in their Platonic caves, the mission for institutions of higher education must be to get people out of their comfort zones to explore territories beyond their metaphorical box. But as soon as students arrive at college, they start to "network" with the goal of establishing connections with what is familiar and comforting to them. Because college, unlike high school, is not based on neighborhood zoning, it offers a more diversified environment. Yet instead of diversifying friends to seek new and different perspectives, they collapse this new environment into one that resembles their past comfort zones (Bruni 2014).

Lukianoff (2017) observed that college students in most institutions of higher education seem to follow four simple rules: talk with peers who think like you, join organizations that confirm your beliefs, figure out what the professor wants and don't disagree, stay away from controversial topics. By not counter-acting these approaches to higher learning, colleges close the door on students' temporary openness, which is borne out of the curiosity of a newcomer, in hopes that keeping them comfortable leads to greater retention rates and therefore better revenue for the enterprise Ed Inc. To this point, Haidt (2016) deplores the continued "coddling" of students, which began with parenting trends in the 1980s. For example, students are given trigger warnings prior to reading assignments if the content is potentially opposed to their existing views and therefore disturbing.

There seems to be the assumption that students are too fragile to think through a concept that might cause even the remotest disquietude. Lukianoff and Haidt (2018) warn that this tendency results in protecting the dominant group, which at the moment are liberals, by treating conservatives as a morally defect Other. This

Othering is expressed in microagressions, which are intentional or unintentional explicit or subtly hostile, derogatory, or other negative behaviors. Since "outsiders," who are those who feel Othered when it is assumed that everybody in the room has the same underlying worldviews, feel intimidated to voice their oppositions to opinions held by the dominant group, there is the danger that the concepts of the dominant group are not challenged in ways that necessitate deep and critical thinking.

The elimination of conflict does not only *not* challenge college students' existing beliefs, but it validates them, which reinforces the metaphorical box in which they house their singular version of reality. If concepts are not challenged, the process of truth seeking does not function. The result is a homogeneity of thought, which is counterproductive to truth-seeking. It is the antithesis to Karl Popper's theory of falsification. Popper, a twentieth century social scientist, proposed that since a social theory can hardly be proven beyond a doubt, we must expose it to relentless criticism, trying to falsify it (Popper 1972). Only if our attempts to disprove a hypothesis fail, can we think of it as truthful enough to use it as a premises for further thinking. Popper's idea was that truth is something we must strive for while reconciling the idea that it is unattainable. As long as we demonize the Other, our support for a democracy is waning because we enforce the kind of bigotry that potentially cripples the very idea of a democratic society, namely the protection of non-dominant groups.

So instead of helping college students understand that they play an infinitesimal yet integral part in a pluralistic society, they learn to think of those whose worldviews clash with their own as an Other who is misguided and stubborn (Lukianoff 2017). What they must learn instead is that an educated person is one who seeks out opposing views because to converse about them is the only way to illuminate one's own views, and this brief but intense flash of bright lightning will unequivocally lead to a better understanding of the self and the part one plays in the bigger picture of the photomosaic that is the synthesis of humanity.

Huebner (1962), in the above quote, decrees that education must make us freer. For him, learning is the journey of the self (Huebner 1993). This process begins with students owning their learning rather than holding me responsible for making them knowledgeable or successful teachers. The goal must be for students to become aware of themselves, their beliefs about the world they exist in, and where those beliefs emanated. With this awareness, they must be challenged to design their individual, ever-temporary definitions for the purpose of school and what it means to be an educated person. Only then is there hope that they choose their place in the world rather than be placed in it and that they extend this ability and responsibility to their own students. This notion becomes particularly relevant for pre-service teachers who are about to enter an education system that is eternally situated in the limbo between politics and policies on one hand and scholarly voices on the other. The current test-driven, economic nature of the institution school readily reduces the role of the teacher to that of a tamer when, in fact, s/he should unleash the lion.

I tell my *Intro to Teaching* students about Nietzsche's (1978) metamorphoses – from the camel that acquires human knowledge, to the lion who critiques it, and finally, to the child who dreams up possibilities for himself of how to exist in the world and how to contribute meaningfully to the communities he is part of. The

professor in Bertolucci's movie never enabled Clerici to go through the second metamorphosis. The goal of higher education must be to incite it.

3 Part III – Seeking the Other and the Provocations of Diversity

We are all bigots. All of us prejudge people on some basis, be it race, sex, sexual preference, height, age, or any of scores of categories … Crutcher 1991 p. 131.

March 2006. I am preparing a unit plan for my 10th grade English class on Chris Crutcher's book *Athletic Shorts*, which is a collection of short stories whose themes promised to resonate well with high school students. As I am starting to read the last one, I stumble over the above quote: "We're all bigots …," and I think he's got that one wrong. I certainly am no bigot. I am a high school English teacher in a challenging urban neighborhood and the embodiment of Miss Open-Minded. But because this author was able to engage my students in ways other adolescent authors couldn't, as I knew from previous reads, I was willing to entertain his insult for a brief (and unexpectedly shocking) moment. After some soul-searching, I found that I was biased against people who were obese and against those whom I perceived to lack basic intelligence. I was as shocked then as I am ashamed today remembering this previous me. But shame is somewhat counter-productive when coming to terms with one's biases. Prejudice, which gives rise to bias, is part of the human condition. The point here is to become aware of our biases and their origins so that we can consciously choose how to act upon them instead of reacting emotionally. By diagnosing our ills, we have a chance to counter-act them (Jacobs 2017). This is a difficult process that requires a certain amount of objectivity to avoid becoming defensive, which would continuously close us off from the Other.

Our biases are mainly rooted in three phenomena – in the beliefs taught to us by those we trusted when we grew up, in our prior experiences, and in the lack of experience with a phenomenon. In my case, it was the second. Much of my childhood was characterized by being excluded because I was too heavy. Once I was able to lose weight, I falsely assumed that everybody had the same goal and that if I could do it, so could anyone else. My second bias originated from a three minute experience on the last day of 9th grade during which my math teacher made it very clear to me that I am second best, not smart enough to make an A. When I did see an A on my report card, it did not feel like a reflection of merit but like a challenge. I think I have spent much of my life trying to prove to him that he was not wrong.

Though my pre-service teachers are certain that they would never let their biases interfere with the way they treat their future students, they, like me, will be trapped by their interpretation of prior experiences and beliefs. Nieto (2013) stated that a socially just person is one who challenges and disrupts stereotypes and common misconceptions. I need for my future colleagues to be socially just people, and for this to be possible, they have to come to terms with the unpleasant reality that we all are biased.

3.1 The Bias Project

The Bias Project is a personal experience for university students[4] consisting of three parts. In Part I, students identify the Other; in Part II, they approach the Other; and in Part III, they become the Other. The experience concludes with a reflection that invites students to explore the presence of the Other in ourselves (Georgis and Kennedy 2009).

Part I – Identifying the Other The experience begins by confronting students with Crutcher's quote. Once they understand the meaning of the word "bigot," they usually react similar to how I did because most people think of themselves as open-minded. Students then understand that prejudice is part of what it means to be human and that the point is not self-depreciation, which amplifies pre-existing biases as everything from hereon will come from a place of defense, but self-awareness. Students then think about what others prejudge people for. Though they are probably thinking about themselves, temporarily laying existing prejudice on others makes them feel safe, which is an essential prerequisite at this early stage of the experience. Together they effortlessly compose a complex web of prejudices while I create a visual of their responses as shown in Fig. 1 below.

Once student replies are exhausted, their focus is redirected back onto themselves, and they are asked to take a moment to themselves to make a mental list of those prejudices that apply to them. After a minute of silence, I ask that anyone who

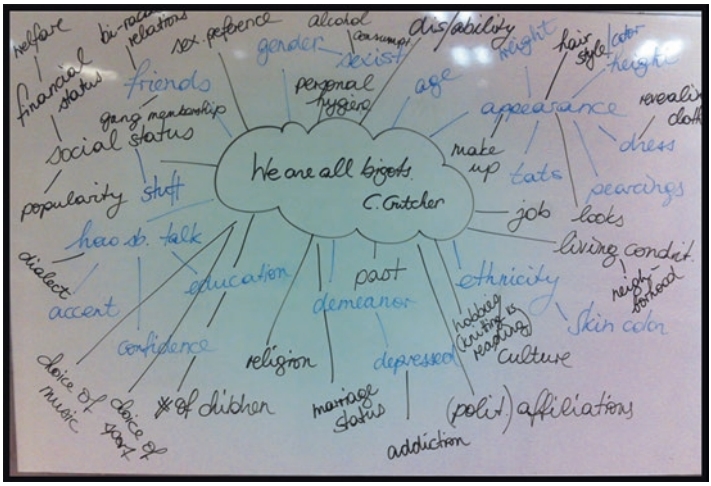

Fig. 1 Prejudice web

[4] Students have successfully completed the experience in introductory, upper level, and graduate education courses as well as in mixed majors freshmen seminars in both traditional and online settings.

has come up with an empty list raise his/her hand. Over the years, I have taken this journey with hundreds of students; no one has ever indicated to be free of prejudice. To make the experience more tangible and to prepare the second part of the project, students are asked to think of a person in their lives who displays one of the characteristics that ended up on their mental lists. Most of them already have someone in mind. At this point, we have identified the Other for ourselves. Their reflections on Part I show that they are willing to take a risk with this experience. For example, Jazmin from a freshmen seminar wrote:

> I made a list of characteristics that I am biased about. I was sad to see how many qualities I judge people on. I always thought I treated people equally, but I have come to realize that I do not.

Once this insight is acknowledged, students are ready for the next part.

Part II – Approaching the Other The second part of the experience begins with the realization that they are asked to approach the Other. In preparation for this conversation, students first learn how to compose and conduct a qualitative interview. I use my bias against gun ownership as an example to design questions whose format is loosely based on Spradley's (1979) design for ethnographic interviews as shown in Table 1 below.

As any qualitative researcher knows, it is very difficult to compose good conversation questions. Students learn to avoid convoluted questions so as not to overwhelm their conversation partner, as well as yes/no questions, which will give them no insights to reflect on.

Composing this conversation enables students to change the way they think about the encounter. They often start with the idea of confronting the person they thought of in Part I rather than approaching the Other. This is reflected in bellicosely worded questions such as "Why do you disrespect gay people?" or "Why are you against Muslims?" By rewording the questions, students slowly understand that antagonizing the Other closes the small window of opportunity to see the world from his/her perspective. With this understanding, they change the vernacular to that of their conversation partner to put the Other at ease. For example, "Why are you against abortion?" changes to "Can you tell me when you first felt that you are a pro-choice advocate?" In the process, their thinking about the encounter changes from confrontational to open or curious.

Table 1 Designing conversation questions

Question type	Example for a conversation with a gun owner
1. Descriptive	Tell me how it came about that you became a gun owner.
2. Specific	Can you tell me about the day you got your first gun?
3. Structural	Can you tell me some typical situations in which you take your gun with you?
4. Contrast	Can you think of some things that make you feel hesitant about guns?

This is the point when students must distinguish among pluralist, essentialist, and critical multiculturalism (Morris 2016). They make the connection that exaggerated curiosity furthers the notion of pluralist multiculturalism because it exoticizes the Other. With this understanding, they can prepare not to employ a museum's approach during the conversation where they focus solely on the Otherness of the Other. The purpose of the Bias Project as a whole is illuminated when students understand the idea of critical multiculturalism, which aims at improving human relationships by opening people toward plurality (Morris 2016).

Once all interview questions are revised and students have designed a plan to meet with their conversation partners, they are anxious to proceed. In their final reflections, many students described this part of the experience as "nerve-wrecking" while others were looking forward to finally having a conversation with a person who they feel does wrong. For example, Madison chose to have a conversation with her mother who is a hoarder. Her final reflection below will show what kind of changes the encounter can make possible. Some students approached the Other with a mindset like Clayton who wrote: "This assignment honestly began with me wanting to prove to Dr. Varbelow that guns are not as bad as prescribed." I will call on Clayton again at the end of this part after he had a chance to become the Other.

Part III – Becoming the Other After their encounter with the Other, students compose a first-person narrative from the point of view of their conversation partner. Once they understand that this is not a simple write up of the conversation from the other person's point of view, this proves to be the most difficult part of the experience. For example, Charles observed, "This was not easy to write. Several times I found myself making a sentence sound sarcastic and I had to step back and start over." But once they accept the challenge, their work is chillingly insightful. Below is an excerpt from Madison's narrative written from her mother's point of view:

> *I walk inside my home and all I feel is overwhelmed and anxious. How did I let this happen? Why can't I make all of this go away? I want more than anything in this world to be able to live a simple life style. Free from unnecessary items and things that don't bring happiness into my life. I've tried multiple times to fix this mess that is consuming my house. I clean one room but then I build a bigger mess in another room. I feel as if this cycle never ends. … I feel guilty that I would let this become so bad. I feel guilty every time I go shopping because I buy more to cover up the ugly around my home. I want to invite people over for fellowship, but I can't. Daily things, like cooking meals, would be less daunting if I didn't have to declutter before starting the next meal. I dread having to go inside my bedroom because I always have to uncover one mess before I get where I need.*

Madison's final reflection exemplifies that the experience was what Huebner described as the fourth social encounter:

> I now understand why my mom struggles like she does. I always assumed she liked it like that. I now can see the guilt she feels about this. … This assignment has reestablished my mom's and my relationship. … I am now devoting a lot of my time this summer to help her organize and go through her home. … My mom sends me pictures throughout the day of little sections of the house she has cleaned and organized. She is a lot happier now.

The change in perspective described by Madison embodies Huebner's definition of conversation. It changed Madison once she appreciated her mother's agony, it changed her mother who was acknowledged through the conversation, and the empathy created in the course changed their relationship with each other.

Similarly, Jovanna decided to talk with her aunt who is a white supremacist. Since Jovanna distances herself from those beliefs, she had not spoken to any family members in years. The following is an excerpt from her narrative written from her aunt's point of view:

> *Mamma always said never to play with the kids down the road. But you see, my siblings and I were the only kids in a time mile radius besides the family down the road. I knew better not to associate with anyone whose skin is darker than my own, but I wanted friends. So, I skipped down the road to play with the González's children. Boy, did we have a blast … When I arrived at my house, Mamma was waiting for me on the porch with the bible and a belt. I received 20 likins that night along with a lecture saying that peoples whose skin is darker than ours are evil people. They are the devil's children. … When daddy came home that night, I got 10 more likins and he told me good girls don't lie to their parents and only good girls get into heaven. … Damn, I should have listened to Mamma and Daddy. I should have been a good little girl. Why can't I be a good little girl? Why?*

The way Jovanna tells her aunt's story shows how the encounter let her separate her aunt from the group categories Jovanna had used to think about white supremacists and her family. Her final thoughts reflect her understanding that a person is not exclusively the ideals one disagrees with:

> The day after my meeting, I received a phone call from my aunt [who] explained to me, that my interview with her opened her eyes. … I felt like she was holding on to some heavy stuff and it needed to be let out; I just so happen to be that person. I feel like deep down, my aunt isn't a racist person. She was somewhat brainwashed into believing things that aren't even true.

Through conversation, Jovanna realized that the one is not the group. The group's identity is reflected in its ideals, which rise above those of the individual, drowning out his/her singular stories. Hence, it is futile to attempt to empathize with the Other as a collective. But by approaching the Other as one, his/her individual story can make the changes conversation promises possible.

While students' beliefs did not change, which was also not the purpose of the Bias Project, they no longer felt walled off from the Other. Oscar stated, "I have respect for these people that I never had." This change is made possible when they encounter the Other as a fellow human being rather than as an opponent. As they listen to the Other's story, they recognize themselves in a sentence, in a feeling, or in an experience. Christa wrote, "After the interview, as I read over our conversation and tried to view it from her perspective, I started thinking about my own experiences," and Jacob concluded, "After talking with Mike, I realized his situation was similar to my own (just in reverse)." What conversation makes possible is that for a brief moment we glimpse ourselves in the Other.

Although the experience of the conversation is generally more influential for the one who initiates it, the Other feels acknowledged by being given a voice. For example, Cheyenne, who is determined never to have children,[5] noted:

> When I asked to do our interview, [my conversation partner] got very, very excited about it because any chance she gets to talk about children she will jump at. It took me a little bit to open up and hear her out because to me children are just awful.

While the person initiating the conversation is often not directly acknowledged, the Other is. Many students felt that people initially agree to participate because it gives them a chance to convince an opponent. But through the course of the conversation, they observe a zealot changing into someone who simply has strong beliefs on a topic, just like they do. They realize emotionally what they have already known intellectually, namely that we all have reasons to act the way we do. This human connection opens them to acknowledging the Other in themselves.

For the vast majority of students, the Bias Project presented a uniquely challenging and positive experience. Most students drew conclusions similar to Jazmin, whom I quoted earlier. In her final reflection, she stated,

> By me setting aside my feelings and allowing [my brother] to be himself, I have been allowed to see his true heart again. … I have chosen to take this effect into all of my relationships. I want people to know I will love them regardless of my personal biases. … Even if I can judge one less time a day until it becomes a habit, I will feel accomplished.

While Jazmin's description of the experience is a testament to how powerful it is, it does not evidence transformation. Huebner (1963) stated that to learn means to change and that this change is reflected in the quality of human relationships. Since the Bias Project causes insights into the self and into what it means to be human, it has the potential to lay the foundation for transformation. I will conclude this part by calling on Clayton, who you recall went into this project to prove his point to me. He chose to have a conversation with a history professor who, like me, is opposed to gun ownership. Below are Clayton's final reflections:

> This assignment honestly began with me wanting to prove to Dr. Varbelow that guns are not as bad as prescribed. I still may believe this, but that is my reality, not hers. I did not take the time to realize that what may seem like common sense to me may seem like pure insanity to others. The point of the assignment is to realize that I must be able to understand another person's reality. The point of the assignment is more realistically the point of life, and that is empathy and appreciation, is this not what makes us human? If we as a human race continually shrug off the feelings, ideas, hardships, and biases of other people then what have we become? We must become more open to the idea that there are other ideas.

Clayton's final thoughts are indicative of two insights gained by all of us who participated in this experience: we are not infallible in our views of others and a person does not have to share our worldviews to teach us something.

Throughout the Bias Project, participants undergo three changes. The first one is their acknowledgment of the fact that they are bigots, the second is that they change

[5] Cheyenne is not an education but a business major who participated in the Bias Project when I was invited to conduct a guest seminar in an organizational behavior course.

their approach of the Other from confrontational to open. This makes possible the final one, which is to sense themselves in the Other and the Other in themselves. It is my hope that the experience of these three changes carries the seed for transformation.

4 Conclusion

So what are the promises, the perils, and the provocations of diversity in the 21st century? As outlined in the first part of this chapter, the promises of diversity lie in its innate gift to offer us an opening out of the metaphorical boxes that present our singular realities. Truths do not exist in me or in the Other but in the fertile space between our two epistemologies. The Other does not validate or devalue me, but his existence provides a beacon for me that allows me to locate my self and the place I occupy in the space and time we share. In short, without an Other, I cannot be me as he needs my presence to be him.

The second part of this chapter shows that the perils of diversity exist in the silence created in institutions of education whose purpose must be to help create just societies. The elimination of conflict permits the deterioration of democracy while comfort zones represent blinders that keep us from envisioning what should be and what we could be. Without vision, evolution turns into drifting.

And finally, the provocation diversity presents is the terrifying notion that the story of the Other is also my story. Hence, we must think of self/Other not in dichotomous but in dialectical terms. While the former makes both mutually exclusive, the latter has the potential to provoke us into exploring the possibilities that a meeting of different epistemologies bears. Then we have a chance to relate to each other as fellow human beings instead of as members from warring ideological or social tribes. And it is how we relate to the Other that reflects the measure of our humanness.

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Decolonization, Counter-Narratives and Education of Two Native Women in Higher Education

Angela M. Jaime and Taylar Stagner

Abstract While the discipline of American Indian Studies has been instrumental in advancing the history and experiences of Native people, in the field of education, there is a troubling knowledge gap by k-12 and post secondary educators. Misinformation and stereotypes about Native people persist in textbooks and educational discourses, making it imperative for the field of education to recognize the importance of Native ways of knowing and the implementation of counter-narratives to be heard in classrooms—at all levels from K-12 to the university. We see numerous examples of classroom textbooks using inaccurate information or lacking the counter-narratives in examinations of Native/Indigenous history and current day issues. This lack of counter-narratives and the silencing of marginalized people and their perspectives is evidence that the US public education system fails students, especially students of color. K-12 teacher certification programs that include coursework on the knowledge/history of people of color and marginalized groups, are promising spaces where preservice teachers might engage with traditionally silenced voices and narratives. As Native women in Higher Education, we present our voices as counter-narratives to the continued colonization of the experiences of indigenous peoples and people of color. We provide the experiences and stories of two Native women in higher education to educate others on the importance of counter-narratives. We also emphasize the importance of Critical Race Theory (CRT), theories of decolonization, and the awareness/analysis of microaggressions in hopes of initiating a dialogue so that educators in K-12 and the university push the boundaries and include Indigenous knowledge and counter-narratives to provoke change.

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The discipline of American Indian Studies has been instrumental in advancing the history and experiences of Native people. A fundamental tenet of the discipline is the importance of counter-narratives; narratives that derive from and highlight the perspectives and experiences of marginalized people. To combat the misinformation and stereotypes about Native people, and to validate Native ways of knowing, counter-narratives need to be heard in classrooms—at all levels from K-12 to the university. Unfortunately, not all classrooms share this dedication to foregrounding counter-narratives. We see numerous examples of elementary and secondary classroom textbooks using inaccurate information or lacking the counter-narratives in examinations of Native/Indigenous history and current day issues (Loewen 2008; Zinn 1990). The lack of counter-narratives and the silencing of marginalized people and their perspectives has caused the US public education system to fail all students, especially students of color.

Outside of the history textbooks in formal education, the experiences of Native people are nearly non-existent in education. Further, when Native people are profiled in texts and other media, they are often frozen in time and the message students receive is that Native people do not exist anymore. We see more of an effort by teachers who utilize supplemental (not just textbooks) information or who have taken classes in non-traditional subjects (American Indian Studies, African American Studies, etc.) to incorporate counter narratives in their classrooms. Preservice teachers who take courses in specialized certification programs focused on information/history about people of color or any marginalized group, tend to create space for the traditionally silenced voices. All of these aspects of teacher education become especially important when we bring students of color to the center of the discussion. It is the duty of educators to provide space for all student voices, and not just the top third or dominant student population.

As Native women in Higher Education, we present our voices as counter-narratives to the continued colonization of the experiences of indigenous and people of color. We intend to provide the experiences and stories of Native women in higher education to educate others on the importance of counter-narratives. In doing so, we also emphasize the importance of Critical Race Theory (CRT), theories of decolonization, and the awareness/analysis of microaggressions in hopes of initiating a dialogue so that those who may not be knowledgeable in these subjects may push their thinking and reflect on their actions to instigate change in themselves. In particular, we hope that teachers across all levels will see the importance of counter-narratives in the classroom.

1 Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Yosso 2005) explains that people of color are forced to accept the pervasive notion that their experiences are not valued, nor valid. CRT has a primary interest in how racism is used in the construction of false assumptions in which dominant ideology and white privilege are legitimized, and the experiences of people of color are excluded and silenced (Su 2007). However, when people of color are given an opportunity to share their counter-narratives, their experiences are valued and moved to the center of the discussion. Readers and listeners can hear the stories or accounts from those who witnessed and experienced events that many of those readers and listeners, due to their privilege or other factors, may not have had a chance to read about or hear.

Historically, students of color in American schools are forced to value and accept the dominant knowledge over their cultural ways of knowing (Zamudio et al. 2011). Post-colonial discourse gives us room for the untold stories of those who have historically been marginalized and silenced (Jaime and Cho 2017). "Post-colonial writers face the task of 'decolonizing the minds' of the colonized and colonizer and carving a new path to freedom. Post-colonial writers have to confront their denial of self-esteem; alienation; betrayal; and have to bring "to the forefront of concern the interconnection of issues of race, nation, empire, mitigation and ethnicity with cultural production" (Moore-Gilbert 1997, p. 6). Post-colonial writers utilize the tenets of decolonization and CRT to challenge the status quo and mainstream mentality of white privilege. The use of counter-narratives is key to challenging the status quo.

Decolonization and CRT scholars often include traditionally marginalized voices in their work (Delgado and Stefancic 2000). Similarly, the authors of this chapter tell their stories and share their experiences to voice that which has been silenced. The literature regarding theories of decolonization addresses issues of colonialism, colonization, imperialism, and capitalist expansion, all of which are related to the overarching theme of how power is used and maintained within the dominant culture (Jaime 2008). Decolonization is the stripping of that which detains us, holds us, and prevents us from negotiating our own destiny and allows us to transcend to a place of balance and peace (Deena 2001; Mohanty 2003; Smith 1999).

> Indigenous people live every day in the realization that colonization is ever present in our communities, educational systems, public policies, etc. The academy, as an example, perpetuates the notion that our stories, identity, culture, and experiences are not valid resources for knowledge; what we value most is dismissed as illegitimate and 'uncivilized.' (Jaime 2008, p. 2)

Self-determination is an instrumental process of decolonization. The individual comes to identify his/her oppression/pain, at which point s/he may either acknowledge the oppression yet do nothing or question and resist the oppression to the eventual point that s/he are liberated (Jaime 2008). This dilemma has been summarized as a "formulation of decolonization in which autonomy and self-determination are central to the process of liberation and can only be achieved through a self-reflective collective practice" (Mohanty 2003, p. 8). The process of decolonization,

like any transformation, must come from a reflective evaluation: "…self-reflexive collective practice in the transformation of the self, reconceptualization of identity, and political mobilization… [are] necessary elements of the practice of decolonization" (Mohanty 2003, p. 8). When individuals question the way society accepts "norms", stereotypes, negative or inaccurate generalizations, and deliberate lies about marginalized groups, they come to the point of interrupting the cycle of socialization (Harro 2000) and begin the journey toward decolonization. Our chapter seeks to push the reader to face his/her colonization, and challenge oppression through decolonization.

2 Methodology

Using autoethnography, we place center stage our voices as counter-narratives. Tomaselli et al. (2008) explain autoethnography as a way to capture multiple reflections, "We should not be embarrassed, ashamed, or tentative about what we are doing. Neither should we allow ourselves to be intimidated your conventional scientific peers and canonical adherents who may be unsettled by unconventional methods (p. 347). Autoethnography through a CRT and decolonization lens provides a space in which the marginalized and silenced can provide a counter-narrative and be validated.

The tone of our reflection is duo-ethnographical in that a series of discussions take place between two people where data is gathered, analyzed, deconstructed, and reconstructed (Norris and Sawyer 2012). Duo-ethnography is "a literary style that provides stories of insights containing theses and antitheses of two or more individuals between which readers can form their own synthesis" (Norris 2008, p. 235). According to Norris (2008), duo-ethnography is a "dialogical approach to meaning construction" (p. 235) as a form of counter-narrative that is grounded in experience and reflection. Our dual identities as Native women in higher education in the United States will serve as a paradox of multiple voices countering prejudice and microaggressions through narrative and discussion.

We, the authors, have had informal and formal conversations between September 2016 and December 2017 discussing issues and concerns regarding the microaggressions (Berk 2017) and prejudices we face in the classrooms we teach in or learn, at the hands of our colleagues, peers and the larger university community with which we struggle every day. We met at least once a month for 1–2 hours, which amounted to a total of approximately 20 hours. At these meetings, we reviewed our daily personal notes concerning interactions with colleagues and students, both positive and negative, around issues of race and gender. We discussed the challenges we faced over the past month and analyzed data from emerging themes which provided us with a clearer picture of our ideologies around microaggressions and decolonization. We have worked together through the McNair Program over the past two years and have come to know each other's values and beliefs on diversity, multicultural education, and social justice. The way we made progress over the last

two years has been ongoing, cyclic, and critical in nature. In particular, we have focused on: (1) talking about theories; (2) sharing particular incidences; (3) interpreting them from multiple perspectives; (4) asking why questions; (5) writing our stories; (6) bringing our written narratives to meetings to discuss them; and, (7) revisiting theories, re/telling stories, and discussing in a collaborative process (for background on this process, see Norris 2008).

Our hope in this chapter is twofold: to evaluate our experiences as Native women in higher education to analyze how these types of experiences impact our teaching and learning; and, to provide our readers with ideas and perspectives for decolonizing their classrooms.

3 Author Narrative

We are both members of Indigenous tribes in North America: Angela, a member of the Pit River/Valley Maidu Tribes and Taylar, a member of the Northern Arapaho tribe. What we have in common is that we are both Indigenous women. Though we differ in age by 21 years, our experiences and the impact they have had on our lives, have been similar. While Angela has faced instances of resistance and adversity far longer than Taylar, we both agree that our experiences have impacted us in parallel ways. We share stories from similar places in academia with similar particulars in the narratives. We desire to educate others and further constructive conversations about inclusion at all levels of education, and yet we are acutely aware of the millions of tiny cuts caused by the microaggressions we've experienced, which impedes our goal of educating others to be thoughtful and accepting. Keeping these realities in mind, the following is an excerpt of our co-constructive narratives. We take turns responding to a series of relevant questions—those responses are italicized—and then come together at the end of each question to reflect upon the harmonies of our responses.

Who are we? What are the challenges and successes that impact us daily in the academy?

Angela:

I am a mother, daughter, grand-daughter, niece, cousin, and friend. I am a Native/Indigenous woman, associate professor, educator, colleague, leader, scholar, traveler, community member and activist. This is only a selection of the multiple aspects of my identity. It is important to me to list some of the memberships I am honored to hold, but not in any lineal way. Each of my roles is equally important in the building of my identity and are intersected. The experiences I have help to shape who I am.

Each day I face challenges in the academy as a teacher, colleague, and community member. My most difficult challenges are with colleagues who, I believe, should be educated well enough or at least open-minded enough to be willing to learn from others as well as reflect on their own actions/words. It is disheartening when comments about having a "pow wow" or "too many Chiefs" are used without

forethought. The term Indian is also one I choose not to use for its misleading historical connotation coined by Christopher Columbus, yet so many of my colleagues use it without consideration to its history. Terminology can be one of the most harmful forms of microaggressions; the flippant nature of speaking without the thoughtfulness of how words might be damaging to others around. The worse is when the person using the offensive language dismisses my feelings about their hurtful rhetoric.

Students can be a challenge introducing new information to them, especially when that topic is counter to what they have learned in their formative education years or from family. Some are open and ready to learn new ideas and perspectives. Others are threatened and will resist through argument, personal attacks or acts of disrespect in the classroom. While these seem worse than those interactions I speak of with my colleagues, I am hopeful that they will process the information and maybe consider the counter-narrative either soon after the interaction or later in their lives. I have hope more of them will be impacted by the classes I teach than I am about my colleagues who seem to defend their "superior knowledge" or "long life experience".

The successes I feel I have daily are the Native student's lives I interact with, in our Native American Center. Or the random student in my class who expresses to me that the information they are learning in my class has opened their eyes and stretched their thinking. It's the colleague who is truly interested in hearing an alternative perspective on the term "pow wow" instead of meeting or those who realize the term Indian is not an acceptable term to use and ask what might be an alternative. The exchange of ideas and constructive dialogue on any day is a success.

Taylar:

I am multidimensional. Like you, I have many sides to myself. I'm a Native woman, a ranch kid from the middle of Wyoming, and an artist. I am a researcher, and a scholar, a community leader, and a dancer. I have dreams of having a family as big as the one I have now; I am an aunt to ten beautiful children, a sister to five siblings, a daughter to three, and a cousin to many more. I also dream of a more inclusive Wyoming community for the Indigenous people of this state, starting at a foundational academic level.

In my elementary school, I was a very shy girl with few friends who found a lot of solace in reading. Programs in speech therapy helped me with my lisp. I was tutored in math for the entirety of 5th grade. The structure of my years in elementary school in my formative years was a process of catch up with the other students. From public speaking to math, I was always a little behind. This changed when I joined after-school activities like Speech & Debate and Theater. I found ways to express myself through an inclusive group of the most diverse collection of friends in middle and high school. I even won a state speech & debate award 1 year for my dramatic interpretation of a woman from Bosnia who was sexually trafficked and abused. The complicated issues I could tackle in creative programs gave me a lot of confidence and eventually an acting scholarship.

Now I see more and more the issues that permeate institutions at a ground level. I witnessed white privilege first hand through my theater department and classes with students and professors who have very little exposure to Indigenous communities or people. Also, this lack of exposure and conversation, with people who haven't been acquainted with places like the Wind River Reservation, is where many became defensive instead of listening. This problem exists in all parts of the country.

The challenges that I face involve my peers and relationships with professors and directors in the academy. The successes come with every setback; I gain more hardened resolve to press forward regarding my Native identity, to become visible and vocal about my home on the Wind River Reservation and places like it. My biggest challenge is my community and family. So many of my friends, family, and peers ignore pressing issues that inform the lives of the Native people who live on the Wind River Reservation.

But through these challenges, I have gained friends, a more solid identity, and a drive to do good in the world, especially for fellow Native people around me at the University and home. The confidence I have now is invaluable; controversy has helped shape who I am.

Reflection analysis: We both have multifaceted identities and acknowledge the challenges we face in our classrooms, with our colleagues, friends and families. We share a common frustration with the way our expectations of those we love and work with, dismiss or resist understanding our concerns and feelings. Even with these frustrations, we find success in the resistance. The struggle makes us stronger because we have no other choice. We have to push through.

What are the cultural challenges that impact us daily in the academy through microaggressions?

Taylar:

Academically, I have been cast as a Native stereotype in a play, my ideas have been dismissed, and I have been told by classmates to not go to Standing Rock and other protests. I have been interrupted during presentations I have been asked to give, and asked "Why should I care?" when talking about my principles in discussions. As a woman talking about divisive issues, I can't count the times I've been interrupted, or had my words steamrolled over.

Personally, lifelong friendships have been put to the test, and we have gone our painful separate ways over egregious misconceptions, such as a differing in perspective over cultural Darwinism. This is the erroneous notion that "bigger and better" cultures engulf and assimilate smaller weaker cultures. This notion is everywhere in Riverton, Wyoming and permeates through conversation after conversation with friends and family. My mother has told me Standing Rock was a waste of time, and still brings up the uselessness of it all. She says useless because she has learned that fighting against these sorts of institutions, the development of a pipeline, for example, has historically been a losing battle for the Indigenous and she would prefer me to focus on getting a job after school. My father is an oil field man and has repeatedly told me I was wrong for going to protest that pipeline; it's his

livelihood he would say. After all, he's been in the oil fields for 24 years and provides for my big family with that money.

I hear all too often the derogatory terms and actions that further subjugate Indigenous peoples, even at the University: the use of the word squaw, the mocking of a Native American accent, the constant defending of my Indigeneity, and the passivity of professors. The passive compliance of professors of racist acts is the most hurtful thus far.

In the summer of 2016, I was asked to give a presentation about the Wind River Reservation to a group of my peers at the University of Wyoming. The Wind River is where I was born and raised, and my family had been in that area for four generations continuing the family tradition of cattle ranching and farming. To my surprise, not many people in the class knew we had a reservation in Wyoming. The professor, seeking to correct the class' collective blind spot, asked me to give a twenty-minute presentation for my peers.

Preparing for the presentation took about a week. I had all the important talking points about the Wind River Reservation I would share with the class. Generalities of where the Wind River is located, what tribes reside there, and a bit about headdresses, because one of my projects in that class had to do with headdresses and representation.

Public speaking in college was not a strong suit of mine for a large swath of time. Years in theater paired with speech & debate had groomed me to play a character when speaking in front of a large group. Shakespeare and musicals demanded me to be big and boisterous on stage, while academic presentations required a level of professionalism that I was not yet accustomed to because there was no character to play; there was only me. Nervousness set in quickly, especially with a subject having to do with where I was born and bred.

I feel I have a unique perspective on the Wind River Reservation being that my family has a long history of farming and ranching there. I'm also Eastern Shoshone on my Dad's side and Northern Arapaho on my mother's. I was excited and nervous to do a presentation on a subject that meant a lot to me.

The day of the presentation came, and I had brought beadwork from my uncle, as well as pictures of my home to share with the students. My voice shook as I talked, I stammered over my words, my face bloomed a deep crimson and felt hot to the touch. I looked around in that panicked way you do when you don't think anyone is listening. But I smiled and got through the worst of the jitters and ultimately felt good about what I chose to speak on. I got through most of my points, and finally questions from the audience. The topic of the Cleveland Indians came up in questioning.

Student (sitting in the back of the room): "Is it really that big of a deal?"
Me: I think so. You wouldn't like to be portrayed like that, would you?
Student: "Doesn't it show sort of an honor thing?"
Me: I don't see why it would honor us. Or why we, or anybody else, would want to be honored that way.

My cheeks were very warm, and my hands were visibly shaking, but I continued to smile and convey a sense of authority.

Two boys in the back of the classroom began speaking to each other in hushed tones as I was asked another question. At that moment, I heard them start tapping on the desk. Softly at first, then louder until it was unmistakable what they were doing. Using the desk as a drum, they began doing "The Tomahawk Chop." This is typically done in a stadium for a football team such as Florida State University Seminoles, Atlanta Braves baseball team, or the Kansas City Chiefs. Only, they were doing this funky offensive dance in the middle of my presentation. I remember my mouth being agape and my eyes widening.

The two boys only looked at each other laughing and talking while students laughed along. What was funny about the situation is still a mystery to me. Whatever false confidence I was trying to embody quickly fell away and died down with the classes laughter. Rage, but also helplessness set in and I looked at the professor. The professor didn't do anything. While I felt like it was my responsibility to take down these boys who offended my heritage, my home, and me, I was mostly hurt and in need of help, and I was profoundly disappointed when that help did not come. The professor did not laugh but seemed to be on autopilot while I filled out his lesson plan with a presentation that was very quickly spiraling into a nose dive.

Remembering how I felt being openly mocked in front of my peers was a formative moment in my academic career. Something about being Indigenous was inherently hilarious and needed no explanation of why the "Tomahawk Chop" was considered funny. Everybody understood this hilariousness, except for me. This microaggressive behavior had a huge impact on the direction I wanted to take the rest of my undergraduate degree. My undergraduate research exclusively deals with the Wind River Reservation and interactions between the Arapaho, Shoshone, and the non-Natives that live within the borders of the reservation.

This was also my favorite class in my favorite department. After this incident, I have had to do three other presentations in that room, remembering the whole time what it felt like to not be taken seriously. When I felt comfortable enough to speak about the incident, I remember talking to the director of the program a year after it happened. The director of the program offered apologies, but I could not help but feel like I was not being heard, again. As I walked out of her office, I didn't go back and started going more frequently to the Native American Center, because at least there I felt heard. This speaks to the need for there to be places for Native students, a place where concerns like this are understood and taken seriously.

Angela:

The challenges I face daily in the academy are similar to the little cuts from shattered glass showering over my head. In the safety of my own home, in the morning before I leave, I am on the mend and ready for another day. Over the course of my daily routine I endure comments, resistant students with a point to prove me wrong about diversity and Indigenous issues, the constant sexist/gender bias images and comments, the homophobic rhetoric tossed like snowballs in a fun game on the first snow, and the constant visuals of all of the above projected at me with force. By the time I return home to my safe zone, I am sore, stinging from lacerations and weak

from the barrage of microaggressions. I spend the evening each day tending to my wounds, preparing my children for the battle they either are fighting or will have to as men of color, and bandaging myself up for the next day, when it starts all over. Of course, some days I come home with fewer flesh wounds and yet never unscathed. It is this reason I continue to push the boundaries of those hurling insensitive/inappropriate comments or acts at those the aggressor sees as weaker or irrelevant. We have to fight the aggressor and the more of us who do, the more successful we will be in ending the ignorance of colonization and Post-colonial thought.

Reflection: Every day we are challenged with the microaggressions that face us in and outside of our communities. We agree that the resistance we experience from our peers causes us daily stress, but it's the resistance from our loved ones that test our very being and make us question our identity and convictions. The microaggressions can have lasting impacts how we resist the oppression of others and how we move forward.

What are examples of microaggressions we face daily?
Taylar:

College wasn't something I thought I could do for a lot of years. It was expensive, and I didn't think I would be successful. So, when I was offered a Theater Scholarship to attend a local community college, I thought perhaps I would give it a try. The theater had been a hobby of mine since middle school, and it's where I found most of my friends that I have to this day. It is also responsible for giving me the money I needed to prove I could thrive in college. In a lot of ways, acting felt like the only thing I was good at doing.

The director of the theater department had given me a chance to better myself. I had gotten scholarship money, and an outlet to direct and star in plays and get an associate's degree. I've even had my own one-act plays and skits produced at Central Wyoming College. The director had put me on promotional posters to advertise for upcoming plays, which was a fun and new experience and boosted my confidence. I found my love of Shakespeare with this theater troop and eventually was paid to perform Shakespeare around Wyoming. I found a lot of myself creatively those few years and I gained lifelong friendships through theater. These are fulfilling opportunities I would never have gotten to experience if the director hadn't given me that scholarship.

So, my last big production at the community college was The Music Man, 2014. I was cast as a verbose and fussy mayor's wife to act as comedic relief in the play, Eulalie Mackechnie Shinn. I had a giant fat suit, and huge greying hair and my stage make-up were exaggerated with age lines on my face. I screamed "BAAAAAAALLLLLLZAAACCC!" when it was my cue in one of the more iconic numbers, again for comedic effect. Eulalie Mackechnie Shinn was supposed to be a funny character to poke fun at.

In the play, and to my horror, there is a picnic scene where Mrs. Shinn is written in the musical to come out with a long headdress, followed by children with feathers in their hair. Mrs. Shinn decides to speak some "Indian-ese" to the audience in an

exaggerated manner, and the children follow suit. All for laughs and completely unnecessary.

While reading through the play before rehearsal, I had immediate grievances with my character having to wear a headdress and dance around like the worst Indigenous stereotype you can imagine. The scene was worsened by the fact this section comes right after a set change, so that it could have easily been omitted from the final performance. I was very vocal at first with my friends and castmates, but was met with two of the following comments:

Castmate: "It makes it better that you're Indian, right?"
Castmate: "I don't think they (the Natives) will come see the play anyway."

Community college was the biggest community theater option available in the area. I just didn't see why nobody else was upset at this mockery. This is a huge offensive scene for nothing but a cheap laugh. Riverton has a huge Indigenous population, of course there would be other Indigenous people in the audience. Wouldn't there be? And even if there were none, isn't it offensive to non-Native people too? Am I overreacting?

I finally decided to talk to the director a few weeks into rehearsal. Talking to my friends and castmates proved useless. Anytime I would bring up that this part was ridiculous, or I wasn't comfortable with doing it, my comments were always met with detachment. It was explained to me a couple times that "it's making fun of people who don't know anything about Indians." My response to that was, "Yeah, but do the people laughing know that?"

I approached the director and asked him if this offensive scene was necessary.

Director: "What do you mean?" He was looking at the stage.
Me: "It's just that we live on a Reservation and maybe it isn't so appropriate, plus I don't feel comfortable in that dress and headdress."
Director: "You don't have to wear the dress."
Me: "Oh, thanks."
Director: "Is that it?" He did not look at me directly.
Me: "Yes."
Director: "Alright, let's get on with the scene."

We got back to rehearsal.

Looking back, I don't know what else I could have done. I could have complained to the administration about how insensitive the play was, but then everyone would know it was me, I was the only one talking about it. This act against the production would be bad for the department that had already given me so many friends, resources, and money. I could have raised more concerns with my castmates, but they seemed detached and uninterested, and borderline annoyed with me raising the issue repeatedly. I was left to preform the scene as written and compromise my beliefs to save my position in the play and my scholarship to school.

This power struggle between my departmental colleagues and me is an example of the institution setting the rules of what is offensive and what is not, without considering the social implications of such egregious misrepresentation. The dismissive

attitudes I was met with is a representation of a colonial perspective. "The academy, as an example, perpetuates the notion that our stories, identity, culture, and experiences are not valid resources for knowledge; what we value most is dismissed as illegitimate and 'uncivilized.' (Jaime 2008, p. 2). My point of view focused on how the Indigenous of the audience would feel, and how I as an actor felt acting out very offensive material. Thus, the college was discounting my complaints because it would undermine the authority the department had as an institution that is not going to be swayed by the whims of the "minority".

While the theater is a wonderful place of self-discovery and creative opportunity for me, there was little talk about the Wind River Reservation. Many of the people who went to Central Wyoming College's productions did so as a form of escapism, while I now believe that a theater community willing to challenge racial divides when it is located in the thick of one of the most poorly represented Native communities would have been groundbreaking. Art as a radical change, and paving the way for real conversation. This is what I think a college art program should be about.

In the article, Introduction to Indigenous Performance's: Upsetting the Terrains of Settler Colonialism, Mishuana Goeman (2011) says, "Native performances imagine different set of power relations between Native people and settlers by presenting us with complicated vision that, rather than distance themselves from pop culture and its wooden Indian figures, cannibalize it, producing a visual sovereignty that deals with the hegemonic structures of settler societies" (p. 8). This idea integrates well into the literal performance of a damaging stereotype in the middle of Wyoming's reservation, and how willfully tone dead the arts can be to social change.

I still believe that scene was inappropriate and could have easily been cut out of the play without affecting the plot of The Music Man. Another castmate also tried to explain to me that all the children that followed me around during the picnic scene wanted time on stage and cutting this section would cut down on their time being a part of the play. And their parents who spent money on costumes would be upset that their kids didn't get more stage time. But, what keeps getting me is why would we want to teach the largely non-Native kids of Riverton, Wyoming that this is acceptable behavior?

Angela:

The following story is an example of one of my more painful experiences in the academy. This is particularly excruciating because my eldest son was a part of the group involved as well as 27 other Native high school students. Those I was charged with protecting while their families and community trusted me.

The Fantasticks

During the summer of 2017, our university hosted a group of 28 Native high school students from the reservation and Laramie for a week-long campus experience to recruit and encourage students to attend college. We were excited that the program we had such strong numbers of students in our inaugural year. The students would spend a week in classes, workshops, cultural events, lectures, etc., to

experience a little taste of college. They would stay in the dorms with roommates and eat in the cafeteria. All this would give the students a feel for the campus and life as a college student. The goal was to introduce the students to a university in a safe way, presenting it as less overwhelming and cold. We employed Native college students as mentors and dorm supervisors. Faculty and staff were brought in to support the efforts and introduce themselves to the students. Overall, the week was full of wonderful experiences, encouraging students in disciplines they expressed interest in pursuing.

One of the events we set up for the students was a play opening on campus as one of the summer series performances. The Fantasticks was opening at the end of the week. The producer and chair of the theater department offered our program free tickets for the opening night of the performance. The synopsis (StageAgent, http://stageagent.com/shows/musical/1377/the-fantasticks *Retrieved October 2017).*

*Whimsical, poignant, and romantic, The Fantasticks is an allegorical story that focuses on two young lovers, their meddling fathers, and the journey we all must take through adolescent thrills, the growing pains of hurt and betrayal, the highs of passion, the challenges of distance, and the agonies of heartbreak to discover how to truly love. In a theatrical and inventive fashion, our gallant and enigmatic narrator--El Gallo--introduces us to a pair of young lovers, Matt and Luisa, who experience the magical, moonlit phase of falling in love. For a time, romance seems perpetually exciting, and heroics seem always to save the day. However, El Gallo leads our young protagonists from the romantic moonlight into the harsh sunshine, where the weaknesses in their relationship are exposed, and the reality of the struggles and heartache love brings is revealed. With the understanding that "without a hurt the heart is hollow," Matt and Luisa manage to find their own identities, and in turn, to discover their strengths as a couple in times of both darkness and light. With the record for the longest American theatrical run, The Fantasticks is a gem of the American musical theatre. Featuring timeless classics like "Try to Remember" and "Soon It's Gonna Rain," this simple and beautiful ensemble piece is as beloved and as timely as it was when it opened over 50 years ago.The play is advertised on its official website as the longest running off-Broadway musical in history (*http://thefantasticks.com/webpages/media.html*). Without hesitation, we accepted the tickets and took the students to the play.*

As I sat and watched the actors play out the storyline, I realized how outdated the play was, and as a woman, how offended I was watching the way in which the young woman (16- years-old in the play) was being manipulated to fall in love with the 20-year-old boy next door. Additionally, the parents concocted a plan to have the young woman kidnapped by the "bandit" to get the young man to fall more deeply in love with her while saving her. In the play, after the parents hired the "bandit" (an actor by trade, with a Spanish surname, and when said out loud with a roll of the tongue, the mom swoons, imposing the stereotype of the "Latin-Lover") to stage the kidnapping, he enlisted the help of two other actors to play additional parts. While he is auditioning them for the scheme, they proceed to prove they have had

other roles like this one. The actors recalled all the roles they have played and how successful they were in each. At that moment, one of the actors pulled what looked like a handful of feathers from the wooden box center stage. I was sitting center stage in the front row next to the President of the university, her husband, my youngest son and a professor from our Gender and Women's Studies program. It was at this very moment when the actor presented the headdress and donned it on his head. There was a wave of gasps that rippled through the audience. The air in the theater felt distinctively cold and agitated. The entire section of our Native students was affected. The actor continued his bit by dancing around in stereotypical ways making inaccurate "Hollywood" sounds. From there it only got worse, the actors were hired. In the next scene, the three actors catch the young woman and man on a walk together. The actors come screaming out from behind the curtain making war-like sounds all wearing headdresses and fake buckskin clothing, "war-paint" on their faces carrying plastic blow-up toy tomahawks. The mockery of Native culture on display was overwhelming. It felt as though the scene lasted much longer than it really had.

The play continued for another couple of minutes before the curtain fell and intermission began. I turned to the president and her husband to see their shocked faces. The students had been stirring before the curtain came down, and yet they stayed in their seats. At intermission, the mentors and staff made a decision, per the request of the students, to take the kids back to the dorms. Six of our students chose to stay out of curiosity and interest in theater. The President's husband and I stayed with those students who wanted to finish watching. During the break the producer found one of our coordinators to ask how they were enjoying the show. He proceeded to tell her how offensive the plays content was to our students and that they made the decision to return to the dorms instead of staying through to the end of the performance. The producer was stunned and could not understand why they had left. When our coordinator explained the nature of our disgust, she seemed more offended than us. She thought it was a mistake to leave the play early, rather than stay through to the end. She felt the play was a time period piece and that the offensive parts could be "explained away" by watching the whole performance. I stayed for the whole performace and was even more offended by the end.

I was appalled, and yet somehow not surprised at the events of the play. Images like these are co-opted in popular culture and the media daily. Native people endure seeing and hearing their culture used for all sorts of advertising, films, television programs, sports teams and even in the classroom during certain times of the year. The microaggressions Native people endure every day challenge our identity, our connection to our culture and our place in the world. We have to be strong to face the resistance to our existence or that, like so many other things, will be taken from us as well.

The days following the opening of the show was riddled with Facebook posts, newspaper articles and radio spots talking about the Native students who "walked out" of the play. The Associated Student Body Diversity Officer posted a letter the night of the play explaining how disappointing it was to see the racism displayed in the play and that the Theater department should pull the show.

The Theater department published an article in the local newspaper defending their decision to choose and produce the play. Among other aspects of the letter to the editor, the Theater Department dismissed the claims that the play was inappropriate and racist, explaining that it should be viewed as a "point in time".

The use of "Indians" as stock characters, alongside pirates and bandits, as a shortcut for exotic and dangerous outsiders, is now coming to the fore as problematic. Whether it is unquestioned, as in Peter Pan productions the world over, or painfully obvious, as it was for our audiences on opening night, this kind of portrayal deserves consideration. In this case, it is an actor playing a two-bit actor playing a stock character from his traveling troupe, and truly reductive and indicative: a caricature. With historical productions, we see a "point in time" that is different from our own, and character portrayals that can be painful to watch for 21st-century audiences.

While, professionally, we are bound to present works "as written," and cannot take undue or illegal liberties with a script, we recognize that we failed to provide sufficient context for this scene and the play to prospective audience members. We immediately produced program notes for future performances to address this error.

We regret the discomfort that this scene in the opening night performance caused the Native American students and other audience attending, and honor the validity of their response and their protest. We are sympathetic to their perspective.

The cast and the crew were shocked and saddened and wished that they would have had the opportunity to have a dialogue with these students. We invite future conversations with all members of the community.

As a department, our primary responsibility is to support our students and their work. In a meeting with the cast members of the production, we discussed whether to close the show because of the prevalence of this issue in social media and the resultant newspaper article and how this might impact their commitment to the work and their performance. The performances scheduled for the state, sadly, will be canceled. We want to focus on the Laramie community, provide a time for dialogue and for people to have the opportunity to see the performance for themselves.

The performers' response was vehement and unified. "As actors, we stand behind the integrity of this production. It comes from a place of love. We look forward to sharing this beautifully simple love story with all of our audiences."

"The Fantasticks" is a show about love – the naive love that sees no flaws, and the world-wise love that comes from a mixture of experience and knowledge. We know that there are flaws in the play, but it contains a message of hope and inclusion, delivered through the simplest elements of theatrical magic. We hope you will feel the same.

We encourage you to support the company members in this production, and if you come, please understand that "The Fantasticks" presents elements that are clearly sensitive, but are not intended to offend. (para. 7–11).While the Theater Department acknowledged the perspective of those offended, they were quick to

defend their choice. We find that the response to these microagressions is almost always the "I'm sorry, but…" explanation. An aspect of this story the Theater Department failed to share in their letter to the community, is that the week prior to the performance and prior to the beginning of the summer institute my colleagues and I presented a two-hour workshop on best practices when working with Native students. In this workshop were several of the members of the production, including the Chair of the department and faculty member who invited the institute. I presented information on the ways that images and stereotypes hurt our people. In a conversation between the summer institute and the Chair during the intermission the night of the play, she admitted discussing with the director about the images and content in the play as to whether they should warn our program coordinator about the plays questionable scenes. Those involved in the play decided against sharing that information with us at that time. Instead, they handed out flyers at the workshop and encouraged everyone to attend.

The Theater Department failed to acknowledge the damage caricatures of Native people in our society –daily. They mentioned in their letter that Peter Pan is "unquestioned", as if people have not protested the scenes in the book, play or film. This is untrue and well documented otherwise. Walt Disney has done a wonderful job co-opting and exploiting Native culture, and other cultures, for their economic gain. Pro sports teams, elementary and secondary schools and universities (to name a few) depict Native people in derogatory, inflammatory and racist ways for their own economic and social gain. These institutions explain away the injustices with arguments about how they are "honoring" Native people, "it's just an image", "you are too sensitive" and (my personal favorite) "I have an Indian friend and he isn't offended". These responses are examples of the microaggressions Native people face daily through conversations with people in their lives, the dominant societal rhetoric and everyday images they pass by on the clothing of people around them or media outlets.

Reflection: We both have a deep appreciation for the arts. We also recognize that art and its interpretation are meaningful and different for all. Having said this, in both examples discussed the racist elements of the plays are tangential to the main storyline—and could have been dropped without jeopardizing the plays' integrity. Had those in charge of the plays had the foresight or sensitivity to interrogate and eliminate those racist elements, we could have escaped the damage. We do not argue that copyright issues apply to how a play is produced. If permission to change a scene was submitted to the copyright agency, then the possibility of changing the racist connotation could be addressed. Or, in Angela's situation, the theater department could have warned the summer institute of the content and allowed us to make our own decisions. In Taylar's situation, she could have made an informed supported decision to play a different role. Neither of these solutions addresses the real issue of racism. In our view, the theater departments could have chosen different plays and productions without the racist content. When classroom voices speak against such aggressions, it is important to consider those voices rather than silence or dismiss them. The images portrayed in both experiences send a message to the

audience that these stereotypes and generalizations are acceptable. This message is pasted through to children in the audience and community members who may also be teachers, that they can use the same images in their classrooms without being questioned. When our society accepts racist stereotypes in the k-12 classrooms we are teaching kids to take these values into society and use them.

How do the experiences with daily microaggressions impact our future in the academy? How does decolonization empower us and encourage us to continue the work toward transformative education for a diverse accepting society?

Taylar:

The only way out is through.

To keep moving forward with positivity and action is the best remedy to such microaggressive assaults. I do this by reminding myself of my mother and the hard life she has had to live. I want to make the world better for women of color because she has been treated so roughly, and so undeservingly, and I want to alleviate that sickness within her and others like her.

I do not use the term colonialization lightly, the hatred for the Indigenous is alive and well. And all too often we keep that hatred within ourselves. When it comes to my mother, the healing of a lifetime of mistreatment and hatred for herself and her indigenous roots is no easy task. She is angry, raw, and unhappy due to an innumerous amount of issues. Most of which deal with living on the Wind River Reservation and being a woman of color. Indigenous decolonization is a journey though these harsh realities and finding empowerment through controversy.

The greatest accomplishment I found during my time in the University is to be proud of my heritage. To be proud, and not ashamed to be Native. If I carry that with me enough, if I let it shine through, I see my mom take pride too. She starts to speak Arapaho to me and gives me fry bread recipes. Smiling she talks with pride about her mother, and her beautiful sisters. Through the academy, I have learned to take pride, and this pride has guided my mother and me through her darkest days.

To me this is what makes it easier to work past the microaggressions: the people we hold dear. Making a brighter future for those of us with complicated heritage, and confusing lives, who could be made happier through the good work many people do at universities. Transformative education is what my mother is going through when I speak to her about how proud I am of our Arapahoe roots. I am educating her to decolonize and love herself a little more every day. To remind her in the most gentle way I know how that it's okay to be from the Wind River Reservation and it's okay to be Arapaho.

The upshot of this positive notion is that going through controversy is the only way to end up moving forward. To get to a more diverse and accepting society (especially in the middle of Wyoming), there is going to be push back. The way to empowerment is to push back through many microaggressions and finding the strength to move forward. With more pride in our Native roots, and to dive into controversy head first for the people we love is the most decolonizing way of thought I can think of.

Through my continuing education, I want to focus on doing research with and for Native communities and disseminating what I find and learn to non-Natives who may not understand the challenges that many Native people face at the University. In my own life, I will continue to talk and advocate for my people and change minds one person at a time if I have to. I am a multidimensional person, and I believe through that, I can relate to and help change attitudes non-Natives have about Native people.

Angela:

Every day holds challenges, they may be wearing a different hat or coat, but they are similar. I face each day knowing I have to continue to educate others, help them on the journey toward understanding and acceptance. I do it for my kids, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so on. It is for them, to help create a world that they, hopefully, will not have to fight the same battles. I live for the glimmer of hope that my off-spring and theirs will have a safer, more accepting world to live in in the future.

Microaggressions can tear away the thin layers of protection we slip into each morning. This protective coating, most days, provides us with the ability to fight cultural discrimination and challenge the mainstream post-colonial mentality. Decolonization plays a key role in my life. I use it to guide me through my personal life and academic life. I am constantly reflecting on my own actions to ensure I am being thoughtful in my process and interactions with others. I try to believe in the best of everyone, yet I am a realist when it comes to change. Transformative action supporting diversity and positive change in the world takes time and a great deal of patience. I continue on because I have to, for my children, other Native people and for the future.

Reflection: Even though the examples and perspectives we have provided are only a fraction of what we have selected to share, these experiences can be generalized across the board with other marginalized people. The research and stories are out there, and they share similar accounts. Microaggressions exist and are damaging to everyone, the user and the receiver. K-12 and post-secondary educators have to educate themselves and become more reflective of their actions, this would be a start toward a better future for all kids. We will speak directly to this issue in the next section.

4 Narratives as Insight

The narratives we have shared here offer a unique perspective on the impact of microaggressions toward two Native women to challenge societal norms about diversity, and foster decolonization in an ongoing colonized society. In Taylar's description of her experience performing in the play, she talked about the silencing she felt when the director insinuated she was to perform or lose her scholarship. We

both shared extensive experiences concerning the microaggressions we face daily. The microaggressions come from a lack of forethought, reflection on one's actions and words, and above all, in some situations, the mere ability to care about the feelings of others to do what is right and just.

Each of the instances we shared above would have benefitted from having an ally who looked through the lens of decolonization. Professors have the responsibility to protect all of the students in the classroom, not a select few. K-12 educators have the responsibility to create and sustain a safe environment for all students, not just one group. The voice of a few or the marginalized should not be dismissed or silenced. The argument that "it's only one or two who are offended" or "are we supposed to change everything to not offend a couple" contributes to the silencing. The response by some who say, "they are always complaining about something; they're never happy" contributes to the continued colonization of our people. Situations like the ones we shared will continue to occur if we do not stand up and demand better of each other. Racism and discrimination hurts everyone, not just the victims. Our society becomes ill when we do not hold each other up and support one another. People of color and women cannot do this alone, we all have to work toward needing a more just and healthy society. Allies have to be loud in the conversation, not passive or silent. It should not always be the person of color in the room who has to call people on their prejudices.

We make the choice to speak back at the injustice and with it comes consequences in our academic and personal lives. We have, like so many other activists, lost friendships and family members to our convictions. These are choices we make in hoping for a better future for the generations to come. Hope is all we have in this endeavor: the hope that others will listen and that we all can have the constructive fruitful conversations leading to a healthier society. Those of us at the academic level can help instill change in the generations we are educating. Exposing our students in K-12 and post-secondary levels to multiple perspectives and dialogue will have a lasting impact on our society. Using supplemental materials from the voices of people of color and Indigenous communities in the classroom makes a statement by the teacher that it is valued information. As an educator, challenging the district endorsed textbooks as lacking/exclusions of multiple narratives is acting on the best interest of the students in the classroom. Without standing up and challenging the institutions to include a more inclusive education, we are failing our kids. K-12 teachers can make change, even if it starts in their classroom to include more colorful and true curriculum and instruction. We acknowledge that this method may not prove successful for all and it is a tough road to change, but it is a start and one that will have rippling effects across curriculum, instruction and ultimately societal mentalities. The voices of the silenced and dismissed are present, we just have to open our minds and ears to listen.

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Part II
Critical Research on Teacher Preparation, K-12 Classrooms, and Educational Change

How Preservice Teachers Transform Pedagogical Discomfort into Multicultural Knowledge for Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Suniti Sharma

Abstract This study examined how preservice teachers transform discomforting experiences into multicultural awareness for disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline. The study was conducted from 2016 to 2017 at an urban private university in the mid-Atlantic region. The design for the research draws from Yin's steps to conducting a collective case study and is framed by Zembylas' notion of pedagogical discomfort as a tool for advancing preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge. Participants comprised three preservice teachers enrolled in a 4-year teacher education program who volunteered to tutor students in the school-to-prison pipeline. Data consisted of a survey, individual interview, focus group, and weekly reflective journals. Findings evidence the discomforting experience of tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline served as a transformative tool for advancing preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge for developing pedagogies that are inclusive of the experiences of students' lives and histories.

Keywords Preservice teachers · Pedagogical discomfort · Multicultural knowledge · Teacher preparation · School-to-prison pipeline

Traditional discourses in multicultural teacher education emphasize inclusion; however, current political discourses on 'make America great again,' 'build the border wall,' and 'ban refugees and immigrants' are an attack on public education aimed at curbing the influx and proliferation of diversity across the United States (U.S.). Such attacks aimed at rolling back the civil rights gains of the 1960s are detrimental to racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity/students of color, who are already at the receiving end of school disciplinary policies and pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline. Statistics on public schools show the overrepresentation of students of color in disciplinary decisions, dropout rates, and the school-to- prison pipeline (Meiners 2007). Research shows that school disciplinary policies facilitate the

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school-to-prison pipeline, thus, contribute to the educational equity and opportunity gap between students of color and their White peers (Alexander 2011). Teacher educators and researchers committed to educational equity call on teacher education programs to rethink their coursework to include radical learning opportunities outside the classroom for preservice teachers to interact with students of color, expand their knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds, and recognize students' diverse ways of knowing as valuable pedagogical resources for developing inclusive classroom practice.

In response to the call, this paper presents research that explored how preservice teachers moved from the pedagogical discomfort of teaching students of color and tutoring students identified by public schools as 'at-risk' to developing critical multicultural knowledge for inclusive teaching that disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the pathway by which schools directly refer students to the juvenile justice system, use law enforcement present on school grounds for disciplinary action, or allow arrests on school campus under Zero Tolerance policies. Law enforcement, parents, and schools have authority to send children into juvenile detention which can extend from a few days to months and even years. Juvenile detention is a residential prison facility under the juvenile justice system where children age 7–18 years are sent for criminal behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, arson and robbery or status offenses such as truancy, incorrigibility and disorderly conduct (Krisberg 2005). Juvenile detention also houses adjudicated children who are waiting for a court hearing on their sentencing and rehabilitation. Some adjudicated children attend day-treatment programs under supervision of the juvenile justice system without being placed in residential detention. All juvenile prisons whether residential or considered day-treatment programs are required by the justice system to offer education as part of the rehabilitative process of being socialized back into school and society.

In academic literature, policy documents, social discourse, public school and the juvenile justice system, students in the prison pipeline are labeled 'youth,' 'at-risk youth,' 'juvenile offenders,' or 'detainees' and health, educational and rehabilitative supports for them are referred as 'youth services.' According to Ladson-Billings (2007), each of these labels evokes school failure, low performance, and assumptions about classroom behaviors that assign labels to children for life and absolves schools and society of all responsibility. Meiners (2016) argues that labels such as 'youth' and 'at-risk' are used to disguise the practice of racial discrimination targeting students of color. Meiners contends that childhood is a racial construct where the 'innocent' and 'safe child' is distinguished from 'youth' or 'at-risk' thereby using labels to deny some children their innocence, childhood, and the right to education by creating and justifying the school-to-prison pipeline. On a similar note, Harris (2017) argues that referring to racially and ethnically diverse students/students of color as 'minoritized' is part of the marginalization process constructed through hierarchies embedded in the language wherein the dominant group refers to itself as 'major' while all else is 'minor.' Mindful of Ladson-Billings and Meiners' critiques of labeling children, I use the term 'student/s' rather than 'youth' or 'at-risk' when referring to students in the school-to-prison pipeline. Following Harris,

I use the term 'students of color' and 'diverse students' rather than 'minoritized' when referring to groups that do not identify as White.

In the following sections, I begin with a review of research on the school-to-prison pipeline and multicultural teacher education. Next, I present Zembylas' (2017) notion of pedagogical discomfort to provide the conceptual framework followed by Yin's (2013) guidelines for conducting a collective case study which includes the institutional context and site of the research, participants, and data sources. In the next step, I analyze and interpret the data and summarize key findings. In the last section of the chapter, I discuss the implications of the study and conclude with some useful insights for teacher preparation, multicultural teacher education, and the movement to end the school-to-prison pipeline.

1 Literature Review

The first part of this section is a review of interdisciplinary scholarship from the field of education, criminal justice and psychology to highlight critical discourses on the school-to-prison pipeline in the United States, recognize literature that this research builds upon, and identify gaps that my study seeks to address. The second part of the literature review explores multicultural teacher education that my research draws from and advances through this study.

Statistics from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides a quantitative snapshot of the school-to-prison pipeline. According to OJJDP (Sickmund et al. 2017), in 2015 a total of 48,043 students aged 10–18 years were in juvenile detention, and 4100 were in adult prisons. Another 10,000 students were either on probation or waiting for adjudication, not counting students in adult prisons and detention facilities, half-way homes, or awaiting placement after sentencing decisions. The Children's Defense Fund (2011) records one student is suspended from school every 3.5 s and arrested every 32 s, with the result that every 20 s schools increase the drop-out numbers. Although the overall numbers of children in juvenile detention have dropped, the increase of school referrals that pushes students who are low risk out of school and into the prison pipeline is an educational crisis and a social justice issue that needs the attention of educators and policy-makers.

Research on educational policy, school discipline, and classroom practice highlight the crisis created by the public education system in facilitating the school-to-prison pipeline. A study on the relationship between student success and school discipline examined the academic records of almost one million seventh-grade public school students across Texas. The study concluded, 60% of those suspended or expelled were African American and Hispanic, penalized for minor classroom infractions in the name of Zero-Tolerance (Fabelo et al. 2011). A large-scale study on teachers' perceptions of school variables that influence effective teaching concluded, teachers' lack of knowledge about diversity led to the expulsion and detention of a disproportionate number of students whose cultural backgrounds did not

align with teachers (Coggshall et al. 2010). Research conducted by the American Psychological Association's Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) indicated Zero Tolerance policies meant to keep schools safe were being used across schools to push students of color into the juvenile justice system and did not make schools safer.

Several qualitative studies confirm many urban public schools that serve racial and ethnic diversity implement pedagogies of punishment for students outside dominant cultural norms (Baker 2013; Dohrn 2002). Equally concerning, schools use class stratification to deprive some children of an education (Lipman 2011), conduct racial, ethnic, and gendered profiling of students (Meiners 2007), and enforce moral policing based on gender and sexual orientation (Winn and Behizadeh 2011). Compounding the injustices, demographic trends reflect that most racially and ethnically diverse students attend public schools which are under-funded and serve low-income communities where proficiency levels in reading and math are below grade level (Anyon 2005). The achievement disparity is most visible between students of color, namely, African-American and Hispanic students who are at the lower end of the academic performance scale and their White peers with a similar divide between students from low-income families and those who are economically stable (Ansell 2011).

Besides the achievement disparity, researchers note there is a knowledge gap in teachers who come from White, middle-class families with little exposure to working with students of color. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), while student population is becoming increasingly diverse, in 2013 only 10% of teachers identified as racially or ethnically diverse and 90% identified as white. Educational research also documents many White teachers lack experience interacting with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, resist working in high need urban public schools, and harbor low academic expectations of racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity that puts some students at-risk for failure and sets them up for the prison pipeline (Hooks 2013). The overrepresentation of students of color in remedial and low-level courses, alternative programs, school disciplinary actions, dropout rates, and the school-to-prison pipeline have made critical and transformative change a social justice imperative.

Many teacher educators committed to transformative change recommend multicultural education for preservice teachers that prepares teachers in developing culturally responsive pedagogies for inclusive classroom practice. Multicultural education has been defined as a "philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity" (National Association of Multicultural Education 2011). The goal of multicultural education is to prepare teachers for social justice leading to student empowerment, educational equity, and societal transformation (Bennett 2001; Grant 2006). Achieving these goals is made possible when teacher education programs advance multicultural knowledge of future teachers and change their deficit perceptions of culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse students (Nieto 2000, 2009). Another recommendation for teacher education programs is to prepare teachers with competencies for making

content diverse rather than Eurocentric, and differentiating instruction based on learning contexts and cultural experiences of students of color (Banks 2001).

Acknowledging the work of multicultural education in the U.S. as conceptualized in the 1970s; several scholars note the absence of criticality and analysis of power relations in current understanding of multiculturalism in teacher preparation while others have challenged its foundationalism, essentialist trends and universal applications. Multicultural education is critiqued for being "very Western and American in spirit and intent" (Gay 2001, p. 41) as it has "privileged UnitedStatesian understandings" (Jupp and Espinosa-Dulanto 2017, p. 23) of how to respond to cultural difference. Speaking of criticality, Marx (2004) notes mainstream "multicultural teacher education does not go far enough to prepare white teachers" (p. 32). Instead, Marx urges teacher educators to take risks, go against the grain of the dominant discourse in teaching, and subvert white racism through "conscious and continuous effort" (p. 41).

Conscious efforts to subvert racism would include introducing experiences in teacher education programs that prepare teachers with critical multicultural knowledge for developing content and pedagogy that reflect a more complex understanding of race relations in contemporary political and historical contexts. Teachers with critical multicultural knowledge are able to analyze their perceptions of people of color, examine the production of knowledge in the classroom, and recognize how context and history structure privilege and inequality (Berchini 2016). Rather than accept official school knowledge as objective and universal, teachers with critical multicultural knowledge are praxis-oriented as they construct lessons out of students' knowledge and experience and design curricula inclusive of classroom diversity (Parker 2016; Seeberg and Minick 2012).

Proponents of multicultural teacher education call upon teacher preparation programs to offer coursework using discomforting experiences as opportunities for expanding preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge for developing an open mindset that is inclusive of diverse ways of knowing rather than limited to received knowledge in the curriculum (Trilokekar and Kukar 2011; Zembylas 2017). Specifically, scholars suggest pedagogical discomfort to "enhance the learning experience of students who struggle to understand social injustices" (Zembylas and McGlynn 2012, p. 41). Enhancing preservice teachers' learning experiences is made possible by engaging them directly with students who experience educational and structural inequities and helping preservice teachers develop strategies for processing difficult knowledge and complex experiences.

In response to the above suggestions, this chapter reports on research that examined the following questions: How does pedagogical discomfort serve as a transformative tool for advancing preservice teachers' critical multicultural knowledge for teaching K-12 diversity? How does preservice teachers' critical multicultural knowledge contribute toward disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline? What are the implications of pedagogical discomfort and critical multicultural knowledge for preparing teachers to teach in 21st century classrooms?

2 Pedagogical Discomfort as a Theoretical Framework

This study draws from Zembylas' (2017) notion of pedagogical discomfort as a framework for developing critical multicultural knowledge in preservice teachers by making discomforting experiences an intentional part of teacher preparation coursework. To evoke pedagogical discomfort, Zembylas, as well as other scholars (Parker 2011), advocate experiences that move preservice teachers outside their comfort zones of knowing and evoke feelings of discomfort which can serve as pedagogical turning points in advancing teachers' knowledge of self in relation to diversity. Evoking discomfort as a pedagogical practice is an approach to teacher preparation that combines multicultural and anti-racist education with critical inquiry into the production of knowledge valued in classrooms (Zembylas and Papamichael 2017).

Teacher educators who use pedagogical discomfort as a tool for preparing teachers with multicultural knowledge note that most educators emphasize the cognitive; however, emotional responses such as conflict, denial, and resistance to disruption of received knowledge, social norms, and long-held beliefs can also lead to transformative teaching (Britzman 2000; Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997). According to Britzman (1998), when preservice teachers grapple with the "*difficult knowledge*" (p. 117) of learning about educational violence in the curriculum, it is not enough to create the conditions of pedagogical discomfort. Rather, preservice teachers need strategies for processing knowledge and the pedagogical tools for interpreting their experiences and emotions as "efforts in trying to know" (p. 354–356).

Using the concept of pedagogical discomfort, Knight-Diop and Oesterreich (2009) explored U.S. preservice and in-service teachers as agents of change. They note that experiences that incited pedagogical discomfort created a third space for processing emotions that informed participants' knowledge, identities, and actions. Macdonald (2013) found that pedagogical discomfort afforded students and teachers teaching and learning spaces for discussions on racism, stereotyping of cultural groups, especially where socio-historical relations of power such as apartheid in South Africa (the context of her study) continue to shape everyday experiences. In the Canadian context, Parker's (2016) study of in-service teachers explored how immigrant teachers from India, Japan, and the Caribbean evoked pedagogical discomfort mediated by conflict-dialogue to challenge the status quo of received knowledge and validate diverse and global ways of knowing.

As seen from above research, pedagogical discomfort aims to unsettle preservice teachers' received/dominant knowledge and prompt them to examine how teacher identity and perceptions of race and ethnicity are constructed within unequal relations of power. According to Zembylas (2017), pedagogical discomfort aims to prepare preservice teachers with competencies for a) self-examination of one's beliefs, b) critical analysis of what counts as official knowledge in school curricula, and, c) co-construction of curricula grounded in students' ways of knowing and prior experiences. Building upon pedagogical discomfort as a theoretical framework, the next section of this chapter outlines the design for the collective case study which includes the author's positionality and professional background, and the context of the study.

3 Collective Case Study

3.1 Author's Positionality

This study is positioned within my personal and professional experiences as a woman of color and teacher educator in the U.S. The interest in preparing teachers with multicultural knowledge springs from my experience of teaching English as a Second Language in international classrooms and as an English teacher in the school-to-prison pipeline in the U.S. Other professional influences emerge from my experience with teaching at the U.S.- Mexico border serving predominantly Spanish speaking students, as well as my current position as faculty in a teacher education program at an urban university.

3.2 Background and Context

With approval from the Institutional Review Board, this chapter reports on research that is part of a larger study conducted from 2013 to 2017 and uses data collected from spring 2016 to summer 2017. The research team comprised a teacher education faculty, a criminal justice faculty, and a graduate research assistant from special education. The context of the study was a four-year teacher preparation program at an urban university in the mid-Atlantic region. Much of teacher education research is contextualized within traditional coursework and field placements; however, the context of this study is an experiential opportunity for preservice teachers to tutor in an after school program for adjudicated students – students in the school-to-prison pipeline. This opportunity was instructor-led and voluntary and not part of the teacher preparation required coursework. As tutors, preservice teachers who participated in this study worked with 19 African American and three Hispanic youth aged 14–17 years (secondary grade students) over the summer of 2016 tutoring four times a week for 4 hours each day. In the fall of 2016, each preservice teacher tutored for 45 min once a week.

A primary goal of this voluntary experience of tutoring was engaging White preservice teachers' with students of color who have been marginalized from public education, provoking self-reflection, and examining the dynamics of race, historical oppressions and teachers' classroom practice. This study acknowledges that teachers who identify as White are not a homogenous group to be viewed through a deficit lens as Lowenstein (2009) cautions. The study also recognizes that opportunities for White teachers to expand their multicultural knowledge by working with students of color in the school-to-prison pipeline runs the risk of reinforcing savior narratives and deficit perspectives that might enact the very issues being challenged (Emdin 2016; Berchini 2016). At the same time, the transformative possibilities of tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline have the promise of opening curricular spaces for debates and dialogues on the dynamics of race relations, savior narratives, deficit perspectives, and the marginalization of students of color in teachers' curricula decisions and processes.

3.3 Research Design

In designing the research, the study was guided by Yin's (2013) suggestions for a collective case study when researchers explore 'how' and 'why' questions to investigate a phenomenon within a natural setting using multiple cases as a group. This study examined how pedagogical discomfort serves as a transformative tool for advancing preservice teachers' critical multicultural knowledge for inclusive classroom practice that disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline. Yin notes that most collective cases comprise five essential features: (1) phenomenon under study is a collection or group of persons, places, events, issues, or problems; (2) the research is conducted in a natural setting or context in which the phenomenon occurs; (3) the inquiry involves in-depth data collection; (4) findings are compared across cases; and (5) differences, if any, between cases are noted. Accordingly, this study reports on three preservice teachers taken as a collective case bound directly to the cultural context of preparing teachers to teach in diverse K-12 classrooms.

3.4 Participants in the Study

Convenient sampling consisted of one middle school and two high school preservice teachers in their senior year in the teacher education program. All three participants were traditional college students between 19 and 23 years of age during the study. All three planned on teaching English; two are female, one male; all identified as White; none had been placed in low performing urban public schools in previous semesters; and, all identified as monolingual with little exposure to interacting with K-12 students of color.

3.5 Collection of Data

When designing a collective case study, Yin suggests multiple types of data to be able to compare and contrast across participants, validate findings, and draw thematic conclusions. Multiple sources of data were collected from spring 2016 to summer 2017. Data consisted of response to a multicultural awareness survey, a 45-minute individual interview, a focus interview, weekly journal reflections, and researchers' observations of the tutoring sessions. Grade based course assignments were not used as data. Multiple sources of data allowed for in-depth examination of participants' development of critical multicultural awareness across contexts. After transcribing, audio-recorded data were organized in a digital database along with a record of data sources, dates and duration of data collection, storage maps, coding processes, analysis, findings, institutional review board reports, and contact information of researchers with access to the data.

3.6 Analysis of Data

The primary source of data used for this study was gathered from three case studies of preservice teachers reported collectively as a unit of analysis. The analysis was ongoing and emergent following Yin's (2013) five steps to data analysis. The five steps are (1) identifying themes and patterns, (2) linking data to propositions in the reviewed literature and theoretical framework, (3) interpreting the data, (4) comparing and contrasting across participants, and (5) drawing conclusions. Accordingly, in the first step, data were sorted by discursive patterns and categorized under common themes across participants followed by connecting themes to propositions from the reviewed literature and theoretical framework. In the next step of the analysis, each theme was further examined for evidence of participants' pedagogical discomfort and multicultural knowledge. Content analysis of data from individual interviews and focus group provided descriptive information on repeated patterns to show the significance of specific recurring themes.

Findings were triangulated with multiple sources of data and analytical methods. All three researchers coded the data and continued to inter-code throughout the analysis to maintain reliability and internal validity through a continuous process of co-analysis. Once the coding was complete, a member-check with participants was conducted to verify researchers' interpretations of data as an opportunity to clarify, validate, or comment on the findings. In the next step of the analysis, two of the researchers double-coded each set of data, a process of revisiting the data to make comparisons between the initial and the final coding (Yin 2013). In the last step of the analysis, findings from the collective case were used for drawing conclusions. Key results from the study are presented in the next section of this chapter.

4 From Pedagogical Discomfort to Multicultural Knowledge

Findings reveal participants experienced discomfort at the thought of moving outside their cultural comfort zones when asked to complete their field experience in urban schools and work with students of color. Findings also reveal, when offered an opportunity to volunteer tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline, preservice teachers struggled with pedagogical discomfort but confronted their fears to actively engage in the tutoring experience. In the process, preservice teachers examined their deficit perspectives toward diversity, recognized the background knowledge and experience of students of color, and developed a deeper engagement with historical oppression, racism, and the dynamics of power in the classroom. As preservice teachers actively interact with students of color, they developed a complex understanding of students' ways of knowing and experiences and collaborated with students on making inclusive curricula decisions in the classroom.

4.1 Discomforting Experiences and Prior Beliefs About Diversity

Survey Data collection started with a multicultural awareness survey that consisted of responses to 10 statements measured on a Likert scale of 1–5 ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey aimed to gauge participants' prior beliefs about racial, ethnic and linguistic identity.

Of the ten statements on the survey, all three participants strongly agreed with the following statements:

> *I examine my attitudes and beliefs about students who differ from my race, ethnicity, class, and home language;*
> *I have the multicultural knowledge to teach students who differ from my race, ethnicity, class, and home language;*
> *I believe a teacher's role is to transmit established knowledge rather than produce new knowledge.* (Survey, March 2016)

Participants' response to the three statements above reveals a contradiction in how they view their role in the classroom as transmitters of received knowledge even as they assert they examine their beliefs about students who are different from them in race, ethnicity, class, and home language. In confirming their proficiency in multicultural knowledge, participants show a lack of critical self-examination and a need for a more in-depth pedagogical understanding of multicultural issues in diverse K-12 classrooms.

Journal Reflections Evidence of the absence of criticality toward their own identity, beliefs, and background knowledge is demonstrated in their reflections in Spring 2016 when participants were asked to select a school for their senior year's field placement from a choice of urban public, suburban, parochial, or charter school. Each week participants were given an open-ended topic or question to prompt reflection on critical multicultural issues. The following extracts are taken from participants' reflections in response to the prompt "Would you like to be placed in an urban public, suburban, parochial or charter school? Give reasons for your choice."

> *Lisa: I've never lived in the city, and I am afraid to go into an urban public school. As far as I know, they are unsafe, and the thought of doing my field there makes me nervous. I have little knowledge of students in urban schools so would like to stay in a suburban school.*
> *Celia: I am not too sure about working with African American or Hispanic students as I have little interaction with them. City schools have security, police officers walking around; students are detained all the time. Not sure if I can manage discipline issues so would instead be placed in a charter school.*
> *James: I do want to teach in schools where I can make a difference. I think it is going to be cool … teaching in an urban school.*
> *Lisa: I don't have anything against students from poorer neighborhoods or African American or Hispanic students. But I would feel very vulnerable. Last semester I was placed in a suburban school where the students and teachers were terrific. I would like to be placed in the same school as it reminded me of my high school.* (Journal Reflections, April 2016)

In the above data gathered from the weekly journal reflections the option of teaching in urban public schools is discomforting for participants as it meant going outside their cultural comfort zones. Faced with the possibility of field placement in urban schools, participants stated they felt "nervous," "vulnerable," "afraid" and underprepared for working in schools where most students are African American or Hispanic. As noted in the literature (Boler and Zembylas 2003; Zembylas 2017), participants respond with emotional stress when pushed outside their pedagogical comfort zones and show an unwillingness to interact with racial and ethnic diversity. Previous data from survey had shown all three participants held their knowledge and skills in high esteem. This is reinforced in journal reflections wherein participants exhibit deficit perspectives toward students of color whom they consider having "discipline issues," "unsafe," and "detained all the time." Reflecting stereotypical beliefs, participants assume all African American and Hispanic students are poor, undisciplined, a threat to school safety, and challenging to teach.

In a follow-up reflection prompt, "Do you see any connection between your choice of field placement and reinforcement of racial segregation?" participants justified their decisions by stating urban schools lacked resources but did not link school funding to historical, racial, and structural inequity. At this point, it was unclear whether participants lacked critical knowledge of structural racism or did not have the language or experience to speak about educational inequity. Being urged to speak about their teacher identity in relation to students of color, all three participants had a "pedagogical meltdown" (Britzman and Pitt 2004 p. 358). Participants became defensive stating "I don't see myself as white, we are all Americans first," and denied race or color altogether stating, "It's not about black or white, it's about treating children equally." One of the participants brought up meritocracy stating, "My parents worked hard and expected me to work hard, so I don't think I'm privileged" while another stated, "Everyone should be working hard, period."

According to one of the researcher's observations, participants were comfortable discussing race issues in course readings of Delpit (2006) and Kinloch (2009), but their journal reflections show that when it came to actual experience, participants chose avoidance when "encountering the self through the otherness of knowledge" (Britzman 2004, p. 354). As noted in the literature, multicultural teacher educators encounter challenges when leading critical discussions aimed at deconstructing privilege embedded in white identity and using discomfort to disrupt preservice teachers' deficit perceptions toward students of color (Berchini 2016; Flynn 2015; Marx 2004). Aligned with the literature, participants struggle to acknowledge white privilege, use race-evasive strategies or exhibit color-blindness (Jupp 2013), and go through phases of resistance and denial (Marshall 2015). Some participants rationalized racial inequity as a system of meritocracy and hard work rather than challenge white privilege (Castro 2010).

Based on their research, Zembylas and McGlynn (2012) suggest that in such situations, sustained class discussions combined with non-traditional experiential learning are pedagogical tools for provoking preservice teachers to examine their own identity and knowledge-systems they take for granted. Preservice teachers

need both the conditions for such experiences and the strategies for interpreting their discomfort when discussing historical oppression experienced by people of color. Accordingly, participants were offered an opportunity to tutor students in the school-to-prison pipeline – an experience outside their social and pedagogical comfort zones; but one with transformative possibilities.

4.2 From Discomforting Experiences to Awareness of Multicultural Issues

At the end of April 2016, participants volunteered to mentor and tutor students in the school-to-prison pipeline through the summer; an opportunity that is not part of traditional teacher preparation coursework. Through weekly reflections in the summer and a focus group midway through tutoring, three themes emerged. The themes showed tutoring led to participants' (1) increased self-examination; (2) direct engagement with the historical knowledge of race in relation to power in the classroom; and (3) a deeper understanding of how to design inclusive curricula that connect with students' experiences.

Focus Group The conversation below is taken from a focus group in July 2016 after 12 weeks of tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline.

> *James: I understood the theory part of culturally responsive teaching but needed more experience with actual practice in the class. So tutoring students is the best experience of my life. I am learning so much about the students and who they are. I empathize with them. Get this: this one student takes care of his siblings, works a part-time job, has no father, has managed to go to school on his own, and loves to read. I did a reading interest inventory, and he loved science fiction and knew every book on science fiction. That's what we should use in the English class. This other kid loves sports so we talked about games and it was a real aha moment for me.*
>
> *Lisa: They learned how to design and read global maps, and I learned a lot about their lives and myself too. I'm so glad I volunteered to mentor and tutor. I don't feel nervous about teaching African American anymore... The thing is to listen to them. Talk with them, share with them, not talk down. I was surprised how well they are doing. All four students were expelled from school for bad behaviors. That's so unfair.*
>
> *Celia: I agree…Students should not be penalized in school for speaking Ebonics or Spanish. I feel as if this is more of a race thing than a language thing. Standard English, ESL, ELL, emergent bilingual…so much politics.* (Focus Group, July 2016)

The above extract shows that in comparison to data collected before tutoring, there is a marked shift in how participants think about school knowledge, connect individual student experience with broader multicultural issues such as language and power, and reveal a growing awareness of the role of policy in shaping what counts as knowledge in the classroom. Zembylas (2017) notes that pedagogical discomfort is useful when preservice teachers are forced to encounter knowledge that differs from the knowledge they take for granted. Similarly, Trilokekar and Kukar's (2011) research provides evidence that when preservice teachers are pushed outside

their emotional and experiential comfort zones, the ensuing discomfort also serves as a powerful tool in advancing teachers' multicultural knowledge of how oppression plays out in classroom practice. In accordance, participants in this study show a degree of criticality in questioning language policy as a racialized text wherein Standard English is privileged over Ebonics or any other global variation to the norms of language.

Journal Reflections Journal reflections indicate that after working with students in the school-to-prison pipeline, some of the participants were more inclined to critical analysis and questioned how knowledge is produced and legitimized within hierarchies of domination such as race, class, and language. Participants' reflections also evidence their critical ability to connect theoretical understandings of multicultural issues with the pedagogical praxis of building upon students' ways of knowing. For example, excited and open to students' ways of knowing, participants noted in their journals: "Today my students wrote about their lives in haiku…such smart kids!" "These two kids are from Guatemala and Honduras. They speak English, and Spanish…such talented families," and "Wow, this student can draw, write a poem that goes with it, and rap to it. Then he added some dance moves. I couldn't do that!" This openness to different forms of knowing was in clear contrast to how they had previously viewed students as "challenging," and "with discipline issues."

Journal reflections also reveal all three participants were troubled by systemic inequities that shaped students' lives and discussed the contradiction embedded in the fact that "smart and talented" students who brought diverse knowledge to the classroom were labeled 'at-risk' and marked for failure. One of the participants mulled over the "unfairness" of sending students in the prison pipeline while another questioned how "students are blamed for their history" and excluded from educational opportunities. As substantiated by multiple sources of data, first-hand knowledge of the educational experiences of students of color gave preservice teachers more profound insights into the systemic reality of race, class, and language that positioned some groups of students outside dominant norms in school policy and classroom practice and into the school-to-prison pipeline.

4.3 Critical Multicultural Knowledge for Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Findings in this section are based on data from journal reflections, individual interviews and researchers' observations of tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline. While the reflections provide evidence of participants' changing thought processes over a period, the interview conducted in spring 2017 after the tutoring data show participants self-reflexivity toward their own beliefs and perceptions, how multicultural knowledge affected classroom practice, and how their transformative pedagogies disrupted the school-to-prison pipeline.

Journal Reflections In their journals, participants recalled their earlier dismissiveness when it came to discussing racial issues and acknowledged that colorblindness functioned to privilege their background knowledge and cultural beliefs. One of the participants stated, "It is not easy calling prejudice out" while another acknowledged, "I thought racism had to do with how we interact with people, not how I interact with knowledge." Regarding participants' classroom practice, there was a sense of excitement and new confidence in participants' ability to interact with diversity in students' ways of knowing that challenged their thinking. One of the participants noted in her journal, "I am more confident about teaching in an urban school with African American and Hispanic students. I'm already thinking of ways to create my teaching material that students will relate to…no prison for my students!"

Individual Interviews During individual interviews participants revisited data from the focus group interview, read the researchers' interpretations of the data from the focus group and journal reflections and were asked to comment. Each one of the participants became introspective about their prior beliefs and attitudes saying, "I've learned so much," "I don't think I was thinking things through in terms of racism and my identity," and "I thought everyone should be treated equally, now I understand equity is more important than equal treatment." An important admission was, "frankly, I didn't know how to identify bias in the classroom" and "I'm beginning to see how the school curriculum is white not colored. But I can change that with my pedagogy, and students can help me with this." While more open to critique, participants' insights connecting the lives of students in the school-to-prison pipeline to broader issues of race, academic ability and language sat uneasily with the acknowledgment of their complicity in perpetuating inequities.

Data from individual interviews supported participants' openness to students' ways of knowing as they began to change their belief that a teacher's role in the classroom is to transmit knowledge rather than coproduce knowledge. Another significant change was how participants connected the experience of tutoring to their future professional plans. This was evident in the interview conducted in spring 2017. When asked to highlight a specific experience during teacher preparation and outline their plans for teaching, participants gave the following responses.

James: I just interviewed for a teaching position in a public school smack in the city. This decision is the result of tutoring at the juvenile prison and getting to know students. I want to know more about students and stay informed about how to keep them in school.

Celia: I think the highlight for me was teaching students in the juvenile prison. They were so smart and talented. Because of that experience, I want to teach in the city, understand how to help kids, and then teach in another country and gain global experiences. My plan is to get some practice teaching in a multicultural or cross-cultural context – a school in Equador.

Lisa: I don't have one experience that stands out…Earlier, I didn't want to teach African American students… I didn't feel confident. I have learned so much about myself and about students who have not grown up like me. I want to be that kind of teacher who will never send students into detention. (Individual Interview April 2017)

Participants' interviews reflect critical changes in their perspectives toward students of color and their background knowledge and experiences. Participants revealed that in spite of evoking discomfort, tutoring students in the prison pipeline was one of the highlights of their teacher preparation and played a critical role in how they viewed themselves as critical multicultural teachers and advocates for inclusive curricula and pedagogical diversity. Experiential learning in non-traditional contexts such as tutoring students of color in the prison pipeline added a critical dimension by removing preservice teachers from the familiarity of their daily interactions necessary for processing new knowledge and gave them transformative tools for the inclusion of racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity in classroom practice. The challenge and promise of tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline was a shared experience that was also an opportunity for preservice teachers to collaborate as a professional learning community.

5 Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

Findings from this study have implications for preparing teachers with critical multicultural knowledge for teaching diverse students/students of color without recourse to the prison pipeline. This study demonstrates that preparing preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills for disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline involves going beyond traditional teacher preparation to offering radical opportunities for effecting transformational change. Non-traditional experiences such as first-hand experience tutoring students marginalized from public education are radical opportunities when integrated with field-based approaches to teacher preparation rather than optional add-ons outside programmatic requirements. The complexity of preparing teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work in diverse school contexts call for teacher educators to go beyond traditional teacher preparation curricula and field experiences and engage preservice teachers in professional practice in unconventional classrooms with a view to adding criticality to their multicultural knowledge and pedagogical competencies. Experiential learning in unconventional classrooms and school sites offer opportunities for interacting with students who are most affected by policies that have become negative labels for diversity such special education, English language learner, and school disciplinary measures.

Discomforting experiences offered preservice teachers opportunities for examining their own beliefs in relation to diversity and broadening their multicultural knowledge useful to developing inclusive content and pedagogy. The goal of pedagogical discomfort was to incite critical reflection as preservice teachers processed complex knowledge, analyzed their own experiences, and thought about their developing teaching philosophies and pedagogies as an ongoing process of advancing critical multicultural knowledge for teaching students in diverse K-12 classrooms. When future teachers move outside their comfort zones of knowing, they rethink

their role as teachers, take ownership of their choice of content and pedagogy, and play a more active role in effecting transformative change.

This study has implications for critical multicultural teacher education on many levels. First, this study suggests teacher educators rethink their clinical and out-of-class experiences that move preservice teachers from personal knowledge to collaborative construction of multicultural knowledge as they transition from being a class of preservice teachers to professional community of teachers who support and learn from each other. Second, pedagogical discomfort that emphasizes theoretical understanding combined with experiential learning offers preservice teachers opportunities to challenge assumptions about students whose background knowledge is different from their own. Third, innovative pedagogical approaches that are not traditionally part of teacher preparation such as tutoring students in the school-to-prison pipeline create spaces for preservice teachers to connect multicultural knowledge to teaching practices that respond to demographic changes in the classroom. Fourth, preparing teachers for teaching diverse students implies rethinking school policy to be mindful of historical oppression and structural inequities so that teachers with multicultural knowledge implement classroom practice that is socially just without the option of the school-to-prison pipeline.

While this study's 'success' narrative provides strong evidence that pedagogical discomfort plays a crucial role in developing teachers with critical multicultural knowledge for teaching K-12 diversity in 21st century classrooms; findings also raise questions that might be explored in future research. Rather than generalize from three preservice teachers, future research on a larger sample might shed light on new understandings of typical and atypical responses critical to multicultural teacher preparation. Findings in this study evidence the positive role of pedagogical discomfort as a transformative tool; at the same time, a study of atypical responses might delineate responses from preservice teachers whose experiences might complicate their response to diversity. While this study involved tutoring male students of color, the inclusion of female students might deepen preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge of how the intersection of gender with other cultural differences plays out in schools in relation to the school-to-prison pipeline.

In addressing some of the limitations of this study and advancing critical multicultural education, the following recommendations are suggested for teacher preparation programs and educational research:

- Include radical opportunities for experiential learning in teacher preparation coursework
- Conduct longitudinal studies of classroom teachers' use of critical multicultural knowledge in classroom practice
- Research how teachers of color respond to and understand critical multicultural knowledge for teaching in diverse classrooms
- Implement school policy that bridges the gap between multicultural teacher education research and current classroom practice

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Bridging the Gap Between African Refugee Parents and K-12 Teachers: Expanding the Meaning of School Diversity

Wangari Gichiru

Abstract This chapter explores ways to bridge the gap between African refugee parents and US American teachers and expands the meaning of family diversity in K-12 school contexts in the United States (U.S.). Using phenomenology as the research methodology, the chapter is framed by the notion of cultural capital as coined by Bordeaux and applied by Lareau. Participants comprised 16 African refugee parents resettled in the mid-West and teachers from public schools attended by newly arrived African refugee children. The study aimed at understanding how African refugees families experience public schools in the U.S. so that families and schools might work together in bridging the gap between them. Findings indicate African refugee families complicate the notion of diversity, which goes beyond race, ethnicity, class, and gender to include differences in perceptions of family structures, interactions and processes as well. Differences in expectations in the role families play in their children's education, the role that teachers play in assisting children with school work, and the role of schools in resettling parents and children into school culture add to the gap between African families and public schools. This chapter contends that with increasing diversity in public schools that now include refugees from various parts of the world, there is a critical need for the teaching community to develop nuanced dispositions and understandings of family which goes a long way in providing equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Keywords Diversity · Teachers · Parental involvement · Teacher expectations · Family · Refugees

In recent years, the United States (U.S.) has seen significant demographic increase in the number of African immigrant refugee families adding to the increasing diversity in K-12 schools. Despite the demographic increase of African population in the

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U.S., their children remain an underrepresented minority group in K-12 education and in teacher preparation curricula (Harushimana 2007). For recently arrived immigrant refugee population and the schools their children attend, there are challenges on both sides that need to be addressed. African immigrant refugee families encounter challenges on many levels. First, families encounter challenges when they are forced to move from one country to another and work through cultural hurdles such as learning English in their new environment. Second, many refugee families experience economic hardships that accompany involuntary resettlement as they move from town to town trying to find work and reconnect with lost relatives (McBrien 2005). Third, most refugee families who have involuntarily moved out of Africa are survivors of war, disease, poverty, and economic exploitation whose experiences are not fully understood under the general category of 'refugee' (Harushimana 2007).

In addition, families encounter intergenerational conflict between refugee parents who wish to preserve the traditions and values of the home culture and their children who are more easily socialized into their new environment at school and outside the home (Morrow 1994). Schools add another layer to family stress as parents try to get familiar with the culture of public schooling in the U.S., expectations of teachers, and discriminatory generalizations that define school perceptions of refugees and racial minorities (Obiakor et al. 2000).

For schools, the first challenge emerges from the need to provide quality education for all children, including recent arrivals into the country, by facilitating constructive participation of immigrant parents and improving communication (Ladson-Billings 1995; Roy and Roxas 2012; Vera et al. 2012). The second challenge emerges from teachers' attempts at balancing the demands of state accountability and standardized testing with the needs of students who are learning English as a second language and adjusting to bilingualism. A third challenge is organizing the time, place and expertise for professional development of teachers so that they acquire intercultural competencies for working with recently arrived immigrant families and develop pedagogies suited to the learning needs of all children.

According to Ladson-Billings (1995) there is a need for schools to match the home and community cultures of students of color with teachers who are themselves colored or have the competencies for developing culturally responsive pedagogies rather than reproducing social inequalities. Ladson-Billings rejects the one-size-fits all model of traditional pedagogy wherein students of color are constructed as the 'other' by virtue of their race, ethnicity, language, or social class reinforced in the name of *meritocracy*. When teachers are unaware of the cultural background or the historical experiences of students of color, their education is compromised as schools expect all students to learn from pedagogies grounded in the dominant cultural knowledge. This gap in cultural knowledge adds another dimension to the complexity of diversity in K-12 classrooms where teachers are not familiar with the experiences that accompany refugee movement across continents and subsequent upheavals in the lives of those affected by it.

Cognizant of the gaps between recently arrived African immigrant refugee parents and their children's teachers, many scholars call for programs and strategies to

facilitate communication between diverse parents and the schools that their children attend (Roy and Roxas 2012). Scholars also call for closing the gap between K-12 immigrant students who are placed in English language classrooms and special language programs and their teachers who lack cultural knowledge of the diverse communication patterns among families, therefore, are unable to develop pedagogies that align with students' learning styles (Bazile 2003; Szente and Hoot 2007). According to Turner-Vorbeck (2005), it is critical for schools to expand their knowledge of diversity among families and develop a nuanced understanding of parental roles in families.

In K-12 classrooms, diversity is understood as difference in race, ethnicity, class, and gender as listed in school policy and reflected in many educational texts used by teachers. Turner-Vorbeck (2005) notes, schools rarely go outside these four categories to expand how diversity is understood, thereby, excluding diversity among families from school curricula and pedagogical considerations. This makes it necessary for teacher education programs to offer future teachers and in-service teachers opportunities for developing a more complex conceptualization of diversity that considers the multi-layered, often changing diversity of structures, narratives, and processes within and among recent immigrant families. Equally important, how schools work to close the gap between immigrant parents and their teachers have implications for the academic success of immigrant children and educational equity across education.

With this in mind, in this chapter I report on a study that (a) examined how African refugee parents and US American teachers communicate with each other, and, (b) attempt to find ways to close the knowledge gap between public schools and diverse African refugee families. In what follows, I review literature on education of immigrants and African refugees' acculturation and adaptation to school culture. In this section I also discuss the importance of cultural capital in family-school relationships and how cultural capital influences parental interactions in schools. Next, I elaborate on the notion of cultural capital as the theoretical framework and the use of phenomenology as the mode of inquiry to conduct the study. Subsequently, I present the findings from the research followed by a brief discussion on the implications of the study.

1 Review of the Literature

This review draws from teacher education literature to point to the importance of schools as not only offering the ideal vehicle for adaptation and delivery of academic and emotional support for refugee children, but also as being key to the resettlement process of newly arrived immigrant children. It also draws from the work of sociologist William Julius Wilson by drawing a parallel on his discussion on poverty among African American population and the poverty experienced by many refugees especially in the initial years of resettlement. The literature review also indicates some gaps that my study hopes to address.

The importance of schools as a cultural site is critical because the success of refugee students depends on the school environment, how well a school is organized, its relationship with parents and the community, and how teachers interact and instruct students (Brewin and Demetriades 1998; Goldstein 1990; Hamilton 2004). Many African refugee families must negotiate the culture of formal education, including the norms of family and what counts as diversity in US schools. This negotiation may be complicated by their status as refugees, implying involuntary immigration, and a long history of trauma that results in reducing parents' capacity to be stable supporters for their children (McBrien 2005).

Wilson (2012) documents most African American families live in high poverty segregated neighborhoods and most African refugees live in the same or similar neighborhoods. The challenges of living in high poverty segregated neighborhoods, combined with the economic hardship that accompany many refugee families is further complicated by the socialization process of understanding differential hierarchies and cultural norms of their adopted country (Wilson 2012). With many refugee and immigrant parents struggling to adapt to their new culture, navigating the culture of public schools is another challenge that takes time to resolve as families and schools begin to understand each other and the role each plays in children's education.

A major gap that seems to persist is how parents and teachers understand parental involvement in school processes and the education of children. Despite the general agreement that parental involvement has positive consequences (Cheung and Pomerantz 2012), many schools claim getting some parents involved is a major challenge and becomes a major obstacle in children's educational success (Malone 2017). While schools feel that some immigrant parents are less involved, parents express a lack of clarity in the kind of involvement schools expect (Sibley and Brabeck 2017). Educators and parents have put forth various reasons hindering involvement including parents feelings of being unwelcome to school activities and failure of teachers to offer specific suggestions to parents on how they can help their children (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005). When parents and schools have different understandings of what constitutes parental involvement and do not communicate effectively to discuss the issue, there is a breakdown in parent-teacher relationships leading to misunderstandings, mistrust, and lack of communication which has consequences for children's academic success (e.g. BRYCS 2007; Jupp and Luckey 1990).

Research shows that teachers' perceptions of children and their families contributes toward the gap between African refugee families and the schools their children attend (Hamilton 2004). Teachers as well as school personnel play a role in school practices that may lead to marginalization of immigrant and refugee students. Teachers' expectations and perceptions of their students shapes classroom pedagogy that reflect differential teaching behaviors that negatively impact some students (Lee 2002; McBrien 2005; Texeira and Merchant 2002). Many well-intentioned teachers, who lack knowledge of cultural diversity, misunderstand and misinterpret immigrant families' attempts to succeed in their new environments and fail to attend to the learning needs of all children (Hones 2002; Lee 2002; Nderu 2005).

Factors such as lack of cultural capital, low social economic status as well as the emotional and mental health of parents who have experienced involuntary immigration affect the degree and nature of parental involvement that does not match school expectations and has consequences for children's academic outcomes (Garcia-Coll et al. 2002). In this context, other contributing factors that shape African refugee children's academic outcomes are families' lack of cultural capital and limited English speaking skills of parents (McBrien 2005). In a study on parental involvement of Somali parents in the education of their children, Nderu (2005) found Somali refugees are newcomers in the U.S., many are unsure of their roles within the education domain, and most lack cultural capital. At the same time, Nderu notes that in spite of little cultural capital in their new environment, Somali parents are extremely supportive of and value their children's education.

The above literature highlights the important role that schools and teachers play in the resettlement process of African refugee families through the education of their children. Current research highlights the gap between African refugee families and public schools; however, there is little research on how a nuanced understanding of family diversity might contribute toward bridging the gap between parents and teachers. Many researchers have called for studies that expand the meaning of family diversity by exploring family narratives of new immigrants and increasing teachers' empathetic awareness of diversity among families (Turner-Vorbeck 2005). In response to this call and motivated by my professional and personal interest, this study explores ways to bridge the gap between newly resettled African refugee parents and public schools that their children attend.

1.1 My Position as a Researcher

As an African immigrant on one hand and an educator in the U.S. on the other, my experiences have positioned me to empathize with parents and understand the challenge for teachers. My experience as an African immigrant resonated with some of the experiences of the participants in the study; however, African refugee experience in the U.S. offers a unique window to the world of diversity in and outside education. The refugee experience and challenges that accompany the status of resettling under refugee status, combined with navigating school culture, made the study more compelling as an educator – how do recently arrived African refugees experience the phenomenon of navigating public schools in the U.S.?

A strong motivating factor in the study was to close the gap between African parents and US teachers as both groups have a shared concern of how to help new immigrants navigate schools successfully. I also realize that the experience of African refugee immigrants in the U.S. and the education of their children is an undertheorized area of research; therefore, it was of utmost importance to me that this study be meaningful to all the participants in the study. My study draws from van Manen (2007) who describes the role of the researcher in a phenomenological study as "pathic: relational, situational, corporeal, temporal, actional" (p. 20).

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter is framed by Bourdieu's (1977) notion of cultural capital as critical to establishing and sustaining close family –school relationships for attending to the academic needs of all students. Bourdieu explains that cultural capital is reflected through signifiers such as language, customs, life-styles, and behaviors that produce social class positions. These signifiers are passed down through the family and social institutions such as education. Speaking in the context of African refugee experience, Lareau (2015) draws from Bourdieu to state that cultural capital constitutes knowledge about institutional facts, norms, familiarity with social processes within schools, and understanding of how schools work that parents would need to know and assimilate to in order to assist with the educational processes of their children.

In a longitudinal 20-year study on the upward mobility of adults, Lareau (2015) found that cultural capital affected how participants from differing class backgrounds navigated key institutions. She found that middle class young adults had more knowledge than their working class poor counterparts on the cultural norms of institutions and how to successfully navigate the culture of schools. She also found that young adults with cultural capital asked for help; therefore, were successful in having their educational needs met by institutions. On the other hand, Lareau notes, the working class was less knowledgeable and more frustrated by institutional bureaucracies which includes public education. According to Lareau, there is a discrepancy in the level of school involvement between working class parents and upper middle-class parents with working class parents being less likely to participate.

In a study focused on how individuals activate social and cultural capital when working with schools, Lareau and Horvat (1999) found that moments of inclusion occur when marginalized parents use their cultural capital and successfully participate in school interactions and activities and are able to negotiate the school system. On the other hand, moments of exclusion occur when parents who identify with the working class feel their lack of cultural capital in their new social environment and feel marginalized. In addition, given that many African immigrant families are now in a new context in the U.S., are ethnically different, and working hard to learn the English language, Lareau's framework served as a conceptual lens for my study of how African immigrant refugee families experience public schools in the U.S.

3 Modes of Inquiry

This phenomenological study began with IRB approval in 2009 and analysis of the data was completed in 2017. Phenomenology as a method is useful in exploring how a phenomenon is experienced, perceived, and interpreted by the actors in a given situation, event, or condition (van Manen 2007). According to van Manen,

"Phenomenology is a project of sober reflection on the lived experience of human existence–sober, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications" (p. 12). As van Manen explains, "phenomenology that is sensitive to the life-world explores how our everyday involvements with our world are enriched by knowing as in-being" (p. 13) or how individuals experience the world around them.

Phenomenological data is collected through inductive, qualitative method such as interviews, discussions and participant observation to generate rich information from the perspective of the research participants. Phenomenological research is, therefore, an exploration of experience as lived by the participants. According to the phenomenological approach, researchers 'bracket' taken-for-granted assumptions and past knowledge and experience about the phenomenon/topic to open perceptions to new ways of seeing the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945). In this sense, phenomenological studies open research to subjective ways of viewing the world, highlight differences in how participants experience the same phenomenon, and positions personal knowledge as central to understanding experience.

At the same time, phenomenologists try and explore the essence of an experience as experienced by all participants (van Manen 1990), as a means to affecting practice or how individuals live their life. A phenomenology of practice "aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact" (van Manen 2007, p. 13). Knowledge from phenomenological research sheds light on lived experience that is not commonly understood. Van Manen defines lived experience as "Lived experience is simply experience-as-we-live-through-it in our actions, relations and situations" (p. 16). Participants in the research are those who have lived through the phenomenon under study; data is collected in the form of interviews, observations, discussions and focus groups; analysis is conducted by the researchers and participants so that there is co-construction of knowledge. The researchers analyze the data to look for significant statements or quotes to understand how the participants experienced the phenomenon, develop them into clusters of meaning and group them into themes (Creswell 2006).

According to van Manen, phenomenology as a research practice involves multiple steps: (a) identifying a phenomenon whose essence one wants to understand; (b) identifying researcher and participant bias and bracketing them or putting them aside; (c) acknowledging philosophical assumptions of the research; (d) collecting data or a number of examples and narratives of lived experience of the phenomenon and (after bracketing) asking further questions; (e) analyzing the data to develop themes; and, (f) writing up the description that represents the essence of the experience. Phenomenological researchers contend that there are multiple ways of interpreting experiences and reality is socially constructed.

Following the phenomenological approach to conducting inquiry, this study explored the phenomenon of African refugee immigrant families' experience with the public school system attended by their children. According to (Moustakas 1994), the two questions that direct phenomenological research are: What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What has influenced or affected the experiences

of the phenomenon? Moustakas suggests these two questions yield rich descriptive data that help researchers get a deeper understanding of the experience being explored. In keeping with phenomenological research, this study asks the following questions:

1. What has been the experience of African refugee parents with US public schools attended by their children?
2. What contexts or situations have affected African refugee parents' experience of public schools?

3.1 Research Site

The context of the study is an urban school district in the Midwest, considered one of the largest in the U.S., with 223 schools, approximately 100,000 students, and a teaching staff of over 6000. The census of 2010 stated that the city is comprised of 39.97% African American, 44.78% Caucasian, 3.51% Asian and other races, and African immigrants comprising 11.74% (Census Viewer n.d.). While African refugee families have been resettled across the state, the city where this study was conducted documented 12,000 African mostly poor Muslim Somali refugees (Refugee Resettlement Watch 2008). Specifically, five K-12 schools that had at least five or more African refugee students served as sites for the study. According to school data 90% of the student population was categorized as Black which included African American and African students.

3.2 Participants

A non-governmental organization working with African refugees assisted with enlisting 16 parents whose children were attending public schools. All the parent-participants were from Somalia and had been resettled to the U.S. from Kakuma or Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya; lived near the public school in the U.S.; experienced economic hardship and were on social welfare assistance; did not speak any English; had little or no formal education in their home country; and their children attended elementary, middle or secondary school in the U.S. In terms of family demographics, 14 of the parents were female, two male; and eight of the families were single parent with female participants as head of the household. Fifteen teachers from the five schools with experience working with recently arrived African refugees also participated in the study; 11 worked at the elementary level, three from middle and one from a secondary classroom.

3.3 Data Collection

Data consisted of demographic information on the families from a questionnaire that was administered by the translator. This was followed by parental interviews in two focus groups of 2 hours each with eight parents in each group. The focus group interviews were conducted at two of the parents' homes and the translator assisted with the entire data collection process that involved parents. *Focus group 1* comprised of women only, while *Focus group 2* had two men and six women, which included two married couples. Both focus groups were held within the same week. Teachers from the schools were interviewed individually for 1 hour each. With parents speaking different languages, I used a translator for Swahili, Arabic and Maay Maay during the focus group interviews.

3.4 Analysis of Data

After conducting the focus group interviews, the translator and I debriefed about the interview process and worked together to translate and transcribe the interviews. I used interpretative phenomenological analysis to analyze the data. With transcripts at hand, I extracted significant statements and quotes followed by clustering these statements and developing themes that ran across the data. I then looked for patterns and emerging themes across the two focus groups. After this stage of the analysis, I conducted individual follow-up interviews with three parents from each focus group in the following months to clarify significant statements and seek further information on the themes that had emerged from the analysis.

4 Findings

African refugee families add to the complexity of diversity in K-12 schools, and how parents and teachers understand and work through these complexities has implications for the academic success of immigrant children in US classrooms. Equally important, the study has implications for teacher preparation and how the next generation of teachers understand their role in the classroom that is becoming increasingly diverse and global.

In this section, I begin with Tables 1 and 2 showing the initial steps of the analysis followed by elaborating on two themes extracted from the findings, namely, parents' perceptions of their involvement in school and teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. Table 1 illustrates some of the significant process of interpreting the statements.

Table 1 Significant statements and meaning-making

Significant statements from data	Researcher's meaning-making
My mum said you are good to us and everything is free.	School is seen as a savior.
School gives us everything we need.	Parents may have a lot of expectations from the school/had to go through hardship where everything was taken away from them.
Children come to school with dirty socks. How do they send them to school?	Teachers are focused on school norms.
They look like they almost rolled out of bed, put the clothes they had yesterday on and then sent them out the door.	Teachers assume parents are being lazy and are neglecting their job as parents
Can they sit at the same table with the rest of the people while they are eating and they are fasting? Isn't that tempting them to eat?	Teachers lack cultural knowledge, empathy; room here for professional development/ teacher preparation
Teachers know what Muslims eat and do not eat.	Parents' assumptions that teachers are "all knowing"
What is the state of affairs in the Somali house right now? 'How do they live?'	Teachers are curious about how the families run their households especially as it relates to discipline
The kids told me that they get whooped at home.	Different disciplining processes
I wish I knew more about where these children were coming from and what their culture is like. I looked a little bit on the internet	Teachers needed more nuanced understanding of families than the internet
Here in America children are not whipped. We can't discipline our kids	Gap in disciplining processes
I have seen the way teachers are fighting for the kids to succeed so that they can take better responsibility for their lives.	Parents have deep respect for teachers
The good things that these teachers are doing for the kids, we cannot do. We don't have the money or understanding.	Parents admit they have not yet acquired the necessary capital to be equal partners
I do not see them praying five times a day. So, I'm always wondering, 'are they praying or not?'	Teachers lack cultural knowledge
Please ask for us whether there is a place where we can take our children to be helped by the tutor after school for more help?	Parents admit they have not yet acquired the necessary capital to be equal partners
We did Christmas stockings…and this Somali girl made one and after she made it I wondered, 'is that appropriate for her to participate in that?'	Teachers seeking to understand what is culturally appropriate
We do not know how we will speak to the teachers; we do not know where I will start or where I will stop	Parents inability to activate capital thus feeling excluded because they have difficulty with the English language

Table 2 Clusters of meaning and themes

Clusters of meaning	Themes
Saw the school as a savior;	How parents experience school
Saw teachers as "all knowing;"	
Genuine deep respect for teachers;	
Have a lot of expectations from the school;	
Saw teachers as ignoring the dos and don'ts of their culture;	
Inability activate capital therefore leading to frustration in schools;	
Struggle to acquire new methods of disciplining their children that they do not believe in.	
Admitting that they do not have enough cultural capital to be equal partners	
Feeling parents are being lazy and are neglecting their job as parents;	How teachers perceive parents and interact with students
Failure to understand what they see;	
Hope someone would explain the cultural values;	
Curiosity about how families are run;	
Instinctive knowledge that teachers needed more nuanced understanding of families;	
Seeking to understand that which is culturally appropriate.	

Table 2 illustrates the next step of the analysis, that is, the process of making meaning from the statements, gathering them into clusters, and grouping these clusters into themes for further analysis.

4.1 Theme 1: Parents Perceptions of Parental Involvement in School

Theme 1 demonstrates that even though all parents expressed a desire for participation in school activities, the actual contact with the school varied from parent to parent and ranged from exclusion to inclusion. For example, many parents felt that the teachers still did not understand fully their degree of illiteracy or poverty; that they simply could not read or assist with school affairs as they would like for now. They said they wanted to understand how their child is doing at school but were more often, not in a position to ask because they did not know how. They felt that teachers need to understand more the predicament that they are in.

> We do not know how we will speak to the teachers; we do not know where I will start or where I will stop. We do not know the rules of the office at school.
>
> What makes us fear and especially the women is because we don't know the language. I do not know how to ask my teacher how my child is doing at school. We want someone

> who can translate for us at school. When we try to ask friends and neighbors, they have their own work and they have no time to take us there (Mother, Focus Group 1)

This predicament came mostly from the parents who appeared not to have any knowledge of how and where they could get assistance for their school related issues and concerns. From the discussions, it was obvious that parents with more cultural knowledge and connections appeared to be doing better in terms of the way they coordinate their children's activities both in the school and after school.

> My children are doing well at school. My children are helped and tutored with their homework through the X and Y community. My children's father is in Africa so I would like to congratulate the X and Y organization because it really helps my children in their education after school. This is because I don't know how to read and write it is actually me who depends on them to tell me what I don't know. When I go somewhere, and am given a document of any sort I go to this organization and they read for me and help me. (Mother Focus Group 1)

On the question of religion, many parents felt their religious beliefs and customs were not taken into consideration by teachers. Parents concurred that teachers should have knowledge of Islamic culture, such as Ramadan and religious dietary norms. Parents were confused as to why teachers did not understand diverse family cultural narratives leading to frustration and communication gaps between families and schools (Lareau 2015). The following excerpt illustrates this gap.

> Our children are young and they do not know what food is "halal" or "haram" purified or not purified. You know everything they see they eat, including pork; they just eat everything in school. And we know that the teachers know what Muslims eat and do not eat. It is not a must for them to be told, do not give him or her or that, it is not a must that the teachers should wait for a parent to come and say do not give this or that to my kid. Because all children are in class learning and they are hungry, whatever you give them, they can eat. (Mother, Focus Group 1)

Other parents felt more included, especially when it came to basic needs such as clothes and books. In this excerpt, one mother explained that she thought teachers were good to her because they were empathetic with her struggles:

> Sometimes, they [teachers] give Habiba clothes to change, and especially the blouse. Sometimes skirt and blouse. Because they know that I don't have a husband or anyone to help me, so am very grateful. So, they understand my condition. (Mother, Focus Group 1)

Many parents tried to understand the rules of disciplining children in public schools but felt they lacked actual knowledge of school and parenting norms in US society. Data show parents' difficulties in trying to discipline children by local school norms, but lacking cultural capital in terms of knowing the norms of parenting in the U.S. In the current context, they were nevertheless making the effort to follow parental norms in a manner that fit the current society. While parents lacked knowledge of school norms, teachers lacked understanding of how African parents discipline their children. This, then, became a source of rift between what the teachers believed to be parents doing little to enforce discipline and what the parent was trying their level best to do. One father, speaking of the consensus of what they all believed, said the following:

> …here in America children are not whipped. And then, when a child errs, the teacher calls you and tells you your child is misbehaving. When you try to touch that child, they bite off your ear. If they find a child with any mark at school and the child says "its mama who whipped me" that mother is not lucky either. And they will come to get her while she has no shoes on and take her to the police station. (Father, Focus Group 2)

Another parent in the same focus group stated:

> Here in America, parents do not beat a child they just talk to them. That's just what the problem is. So, we can't discipline our kids. If we discipline our own children, we are not understood. (Father, Focus Group 2)

Despite these kinds of gaps, nevertheless, parents were deeply appreciative of the efforts the teachers were making for their children. As one parent stated,

> On my part, what the teachers are doing for the child, is better than what we ourselves are doing for them. The teachers are showing a lot of love to the kids so that they can succeed. (Mother, Focus Group 1)

Another parent stated,

> The good things that these teachers are doing for the kids, we cannot do. (Father, Focus Group 2)

The above data aligns with Bourdieu's (1977) notion of cultural capital comprising of languages, customs, styles, and behaviors that produce social class positions. Low economic status, stress of a new environment, differences in cultural knowledge add to the challenges faced by refugee parents (Garcia-Coll et al. 2002; McBrien 2005). Parents in both focus groups agreed that they were trying hard to change their parenting styles and align with the school system. Parents viewed this shift in their parenting as accumulating cultural capital necessary for their children's educational advancement (Lareau 2015). All the parents realized that they would have to meet the school half way in order to communicate better with teachers and improve academic outcomes for their students.

4.2 Theme 2: Teachers' Perceptions of their Interactions with Students

Theme 2 shows that teachers who participated in the interviews felt they needed more cultural knowledge about African refugee families to be able to help their children navigate school with success and at the same time felt helpless by the larger social and racial realities of living in a poor urban area. The majority of the teachers viewed many of their students as poverty-stricken and on survival mode. This may be because many students experienced difficulty in meeting their primary needs, such as food and clothing. One elementary school teacher talked of her students as "economically disadvantaged" and viewed her school as "a safe haven for them in meeting their primary needs." Ladson-Billings (1995) expressed an insight that seems equally applicable to Somali refugees, that we must acknowledge the broader

societal issues affecting the educational achievement of students as a critical first step in interpreting teachers' experiences with those students.

The demographic information in this chapter provides a vantage point from which teachers viewed their Somali students through the lens of historical issues that have enmeshed urban schools for years in the U.S. One teacher demonstrated this view when she noted the appalling living conditions for many of her students: "there is lead poisoning here, there is malnutrition here, and there is a lot of lack of first needs" (Interview, third grade teacher). While this statement reflects the perception of this teacher, the quote below echoes the majority of teachers' assessments of the dire challenges facing students in this study. It also supports numerous urban researchers' long-term observation of the reality of underfunded and dismal conditions in many urban schools and the communities they serve (Fecho 2004; Ladson-Billings 1994; Wilson 2012).

> I have kids who I give food at the end of the school day on Friday because they will not eat at home. I know this, because there was one Somalia kid who was feeling nausea because she did not have milk over the weekend…but this is really with my whole group of kids, a whole group of kids in survival mode, the whole of this city is in survival mode… most of my kids have not met their primary needs [of food, clothing, and shelter] before they come to school…education then, as a secondary need, is far away.

> I mean, their home lives…it is just so dysfunctional and they are having to come to school… for many of them this is their safe haven. You know, this is where they are getting their meal–breakfast, or lunch–and that is a reality. (Interview Third Grade Teacher)

Teachers were thus aware of and sympathetic to the oppressive realities that Somali refugee children and their families faced in the present context in the familiar complex narrative of urban schooling – a complex narrative that is closely tied with problems of failure and being "at-risk" (Brown 2006; Ladson-Billings 1994). The quote below further exemplifies this complex narrative coupled with teachers' lack of understanding of Somali parents' interest in their children's education.

> Why on earth would you send your children to school with dirty socks and clothes? You know, you can see the skin, the body has not been maintained. They look like they almost rolled out of bed, put the clothes they had yesterday on and then sent them out the door. That I think needs to be addressed. (Interview, Middle School Science Teacher)

Many teachers hoped parents would soon take over in the total provision of these needs. Other teachers viewed parents as neglecting their responsibility towards their children because they were slack in monitoring what their children wore and regarding overall hygiene. This misunderstanding was perhaps brought about by teachers' failure to understand the real reasons why parents were not able to activate their social and cultural capital (Lareau and Horvat 1999). Teachers viewed this as neglect rather than economic hardship. The teachers also demonstrated they lacked cultural knowledge and experienced difficulty connecting with parents. One nine grade social studies teacher posed the following questions on being asked a question about religion:

> I do not see them praying five times a day. So, I'm always wondering, 'are they praying or not?' And what about when they are fasting, 'can they sit at the same table with the rest of

> the people while they are eating and they are fasting?' 'Isn't that tempting them to eat?' But they have been doing that in this school, and I wonder 'is it appropriate?' Or if it is, 'is it teaching them to be confident in their belief?' That they can sit there and not eat and it would open dialogue with other students, 'well why are you not eating?' 'Well, am fasting.' 'Why are you fasting?' And that might be a good place to start talking to us and tell us why they do what they do. (Interview, Ninth Grade Social Studies Teacher)

A third-grade male teacher posed the following questions as he expressed curiosity about how the parents go about disciplining their children at home:

> I would like to know … 'what is the state of affairs in the Somali house right now?' 'How do they live?' And not just that, … 'What is discipline like?' 'What is the parent child connection?' 'Are they nurtured, or are they expected to grow up quickly and be a man or be a woman?' 'Are the girls expected to have babies or things like that?' (Interview, Third Grade Teacher)

Another fifth-grade teacher expressed her curiosity about on discipline as follows:

> The kids told me that they get whooped at home. But when the mum came in, she was like she appeared not to know what to do. The girl acted up at home, so I am curious about what exactly happens at home. I wish I knew more about where these children were coming from and what their culture is like. I looked a little bit on the Internet and I don't think that's the place to get the information of what's happening. (Interview, Fifth Grade Teacher)

Data from teachers demonstrates how many well-intentioned teachers, who are not adequately equipped with sufficient training in intercultural understanding shy away from efforts to support attempts that mean dealing with cultures that are completely different from their own (Hones 2002; Lee 2002; Nderu 2005; Trueba et al. 1990). Many of the teachers in this study lacked nuanced dispositions and understandings of family narratives where educators saw themselves as part of those narratives during the effort to help their students acculturate in the schools. Lareau's (2005) framework highlights the importance of cultural capital for parents to thrive in schools, likewise, acquisition of cultural capital in the form of a development of nuanced dispositions and understandings of family narratives where teachers see themselves as part of those narratives, is critical for tapping into the support and value that refugee parents have for their children (Nderu 2005). This gap may be rooted in lack of cultural knowledge on both sides which can be bridged when parents and teachers collaborate to promote a more inclusive school curricula and classroom practice.

Analysis of data reveals the gap in cultural knowledge and frustrations by parents and teachers and how both sides attempt to bridge the gap facilitated by their shared interests in children's education. Lareau's framework provided the lens of cultural capital for analysis of data while phenomenology guided the questions asked in this study and the experiences explored. Teachers did not understand diversity among families nor did they see themselves fulfilling the role of parents who did not fit the norms of parenting. On the other hand, the experience of parents shows they lacked cultural capital of institutional knowledge, suffered economic hardships and stresses of involuntary immigration, and struggled to socialize into US American cultural values and school norms. Most importantly, findings suggest a need for teachers to expand their knowledge of cultural diversity among immigrant families, communi-

cate effectively with parents, and get specialized professional development on how to work with family diversity so that all children have equal opportunity for school success.

5 Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, I explored African refugee parents' experience of navigating US public schools and highlight the gap between refugee families and teachers. In this section, I also discuss ways to bridge the gap between families and teachers and what this means for how we prepare teachers for K-12 diversity in 21st century classrooms. The literature review and my own study show several challenges that refugee parents experience in and out of school contexts. These challenges, already well documented in the literature, show that economic hardship, history of trauma, and the context of involuntary immigration contribute to parental stress of resettlement that refugee families experience. These stresses are compounded by families' experience with school which ranges from exclusion to inclusion. Lack of clear instructions from schools on how to help their children, differences in the concept of parenting, intergenerational conflicts with their children, and language barriers exacerbate the challenges faced by refugee families.

Findings show that during the educational process, despite the many efforts to help children in the acculturation process, teachers too experienced significant challenges in their capacity to clearly communicate their intentions to refugee students and their parents. Teachers lack knowledge of family diversity, and would benefit from professional development on how to work with refugee families who are in the process of resettlement in a new home environment.

How schools address African refugee parents' challenges and concerns affects how parents navigate the process of acquiring the necessary capital to reduce some of their stressors, especially those associated with schooling of their children. When teachers empathize and view parental experiences from a different lens they bring a nuanced understanding of diversity into the classrooms. Such an understanding helps parents navigate school issues with more comfort, view teachers as partners in the education of their children, and feel less alienated from and more involved with schools.

As the K-12 landscape becomes more diverse and complex, teacher education programs have a responsibility to rethink their teacher preparation coursework and field experiences for preservice teachers as well as professional development for in-service teachers. Gaps in teachers' cultural knowledge suggests room in teacher preparation programs for offering preservice teachers and student teachers exposure to different forms of diversity in K-12 schools that include how families communicate, the structure of families, and the unique challenges that define refugee families from Africa. Such exposure is an opportunity for preservice teachers to develop a capacity for empathy, knowledge of diversity among families, and the skills to work with students from a range of cultural backgrounds. Teacher preparation that is

geared to help preservice teachers develop a capacity to understand and work through complexities of family diversity, such as the unique challenges of immigrant parents, children, and their teachers, contributes toward the academic success of immigrant children in US classrooms.

In conclusion, this phenomenological study demonstrates there is a critical need for teachers to develop a nuanced knowledge of diversity among families and their complex, often changing structures and processes. This nuanced knowledge of teachers has the potential for closing the communication gap between teachers and parents, and provide parents with the cultural capital for navigating schools and schooling that helps their children's academic outcomes as well. It is time for teacher education programs, public schools, and diverse families to work together so that all students, including children of recent African refugee families, experience equal opportunities for academic success in US public schools.

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The Song-Hunting Project: Fostering Diversity in Music Education

Antía González Ben

Abstract Well into the 21st century, a lack of diversity still permeates many aspects of music education in the United States. Most music education courses present the White, Anglo culture as the default frame of reference. This is still the case more than half a century after the Tanglewood Declaration of 1967, in which the music education profession declared its intent to make its content less Western high art-centric. Diversity is also conspicuously absent among the music education student body. Female, White, and high-income students are overrepresented in K-12 music education courses, particularly in high school, whereas students from low socio-economic backgrounds and non-native English speakers are significantly underrepresented. Finally, admission processes and training programs for music teachers commonly exclude all music traditions but Western high art, leading to an overwhelmingly White and middle-class music teaching force. In The Song-Hunting Project students, parents, and music teachers from a dual-language elementary school created a collaborative class songbook. The students recorded their parents singing songs in Spanish and English and then transcribed and analyzed these songs working in teams. This process provided an opportunity for participants to learn about each other's background cultures, fostering a sense of belonging to the school community. The Song-Hunting Project stands as a viable example of acknowledgement and validation of diversity in music education's curriculum content, student body, and teacher force.

Keywords Cultural diversity · Music education · Multicultural education · Bilingual education · Project-based learning

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1 Diversity in Music Education: A Brief Overview

Mainstream school music education in the U.S. has historically privileged the Euro-American high art music canon. Although the American music education landscape has constantly been evolving, from the psalm tune singing schools of colonial America, to the music appreciation movement of the late nineteenth century, and more recently the marching band craze of post-World War I (Keene 1982), one thing has stayed consistent: School music education in the U.S. has focused over time on the teaching of Euro-American high art music. Until the Civil War, when formal education was primarily reserved for children of White, Anglo descent, the music education curriculum was largely attuned to its student population, for it exposed students to what was considered the highest accomplishments of the Western European and White American musical traditions (Gustafson 2009). However, once schools for children of color became increasingly common during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, issues of cultural relevance became conspicuous.

Public schools serving people of color tended to prioritize Euro-American high art music over their students' home cultures. It was safer for these schools to teach that curriculum over students' home music cultures given the White supremacist environment in which they existed, which tended to interpret people of color's intellectual empowerment as a potential social threat. Virtually all instructional materials available consisted of Euro-American high art music examples and little else. Also, Euro-American art music had traditionally been associated with higher sociocultural capital, providing a social advantage to those who mastered it (James 1976). Since *Brown v. Board of Education* and the end of race-based segregation in U.S. schools, music classrooms in the U.S. ought to welcome racially diverse student populations. However, the Euro-American musical canon is still situated at the center of most music curricula. This translates into some students' cultural backgrounds being more decidedly acknowledged and validated than others in music education courses (Bradley 2007).

Over the past fifty years, music education professionals have been taking steps toward creating more inclusive and diverse music education experiences in schools, spurred by the socio-political demands and new sensibilities of the Civil Rights movement. In 1967, the most prominent association of music educators in the U.S., known as the Music Educators National Conference (now National Association for Music Education), organized a symposium to discuss and define the role of music education in contemporary American society (Mark 1986). This symposium culminated in a statement of intent, known as the Tanglewood Declaration. The Tanglewood Declaration provided a philosophical basis for future developments in music education. It acknowledged, "The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety" (Choate 1968, p 139). Although this Declaration called for a broadening of the existing curriculum, it did not question Euro-American high art music's position at the center of this repertory. Hence, this music tradition's long-standing status as the most valuable school music knowledge remained unchallenged (Apple 2000).

Forty years later, in 2007, a second Tanglewood Symposium took place. Tanglewood II's Declaration was devised as a response from the music education profession to the characteristics and demands of the 21st century. This newer Declaration presented a more comprehensive stance toward acknowledging and fostering diversity in music education. It proclaimed: "A major purpose of music education is to validate the many forms of music making found in local communities" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, p 60). Also, it asserted: "All persons are entitled to musical instruction and participation regardless of age, religion, class, nationality, race, ethnicity, disability, culture, gender and sexual orientation, and residence" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, p 60). Finally, this Declaration stated: "Admission standards and graduation requirements for music education students should take account of the broadest view of intellectual, academic, and musical skills and competencies" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, pp 60–61). In short, the 2007 Tanglewood Declaration explicitly called for a greater diversification of music education's curriculum content, student body, and teacher force. Unfortunately, the scope and influence of Tanglewood II has been rather modest when compared to the first one.

Good intentions notwithstanding, music education has been shy in implementing concrete actions toward diversifying its curriculum content, student population, and teacher body. The core of most music education curricula continues to be primarily Euro-American. For example, of the 3665 songs appearing in Macmillan McGraw-Hill's kindergarten-through-fifth-grade textbook series *Share the Music* from 1995 to 2003, and *Spotlight on Music* from 2006, U.S. White culture accounted for 46.05% of songs, while African-American songs constituted only 5.78% of the total, followed by 4.28% of songs from England, and 3.21% from Germany (Mason 2010). Similarly, of the 4000 songs included in Silver Burdett Ginn's kindergarten-through-fifth-grade textbook series *Music Connection* from 1995 and *Making Music* from 2002 to 2005, 53.12% pertained to U.S. White culture, while African-American songs constituted only 5.10%, German songs accounted for 3.07%, and French songs for 2.80% of the total (Mason 2010).

As the cultural background of people of color remains marginalized in most music curricula, it perhaps comes as no surprise that students and teachers of color are disproportionally underrepresented in music education programs. National demographic data from 2002 on high school band, choir, and orchestra students from the U.S. shows, for instance, that White students make up 62.3% of the general high school population, but 65.7% of music students are White (Elpus and Abril 2011). Hispanic students make up 15.1% of the population, but only 10.2% of music students are Hispanic (Elpus and Abril 2011). Female and high-income students are also overrepresented in high school music ensembles (Elpus and Abril 2011). Likewise, most college music education programs only accept Euro-American high art music as audition repertory in their admission processes, leading to an overwhelmingly White and middle-classed music teaching force (Koza 2008).

The normalization of sexual and gender diversity is another area in which U.S. music education has plenty of room for improvement. Gender conformity and heterosexuality have traditionally been, and continue to be the norm in music education programs (Bergonzi 2009). Music curricula tend to sanction gender conforming,

heterosexual identities through seemingly innocuous mechanisms such as traditional musical drama plots and biographies of composers and musicians. Moreover, music teachers from eight U.S. states are currently prohibited by law from portraying LGBTQ+ issues or people in a positive manner, thwarting their ability to normalize sexual and gender diversity in their classrooms (GLSEN 2017).

U.S. music education also ought to continue growing with regards to serving students with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. On the one hand, secondary students with mild intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to learn music in inclusive educational settings at a much higher rate than in other subjects such as mathematics and language arts (Bouck 2011). On the other hand, secondary students with physical disabilities are frequently excluded from instrumental music programs due to music teachers' lack of knowledge and resources on how to best serve these students (Nabb and Balcetis 2010).

Religious diversity is also at stake in music education through the presence/absence of sacred music in school repertories. School divisions across the U.S. have been sued both for using sacred music and for banning it altogether from their music programs. In both cases, the plaintiffs argued that their districts were at odds with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prevents against the establishment of a state-sponsored religion—such as Christianity or secular humanism/atheism (Drummond 2014). Given the legal ambiguity that characterizes this area, some music teachers decide to celebrate religious diversity by programming sacred music from multiple traditions, while others prefer to stay away from sacred music altogether, even if that leads to missed learning opportunities about an important part of many societies' cultural history. Still, some music teachers opt for designing a curriculum that reflects the beliefs and cultures of their local communities. This last option often translates into minority students' cultural backgrounds being overlooked in the music classroom.

One last form of diversity largely overlooked in music education is linguistic diversity. English Language Learners (ELLs) compose an increasingly large section of the U.S. student body (Gándara and Contreras 2009). And yet, students who speak a language other than English (most commonly Spanish) are significantly underrepresented in high school music programs. These students tend to get pulled from "specials" (i.e. subjects such as music, physical education, and visual arts) to receive additional test preparation and/or language instruction (Elpus and Abril 2011). Some areas of the U.S. with large Latinx populations, such as California and Texas, suffer from a chronic shortage of certified bilingual teachers. Hence, teacher education programs in some U.S. states experience difficulties in keeping up with their need for bilingual teachers to properly serve their student population (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond 2017; Kennedy 2013). No studies to this date have focused on studying teachers who are doubly certified in music and bilingual education. However, nothing suggests that the provision of certified bilingual teachers within music education is proportionally higher than among the general pool of teachers.

Additional forms of diversity, such as generational and of country of origin should also be considered. However, the ones mentioned thus far provide enough

evidence that a lack of diversity is conspicuous and persistent in music education. Likewise, the confluence of several forms of diversity, commonly referred to as intersectionality, should also be considered (Carter 2013). When various forms of social privilege conflate in one individual, as in the case of a WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant), heterosexual, and English-speaking man, this person tends to benefit from multiple layers of systemic privilege. Conversely, people who experience interdependent forms of social disadvantage, such as an African-American, Muslim, lesbian, disable-bodied woman, tend to suffer strong systemic discrimination. As a result, systemically privileged individuals are more likely to both enter and see themselves fairly represented in elitist environments such as most current music education programs than systemically disadvantaged individuals, regardless of their particular skills and personality.

For over half a century, experts and institutions have been calling attention to U.S. music education's general disconnect from its social and cultural diversity, yet the disconnect still persists well into the 21st century. The problem is less one of lack of ideas that address the issue than it is of making existing initiatives more widely available.

In response to this situation, the next section presents a case study of a third-grade general music learning project that validates students' home music cultures while building a stronger school community (Yin 1981). Case studies provide in-depth understanding of a real-life issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration (Creswell 2013, p 97). This case study illustrates one of many ways in which, by embracing teacher, student, and curricular diversity, U.S. music education may increase its educational potential.

2 The Song-Hunting Project: A Diversifying Intervention in Music Education

The Song-Hunting Project is an example of a small but increasing number of learning projects that challenge the current music education landscape by acknowledging and validating teacher, student, and curricular diversity in music education. This project took place in the spring semester of 2012 after a semester of collaboration between two elementary general music teachers, one of them officially employed at a dual-language elementary school and the other volunteering at this school while also earning a master's degree in music education with a multicultural education focus from a nearby university. The Project's main goal was to create a new music curriculum, understood here as an organized collection of musical pieces. A group of third-grade students, their parents, and the two music teachers worked collaboratively to put together a repertory of class songs capturing participants' home music cultures and languages. This process allowed participants to learn about each other's musical and linguistic backgrounds and develop a stronger sense of belonging to the school community.

2.1 Rationale

The Song-Hunting Project emerged in the context of an ongoing collaboration between two music teachers. One was the general music teacher of a public charter elementary school with a Spanish dual-language program located in a Midwest U.S. mid-sized city. The other—the author of this chapter—was a master's student in music education volunteering her time in the above teacher's classroom.

Before starting the project, the author deliberated how her positionality could be useful in assisting the school's general music teacher. She considered her experience as a female elementary music teacher who is also a native speaker of Spanish. Likewise, she took account of her knowledge as an emerging scholar specializing on issues of multicultural music education. The author examined the classroom context in which she was volunteering, and detected two curricular and instructional challenges for which her personal and professional experiences could prove helpful. These challenges were: a non-contextual approach to curriculum content selection and an emphasis on individual learning. The Song-Hunting Project developed a synergic response to both.

First, the music curriculum implemented in this school before the Song-Hunting Project was unrepresentative of the school's demographic make-up. Euro-American White, Anglo music occupied the center of the curriculum, to which a multicultural aspect was added through so-called world music. Beside high art music from Western Europe and the U.S., students listened to, sang, and played tunes from places such as Ireland, Korea, Russia, Italy, India, and Vietnam. Curricular contents were, thus, somewhat diverse. However, for a music curriculum to be not only multicultural and diverse, but also culturally relevant, it ought to acknowledge and affirm the musical and linguistic diversity *that is present in the classroom* (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1995). In addition, for this curriculum to have a social reconstructionist edge, it ought to ensure that all students' musical and linguistic backgrounds were situated center stage in the curriculum (Counts 1932; Koza 2001). Music curricula largely composed of music from the Euro-American tradition, plus add-ons from other music traditions, fail to challenge Euro-American music's privileged status as canonic knowledge. Hence, they disadvantage students whose cultural backgrounds are not White, Anglo, and middle-classed. More equitable learning environments can emerge when dominant viewpoints are consciously decentered and culture's margins brought to the center (Apple 2000).

The Song-Hunting Project drew on its participants' cultural backgrounds to create a more contextual curriculum. Unlike most music education curricula, which consist of a generic collection of canonical and multicultural music pieces, the Song-Hunting Project produced a songbook composed of pieces representative of its participants' musical and linguistic backgrounds. The students, their families, and the music teachers, rather than a group of professional curriculum designers, determined what knowledge was worth studying. This strategy increased participants' sense of ownership of the new curriculum. In addition, this process challenged an all-too-common practice in music education: publishing companies and

teachers deciding single-handedly what music traditions best represent their students. When curricular decisions are based on reductionist assumptions about students' races, ethnicities, native languages, or nationalities, the resulting curricula risk stereotyping the target students (Abril 2009).[1] In the Song-Hunting Project, reductionist assumptions were suspended by asking participants to define themselves musically. Hence, some of the songs that parents sang to their children did not match their native languages or countries of origin. And yet, these songs were still entirely true to their households' music cultures, ultimately evidencing cultures' and identities' complex and dynamic nature (Miller 2010).

Second, almost all activities taking place in the music classroom before the Song-Hunting Project were either individual or they had an individual focus—even those often performed collectively, such as singing or dancing.[2] This emphasis on the individual favored comparisons between students' performances, and interpersonal competition over collaboration. It also favored students raised in line with a White, Anglo liberal mentality. Liberalism, a socio-political and economic philosophy that extols individual effort as the main attribute for personal success, serves as the basis for normative American White, Anglo culture. Liberalism tends to downplay the role that social structures play in people's lives. Learning environments that function within a liberal mentality approach students as discrete learning units and presume a level-playing field for all. These environments tend to neglect students in positions of less privilege. There are, however, alternative approaches to liberalism. One of them is allocentrism, a perspective that emphasizes collaboration and cohesiveness among groups over individual behavior. Allocentrism capitalizes on people's differing strengths and abilities for the benefit of the entire group and it acknowledges the crucial role that environmental circumstances play on individual performances. Allocentrism is a common perspective among Latinx families (Kelly-McHale and Abril 2015). This approach to merit attribution was seldom present in this music classroom.

The Song-Hunting Project encouraged a collaborative approach to learning through the project method (Kilpatrick 1918). The project method presents students with real-life "purposeful" problems that they ought to solve by counting on each other's strengths and on their teachers as facilitators. In the Song-Hunting Project, collective success became the end goal and individual achievement was dependent upon successful interpersonal work.

Besides culturally relevant pedagogy and the project method, the Song-Hunting Project was also inspired by the early ethnomusicological work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kódaly (Bartók 1979; Eősze 1962). Bartók and Kódaly, two Hungarian nationalist composers born in the late nineteenth century, argued that music played

[1] This is the case, for example, of Mariachi ensembles established in schools with large Latinx student populations, despite Mariachi music being representative of only Western Mexico, and other music genres, such as hip-hop and urban Latin, being arguably more pervasive and meaningful than folk-based genres for young Latinx born and raised in the U.S.

[2] Students were being asked to follow individual-centered classroom norms such as "no speaking" and "no touching (neither one another nor the instruments)" at nearly all times.

a key role in the construction of collective identities. They both conducted ambitious fieldwork collecting, transcribing, and analyzing Hungarian folk music. Kódaly, who was also a music pedagogue, advocated for the use of tunes from children's cultural backgrounds as main repertoire in their music instruction. The Song-Hunting Project follows on Kódaly's footsteps, developing a new curriculum that students can relate to, and avoiding issues of cultural alienation and marginalization that might hinder some students' academic achievement and self-esteem.

2.2 Process

The Song-Hunting Project was carried out by a group of sixteen third-grade students.[3] Nine students were boys and the rest were girls. Also, twelve students were Latinxs, two were African American and the remaining two students were White.[4]

The development of the Song-Hunting Project can be divided in five stages for analytic purposes: introduction, planning, collection, analysis, and reflection. The *introductory* phase entailed two main tasks: to understand what a songbook is, and to check if students were interested in building together a class songbook. After a brief oral introduction, the author shared two hard-copy songbooks with the students, so that they could get an idea of what a songbook looked like and how their contents are commonly structured (Querol Gavaldá 1971; Torner and Bal y Gay 1973). After some self-directed exploration, the students and their teachers voiced their reflections as a group. This phase ended with a formal proposal to create a class songbook, to which students responded positively despite being a completely different project from what they were used to doing. Students showed excitement about interviewing their parents in the role of emerging ethnomusicologists. They also reacted enthusiastically to the idea of building a common artifact as a class and learning about each other's families' musical backgrounds.

During the *planning* stage, students decided what criteria they wanted to use to organize their songbook based on the musical elements that they had studied in general music. This phase served to consolidate and expand students' knowledge of musical concepts. First, students brainstormed concepts that they recalled from past lessons. Then, they came up with a classroom-wide classification system for their songs. They agreed on contemplating nine elements: country of origin (Mexico, U.S., Puerto Rico, Guatemala, France, or Spain), dynamics (consistent or changing), form (verse-chorus or strophic), language (Spanish, English, or French), meter (duple or triple), mode (Major or minor), authorship (folk/unknown or a specific person), tempo (fast or slow) and theme (nursery rhyme, dance song, or national

[3] The school's general music teacher chose a group of third-grade students to carry out the Song-Hunting Project based on pragmatic reasons: this group met on Mondays and Wednesdays, both days when the author was volunteering at the school.

[4] This statement is based on the general music teacher's description of his students. There were no African American or White girls in this class.

anthem). Finally, students created teams and each team crafted a working definition for a couple of the musical elements selected. These definitions provided a shared understanding of the elements to be analyzed that students could refer to when working on a song.

In the *collection* phase, the students and the author compiled songs from their households and interviewed their participants, gathering additional information about the recorded tunes to assist the later analysis. Most students borrowed the author's voice recorder for a day and brought it back to school with a recording of one of their parents singing. As the end of the semester approached, several students recorded and interviewed their parents the same evening, during a school-wide community-building event carried out in the school playground.

Once there were enough songs to start building a songbook, the *analysis* phase began. In practice, this phase overlapped with the collection stage. Students gathered in small groups and assisted each other in analyzing their group's songs. Each group had a laptop computer with all the recorded songs, allowing students to listen to a recording as many times as needed. Meanwhile, the general teacher and the author monitored the development of the analysis, assisting the groups when necessary.

The project ended with a *reflection* phase in which students accessed and assessed the Project's resulting repository of songs using laptop computers.[5] First, students paired up and explored the Project's songbook. They had an opportunity to check both their own work and that of their peers. Students were satisfied to see all the analyses together in one location producing a cohesive whole of substantial length. Next, we reflected as a class on the entire process. Students expressed pride on their consistent work over the weeks. Likewise, several students stressed the significance that some songs had for them, affirming one of the Project's main goals. Finally, students wrote anonymous feedback on the resulting song repository, on their experience, and on their teachers' instruction. This feedback was overwhelmingly positive.[6] The school's music teacher also wrote a positive remark about his experience carrying out the Project.[7]

The above description reflects the Song-Hunting Project's final version, after it underwent two substantial adaptations in response to students' interests and needs, and to time scarcity. The first major adaptation involved the language of instruction. The Song-Hunting Project, initially designed as "Proyecto Caza-Canciones," was supposed to use Spanish as primary language of instruction. Making Spanish the primary language would help to compensate for the fact that, despite Spanish being

[5] Although the initial plan was for students to upload their songs and analyses to a common online repository, adding a stronger technological component to the Project, time constrains led to the author taking care of this task.

[6] Students wrote, for instance, that the Song-Hunting Project was "cool" and indicated their personal preference for particular songs and performances.

[7] The general music teacher wrote that the Song-Hunting Project created a learning challenge for students to critically listen to and evaluate songs from their families, and that it also generated a great opportunity for all of the parts involved to learn together. Likewise, he commented that it was "fabulous" to work with the author and expressed gratitude for being a part of this experience.

most students' native language and bilingualism a key feature of the school, music classes were carried entirely in English—the general music teacher's native language. Despite these intentions, it became clear early on that not all the students were *de facto* bilingual; some struggled to follow a class conducted in Spanish. English thus became the Project's primary language because, unlike Spanish, all students spoke English and understood it fluently. Spanish was still present in the Project through occasional oral exchanges with the students and in most song' lyrics. In sum, optimizing communication with all the participants took precedence over fostering bilingualism through music education.

The second major project adaptation involved students' use of technology in the classroom. The author's initial plan was for students to not only record songs using a digital voice recorder and analyze them using laptop computers, but to also create a closed-access online repository for their songs and analyses. Time constraints led to prioritizing music-focused activities over technology-focused tasks. As a result, the author uploaded students' recordings and analyses to an online repository, and students had a chance to interact with that repository and comment on their end result during the reflection phase. Although the Project incorporated technology more modestly than initially envisioned, important implications still emerged from the technology-focused activities that did take place. Technology allowed students to skip the music transcription phase characteristic of hard-copy songbooks and draw their musical analyses directly from audio recordings. Analyzing songs through digital voice recordings allowed participants to bypass dominant, Eurocentric conceptions of music literacy as the reading and writing of modern staff music notation. Also, the resulting online repository made the Project more accessible, allowing participants and their families to gain remote access to the Project from the school library or their homes at any time.

2.3 Discussion

The Song-Hunting Project successfully addressed its two initial purposes: to put together a new music repertory based on the school community's diverse home cultures and languages, and to favor cooperative learning. Evidence of ways in which the Project met these two goals may be organized around the Project's main constituencies: (1) the students, (2) their families, (3) the general music teacher, (4) the author, and (5) other music teachers.

First, the success of the new musical curriculum can be inferred from the different degrees in which students engaged with it. Latina students demonstrated the highest levels of interest and commitment, followed by Latino and African-American male students, who also remained remarkably involved during the whole process. The two White male students in this third-grade class were, however, less enthusiastic. For example, Latinx and African-American students were content to see their home cultures acknowledged and validated in the music classroom. Latina students were also excited to realize that the author knew most of their parents'

songs from memory. In turn, White, male students showed some resistance to the Project. One of the two White students declined his invitation to take the voice recorder home by asserting that his parents did not know any children's songs. This student's behavior speaks to the Project's success in challenging American White, Anglo culture's privileged position at the center of the music curriculum. The Song-Hunting Project aimed to give comparable attention to all students' musical and linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, the Song-Hunting Project contributed to cultivating a stronger sense of community among students by enabling a space for self-directed group work and the celebration of cultural commonalities among students. The Project supported students' growth as independent and interdependent learners, encouraging them to take ownership of the educational process. The Project demanded a larger share of self-directed work to what students were used. However, students responded positively to this challenge by acting in responsible and mature ways. For example, the entire Project relied on students' capacity to take home and appropriately use a borrowed digital voice recorder, and to conduct a short interview with their parents without direct teacher supervision. Also, students were expected to work autonomously in small groups at their own pace during class. Students' recounts of the moment when they finally got to show the online songbook to their parents suggest that students dealt well with these challenges and, as a result, took ownership of the Project.

The Song-Hunting Project also provided a venue for students to share and discuss commonalities and differences among their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For instance, some students were thrilled to find out that nursery rhymes recorded by other classmates were the same as the ones they heard from their parents while growing up. As students became more familiar with the collected repertoire, they also enjoyed listening to and memorizing each other's songs.

Second, the Song-Hunting Project fostered student families' sense of belonging to the school community by validating their home cultures. To an extent, the Project helped to reinforce parents' self-image as valuable members of their school community. Parents shared their reactions to the Project with the two music teachers through informal conversations. Although some parents were initially reticent to having their children voice-record them, they agreed to participate nonetheless. As they later commented, families appreciated the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning and responded well to seeing their musical and linguistic backgrounds legitimated by the school.

Third, the Song-Hunting Project proved consequential for the general music teacher and his students. It was in the regular music teacher's hands to either make the Project a sustainable and collaborative part of his teaching practice or an anecdotal instructional experience. The author hoped that the project's outcomes would be compelling enough to move the general music teacher to use The Song-Hunting Project as leverage toward more collaborative and culturally relevant teaching practices. However, she also feared that, if this was not the case, the Project might leave minoritized students feeling even more disempowered than before the Project had exposed an alternative, more culturally responsible way of doing music education.

The general teacher's positive feedback on the songbook, already mentioned in the previous section, suggests a positive attitude toward sustainability and collaboration after the Project was over.

Fourth, the Song-Hunting Project served to validate the author as a competent facilitator. Given that the author did not belong to the dominant U.S. culture, she wondered whether students would read her as a legitimate expert. The author openly shared her cultural and linguistic background with the students as a way to address her Otherness in the classroom. She also recorded her mother singing and analyzed the resulting song along with the students, answering any questions that they had about her background culture. This strategy proved effective in legitimizing her role as a facilitator before the students.[8] The author also wondered whether the Latinx students would perceive her as an insider or outsider. Unlike any of the students, she was born and raised in Spain. However, the author and the students shared linguistic and musical knowledge as a result of four centuries of Spain's colonial rule in Latin America. Although the author's Castilian accent differed from the Latin American accent of the Spanish-speaking students, she was still seen as a native speaker of Spanish.[9] Also, she was able to recall many of the songs recorded by the students from her own childhood. Students' verbal and non-verbal responses to their commonalities evidenced that Latinx students saw the author as an ally.

The author also wondered about her role as a co-facilitator along with the regular music teacher, and to what extent their joint instruction might model collaborative work for students. Given the author's double professional identity as an elementary music teacher and a graduate student, she wondered whether the general teacher might read the entire intervention as arrogant or opportunistic. The author's commitment to the school went beyond the limits of The Song-Hunting Project, helping to minimize the chances of being read as opportunistic—a, complaint that teachers have of education scholars. She volunteered in the music room additional days besides those when the Song-Hunting Project was taking place and she helped to organize and carry out the school's end-of-the-year concerts.[10] She also continued to volunteer after the Song-Hunting Project was over, and until the school moved into a new location. With regard to being read as arrogant, the author made sure that the general music teacher knew she would like to continue benefitting from his mentorship throughout the development of the Project, even though the design was hers. She also put effort into ensuring communication was fluid between the general teacher and herself regarding all the changes introduced in the Program. The general

[8] The author recorded her mother through on-line video call and then analyzed her song along with the students following their criteria. This recording was included in the Project's songbook along with all the others.

[9] The author. Students proved to be aware of this circumstance. One of the students, for instance, remarked that the author sounded like a movie character whenever she spoke Spanish, most probably alluding to movies doubted into Spanish from Spain, a variety with which the student may not have had any other contact in person.

[10] An indication of this general music teacher's appreciation for the author's regular assistance is the way in which he mentioned hers in the end-of the-year concert's hand programs as "Special Teaching Assistant."

music teacher responded positively to this new co-teaching situation. He remained engaged and provided valuable feedback and suggestions whenever he deemed appropriate.

Fifth, the Song-Hunting Project encouraged other music teachers in the same school district. Likewise, it hopes to keep inspiring music educators to create music curricula more attuned to their students' home cultures. Soon after the Project ended, the author received an invitation to lead a district-wide professional development session for elementary music teachers based on the Song-Hunting Project. Participating elementary music teachers showed interest in the Project, demanding advice on ways to adapt it to their respective teaching contexts. The Song-Hunting Project may thus have impacted not only the students, their families, the author, and the general music teacher at the school where it was carried out, but it also served as a model for other music teachers in the district to conduct similar diversity-affirming projects in their music classrooms. The present chapter may likewise stimulate readers to re-evaluate their current teacher practices and aim for more culturally responsible and collaborative teaching and learning practices.

Learning projects like The Song-Hunting Project acknowledge and celebrate human diversity alongside cultivating students' musical learning. Music education's curriculum content, student population, and teacher force have historically represented a narrow section of the United States (U.S.) society in cultural, racial, class-based, sexual and gender-based, disability-based, religious, and linguistic terms. That is, music education has historically supported forms of knowledge and kids of people who enjoy privilege in contemporary American society. Well into the 21st century, U.S. music education continues to reproduce social and economic inequalities. Initiatives like The Song-Hunting Project seek to disrupt and eventually dismantle U.S. music education's prevailing elitism.

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Phenomenology as a Path to English as a Second Language (ESL) Praxis, Curriculum and Theory-Making

Weena I. Gaulin

Abstract This chapter reports the findings of a study that examined the experience of 15 English as a Second Language (ESL) students studying in an Intensive English Program (IEP) hosted at an accredited institution of higher education. The research premise was that *phenomenology* – for its emphasis on *making essential meaning out of lived experience* (van Manen M: Researching lived experience. Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy, The University of Western Ontario, London, ON, 1990) – could serve as a theoretical framework to investigate how ESL students constructed their experience, and how these results could be used to *inform ESL instructional, curricular, and theoretical practices* in a fresh, new way within the larger task of rethinking diversity in the 21st century. The research employed qualitative data collection methods to include interviews, observations, artifact collection, and journaling. It was found that ESL students constructed their IEP experience along a continuum from linguistic, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and communal to active domains. When considered in light of educator preparation and ESL pedagogy, students' voices pointed to the necessity of re-integrating pedagogical critical reflection, a love ethic, pedagogy of relations, and of *presentness* back into ESL daily instruction. Phenomenology, as a research procedure, breathed life and spirit anew into ESL students' experience, thus humanizing the ESL educational experience – a provocative curricular and theoretical promise.

Keywords ESL · Phenomenology · Lived experience · Relational pedagogy · Linguistic differences

I have left pieces of my heart in five different countries: Reunion Island, France, Australia, England, and America. While rich intercultural experiences and geographic mobility have left great imprint on my soul, heart, intellect, and entire being, they have also left me with a sense of cultural loneliness, a prey to competing

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cultural realities unable to find stable grounding, a cultural marginal, a cosmopolite, a globetrotter, or, even best, a "global nomad" (McCaig 2002, p. 11). I have wondered many times, is being a "cultural nomad" a blessing or a curse? I have to conclude that it is a blessing, which has had an indisputable bearing on my profession as an ESL instructor and educator of K-12 teacher prospects. My experience has not only led me to respect and understand other cultural perspectives, it has also widened my tolerance for ambiguity. It has developed my sense of empathy for those who are cultural "others," and taught me to be flexible with my instructional boundaries. More importantly, the experience of being a global nomad has initiated what I believe to be a lifelong process of deciphering and articulating a definition of the personal and professional self.

In rethinking diversity in 21st century K-12 education, I believe educators ought to lay bare their own personal stories in the first place in order to surpass the traditional tale of two (or more) cultures or the "you are" versus "we are" dialogue. The raison d'être of this chapter sprang from my interest in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL). I am not just a research or ESL instructor who observes life. I am one who stands *pedagogically* in life. This is why I orient myself pedagogically to ESL learners in a phenomenological mode. Indeed, "phenomenological engagement is always personal engagement: It is an appeal to each one of us, to how we understand things, how we stand in life, how we understand ourselves as educators" (van Manen 1990, p. 156). In this chapter, I wish to underscore the significance of taking into account the personal stories of ESL learners in not only informing best practices in ESL curriculum and theory making but, more broadly, in rethinking 21st century diversity in K-12 education and educator preparation.

> For, indeed, these stories are of commitment and transformation. They show how people given the proper support, can make it in culturally alien environments. They make clear that standardized test scores have little to say about one's actual ability. In addition, they demonstrate that supporting student's transformation demands an extraordinary amount of time and commitment, but that teachers can make a difference if they are willing to make that commitment. One remedy to the paralysis suffered by many teachers is to bring to the fore stories of the real people whose histories directly challenge unproductive beliefs. (Delpit 1995, p. 155)

From its birth, the United States of America has been a land of immigrants and has acquired versatile pseudonyms, i.e., the Salad Bowl, the Melting Pot, etc. (Tichenor 1994). English is the language spoken by most people in the United States and is used in all governmental functions. Despite this predominance, many speak languages other than English. The 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) reported that of 291.5 million people aged five and over, 60.6 million spoke a language other than English at home. Further, the ACS listed over 300 languages spoken in the United States (Ryan 2013). Consequently, the population of English as Second Language (ESL) students is one of the fastest growing on American campuses. "Whether we are immediately aware of it or not, the United States is surely composed of a plethora of perspectives. If we plan to survive as a species on this planet we must certainly create multicultural curricula that educate our children to the

differing perspectives of our diverse population" (Delpit 1995, p. 177). Numbers and statistics have little to say about English language learners and are no substitute for actual lived humanity. Kanno and Applebaum (1995), explain that ESL programs educators and researchers "spend inordinate amounts of time discussing theories, instructional methods, and program evaluation," (p. 32) but few actually turn to the ESL students to ask them how they conceive the English language learning experience in the program they attend. Pinar and Grumet (1976) believe that when we speak of education, we are speaking of man's experience in the world. In this chapter, I suggest that a promising – though provocative and perilous – approach to ESL praxis, curriculum, and theory making begins with a "*return to the ESL learners themselves.*" For if we do not see students for who they are and strive to understand the elements of their ESL learning experience, then they remain "invisible" to the enterprise of understanding diversity in the 21st century. To be human is to be concerned with meaning and to desire meaning. When used as a framework for research, phenomenology can provide a disciplined pursuit of meanings connected to the educational experience of ESL students in an IEP milieu. A phenomenological framework helps shift the focus from a top-down, mechanical understanding and theorizing of ESL students' experience to a bottom-up exploration of how they make sense of experience and transform that experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning.

1 Literature Review

I turned to a brief literature review to explore how personal stories of ESL learners have (or have not) already been approached under a phenomenological light to inform ESL praxis, curriculum, and theory making. A study of ESL students' perceptions of their experience needs forcibly begin around contextualizing questions as a means towards an integrative literature review: what do we already know about ESL students' experience in Intensive English Programs (IEP)? How has their experience been spoken of and defined? What is meant by experience? What are the criteria of experience? How has other research incorporated ESL students' perception of their experience as a vital element in ESL and IEP curriculum development and ESL theory-making at large? While studies on the experience of non-native English speakers are thriving everywhere, qualitative literature is rarer when it comes to the more *specific crowd of ESL students in IEP settings*. A review of the literature has evidenced that studies usually approach ESL education with a focus on "the *phenomenon* of Second Language acquisition, but not on the *living individual human being*" (Conle 1992, p. 198). Issues addressed are limited to those of language learning assessment, proficiency, theory of acquisition, effective classroom practices, *does and don'ts* in ESL educator preparation, and grammatical discourse, sociolinguistic or communicative competence.

The literature has evidenced a gap indicating that ESL educators and theorists lack a certain qualitative and phenomenological layer of understanding of ESL

learners' experience in IEP contexts. Gass and Selinker (2001) state: "the study of second language acquisition impacts and draws from many other areas of study, among them, linguistics, psychology, psycholinguistics, sociology, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, and education" (p.35). Clearly, this suggests the human element *per se* is fragmented across the academic fields, compartmentalized as each science picks and chooses what aspect of human experience to study. The above literature speaks of the challenges ESL students newly arrived in IEP settings encounter: education and culture shock, socio-linguistic integration and adaptation, and acculturation; however, the study of students' actual *lived* experience is a developing discourse in ESL curriculum, praxis, and theory making.

Undeniably, few studies concern themselves with the *lived* experience of ESL students in an IEP. In her publication, King (2000) argues that while the theory of *perspective transformation* would offer a remarkable framework from which to examine the adult ESL learning experience. Her research sought to provide a window into the adult ESL learner's experience by asking what common themes were evident in the perspective transformations and what facilitates perspective transformation. Baker (1999) undertook to explore the social and attitudinal factors inherent in the language acquisition of ESL learners suggesting that negative orientations, motivations, and attitudes might cripple not only learning but also the experiences to be had. Baker's (1999) study serves as a reminder that ESL students' experiences are not affected solely by their current IEP environment, but, also by their developing identities through life's journey. This is central to Kanno and Applebaum's (1995) discussion are the stories of Japanese secondary-level students who studied at different ESL programs. The authors found that:

> The analysis of their stories reveals that learning English for these Japanese secondary-level students is inextricably intertwined with establishing their identities in a new environment. When ESL experience is viewed this way, a gap between what ESL students need to learn and what current ESL programs offer becomes apparent. […] The ESL curriculum seen from the ESL students' standpoint reveals quite a different picture from that viewed from the usual top-down perspective. From the educators' point of view, English-language acquisition is viewed as the single most important educational goal for this student group. However, when we turn our attention to the students' experience of the curriculum, it becomes evident that English acquisition in the ESL curriculum cannot be treated separately from the larger issue of ESL students' personal and educational growth. (p. 33, 46)

Norrid-Lacey and Spencer (1999) turned to the experience of Hispanic immigrants to gain insights into the everyday lives of Latino immigrants at a large, urban high school. The study involved 70 ESL students who reported "the ESL classes to be renowned for being watered down and more fun than educationally useful." The program coordinator reported that teacher sensitivity to and respect for the students' native language, culture and needs varied, but generally, they showed lower expectations and, in some cases "even thinly-veiled racism." The ESL students reported feeling "ashamed" or "strange" and seeking to remain in the program for reasons associated with social comfort only – not academic success. In sum, in the literature surveyed, there is a sense that ESL students are but disjointed "cultural bits and pieces" scattered everywhere, broken down in units, fragmentalized in their humanity.

In *Experience and Education* (1997), Dewey criticizes traditional education for lacking in wholistic understanding of students and designing curricula overly focused on content rather than content *and* process. Dewey argues that educators must first understand the nature of human experience and recognize that what is deemed a rewarding experience for one individual can potentially be detrimental to another. In other words, two experiences of the same event by two different persons are never the same. It ensues that a return to the experience of the individual can effectively work as a rationale for selecting educational practices that would value and enhance those experiences. But what is experience? Dewey (1997) defines experience as democratic and humane and incorporates the concepts of continuity, interaction, and growth:

> The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before, and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after. In addition, there can be no experience without a reflective ability […]. Unless we go over past experiences in our mind, unless we reflect upon them and by seeing what is similar in them to those now present, [we cannot] go on to form a judgment of what may be expected in the present situation. (p. 37, 68)

Schwab (1973) proposed to understand experience through "agents of translation" or "five bodies of experience:" subject matter, learner, milieu, teachers, and curriculum-making (p. 502). His model is useful in that it can provide a road map for diving into the complexities of experience.

This chapter presents results from applying both Dewey and Schwab's definitional parameters in an exploration of the experiences of ESL learners in an Intensive English Program (IEP) setting; thus, suggesting a way of bridging the gap in the literature. The exploration began with a set of questions: How does a phenomenological investigation of ESL students' perceptions of their experience in an Intensive English Program (IEP) inform ESL daily praxis, curriculum, and theory making practices? How do ESL students *construct* their experience in an IEP? What overarching and/or conceptual meanings or *themes* emerge from their constructions? What significance do these meanings or themes bear on ESL praxis, curriculum, and theory-making?

2 Phenomenology as Explorative Gear

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena. The word phenomenon comes from the Greek *phaenesthai*, to flare up, to show itself, to appear. Phenomenon means to bring to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day. Phenomenology asks, "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the *lived* experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" Phenomenology also asks, "What is this or that kind of experience like" (van Manen 1990, p. 178). In this chapter exploration, the *phenomenon* is the

experience of a cohort of 19 university-level international students studying English in an Intensive English Program (IEP). With phenomenology as an explorative framework, the focus is on the immediacy of lived experience or the lifeworld – what Husserl (1962) refers to as *Lebenswelt*. In order to break down this *Lebenswel*t, it is necessary to consider four existentials: lived space (spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived human relation (relationality or communality) and lived time (temporality). While the detractors of phenomenology as a plausible inquiry framework may argue that it lacks objectivity, the contrary could not be truer and there exist several phenomenological processes or a phenomenology of practice that aid the research process.

The first step in the research process is that of "bracketing" (also known as "*Epoché*") during which the researcher "brackets out" any presuppositions or contaminated worldviews or assumptions, refrains from judgment to examine the phenomenon in a fresh, open, almost naïve, new way. *Epoché* requires a new way of looking at things, a way that requires that we learn to see what stands before our eyes from the vantage point of a pure transcendental ego. In phenomenological research, the researcher is not passive. He/she undergoes a "research purification" process, a phenomenological "reduction" to identify data in its purest form. Imaginative variation aims at grasping the structural essences of experiences, which is typically done via the formulation of themes. Synthesis is the final step of articulating, summarizing, and making meaning. Phenomenology is not interested in problem solving nor seeking a final, correct, hard data-driven answer, calculative techniques or methods that "get results." Empirical generalization is not the aim of phenomenological research. Instead, phenomenology is a mode of inquiry into the *stream of consciousness*, into the world of being – which aims at understanding the meaning of life by probing pre-reflective awareness. Since it begins with the premise that reality is socially constructed, no longer out there but intersubjectively negotiated, a phenomenological framework had potential for enabling the researcher to look into natural contexts for the ways in which ESL students *make sense of their world* and for enabling the actors *to reflect* on the meaning of their experiences. The significance of this chapter's exploration resides in the thrust to deepen understanding of and reflection on the specifics, essences, and constructions of ESL students' experience in an IEP as a basis for re-thinking ESL curriculum, daily praxis, and theory making.

3 Data Collection and Analysis

Before any exploration could begin, approval from an Institutional Review Board was secured. The study spanned 6 months (the equivalent of 14 academic weeks). The setting was a small rural town, approximately 3 hours away from two other major Eastern metropolises. The Intensive English Program (IEP) was itself a programmatic extension of an International Education Center at an American college and offered intermediate and advanced ESL courses. ESL students sought an

academic degree, were exchange students interested in cultural immersion, or were staying only briefly to improve their communication skills. The study included 19 participants, age 16–21: 15 ESL students, three ESL instructors, and the IEP director. Of the 15 ESL students, three were from Korea, four were from Ecuador, one was from Russia, three were from Japan, one was from China, two were from Saudi Arabia, and one was from Africa. The ESL instructors and IEP director were all American citizens. Their voices were sought to help flesh out the layers of experience. The IEP director and one of the ESL instructors had been pioneers in setting up a clearly defined ESL curriculum to ensure the continuation of the IEP as a full-fledged university-sponsored program. One of the two ESL instructors had travelled extensively internationally and spoke a second language. Participation was voluntary and a strong ethos of confidentiality and anonymity was stressed.

A four-component instrument was utilized and included: (1) interviews, (2) documents collection, (3) ESL class observations, and (4) reflective journals. Two one-hour long interviews were held with each participant. The purposes of the interviews were:

- To generate data regarding the participants' life story, including (but not limited to) where they were from, where they had traveled to, how long they had been in the IEP and/or studying English as a second language;
- To obtain details about their experience in the IEP and;
- To develop a conversational relation with the researcher about their experience. This last purpose was motivated by the belief that the best way to enter a person's lifeworld is to participate in it. Indeed, phenomenological research requires of the researcher that he or she stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations.

Additionally, ESL courses were observed over the course of 14 academic weeks and participants were asked to gather a variety of artifacts that they thought best captured and represented their experience and to keep daily journals for the duration of the study.

Four types of artifacts were collected:

- Miscellaneous documents such as IEP brochures, handouts, syllabi, etc.;
- Photographs generated by the ESL students along with farewell letters written by the ESL students;
- A class observation chart was created. These direct class observations provided the opportunity to understand and capture the context within which participants interacted, to see things that may routinely escape awareness among participants in the setting by being discovery-oriented and inductive, and to learn things that participants would otherwise be unwilling or reluctant to share in an open interview;
- Last, but not least, the ESL student participants were asked to keep daily entries about their experience. The journals serve to capture the *stream of consciousness* or the stream of experience of the students. These journal entries generated approximately 20 pages per student participant.

In terms of coding and data analysis, the phenomenological process of "*horizontalization*" was applied – by which the data was first examined for relevant expressions or "horizons;" then in a process of reduction and elimination, the invariant constituents in the narratives were finally clustered and thematized. Individual portrait narratives were then generated. Though each unique to each participant, the portraits followed a consistent outline to include: participant's background and personality description, participant's description of his/her perceived academic experience at the IEP, participant's description of his/her perceived non-academic experience at the IEP, miscellaneous reflective thoughts, and comments on the photographs and farewell letters generated.

4 Findings

Having posed key questions and established a framework whereby to freshly rethink ESL learners' experience as they acquire English skills in an Intensive English Program (IEP), I now turn to summarizing the discoveries that I have made.

A phenomenological enterprise is both *descriptive* and *interpretive* of the search and struggle for meaning. The *interpretive* step was done to respond to the question: what overarching and/or conceptual meanings emerged from the ESL students' construction of their experience in the IEP? Out of the individual participants' portraits, eight themes emerged and are described below. Note that the ESL student participants' contributions are transcribed verbatim without editing since the goal of a phenomenological exploration is precisely to allow these voices to be heard as they are, irrelevant of perceived choppiness in the process of English as a Second Language acquisition.

Theme 1: A Narrative of Lived Experience. The majority of ESL students expressed the stance that experience alone is a teacher. They agreed that their experience could not be reduced to curriculum taught in classrooms. As one participant from Ecuador put it: "My experience here is more than just learning English" (*sic*). A student from Saudi Arabia stated, "Experience is very important. Actually, reading book is most important for the study but study is not all of our life. Study is one part of our life. I did experience many things in my life so that's why I can think about different ways about this IEP experience" (*sic*). In other words, "pedagogy is not the province of school alone. Pedagogy is the province of all experience" (Pope 2002, p. 420). Pedagogy is about the transmission of knowledge but the individual narratives posed questions relative to the nature of that knowledge: in contrast to the constructed, standardized, codified, and measured knowledge afforded in the ESL classroom, the ESL student participants found that their linguistic knowledge quadrupled when "out in the open world." There was expressed a shared sense that their experience did not begin in the ESL classroom but "out there, on the wider campus," and in the world. The classroom was simply a continuation of what happened out-

side of the IEP walls, and not *vice versa*. The ESL classroom itself was neither the sum nor the pinnacle of the students' experience.

Theme 2: A Narrative of Marginalization, Power, and Voice Across the portraits, there was an outcry for affirmation as the ESL students expressed the need for teachers to know and embrace them as *whole*. The ESL students expressed the wish that their teachers would recognize them as continually *being* and *evolving* in and across the past, the present, and the future in an ever-expanding moving back and forth between the social, the historic, and the personal of each individual. In their journals, 12 of the 15 ESL student participants recorded how they endured what was perceived as a lack of genuine interest in them and in their concerns from the ESL instructors, the IEP director, and/or the community at large. One such instance read: "The people who are in charge of the international program did not care about my situation. They do not know how I felt during those days when I moved in. They do not imagine how many times I cried because I was lonely and unhappy. I was tired, tired that I could not express myself how I really am" (*sic*). To have a voice is power. The ESL student participants expressed that to have one's voice heard and recognized would be a means of asserting the centrality of their characters and experiences as the words they uttered would become powerful and self-defining speech acts – the very basis for empowerment. One participant journaled that his limited English communication skills made him feel self-conscious and angry. He felt "dumbed-down" and his sentiment was that his native counterparts seemed to correlate his mediocre speaking skills with a lack of intelligence on his part. While he worked twice as hard to convey his feelings, he spoke of his experience as a "lack of empathy" from native speakers. Conversely, other participants found their ESL instructors to be authentically curious about them, but there again, their cultural tradition forbade that one speaks negatively of older, more experienced peers or elder.

Theme 3: A Narrative of Faith. The ESL student participants represented many faith/religious traditions. At least seven of them explicitly mentioned the importance of their faith as a coping means. For them, faith kept them anchored in a sense of potential achievement, self-confidence, and fortitude. Faith and spirituality were deemed key shapers of their overall experience. Without identification with any particular religious denomination, one participant stated, "I think religion, faith is very important for me and other people here. We have to think about life and faith gives me time to think about my life and purpose here. We can see sacrifice and love and we can feel and think about that. This IEP is a lot of sacrifice for me and religion helps me appreciate that" (*sic*).

Theme 4: A Narrative of Resilience, Hope, and Perseverance Dulebohn (1991) defined culture shock as "the psychological reaction following the immersion into an unfamiliar culture, for which the sojourner does not have prior knowledge and his or her behavioral learning is culturally inappropriate". In response to culture shock, many ESL student participants expressed reverting to the shield of persever-

ance and resilience. One participant wrote the following in his journal: “But now, I am in another step: I cried a lot two months ago and almost wanted to leave. But now, I want to study. That is why I came here and I am going to do that. I am trying to appreciate and enjoy everything. I know how everything I have here and in Korea is precious for me now, in this time” (*sic*). Some of the character traits that the ESL students considered essential to a resilient ability included openness, creativity, a sense of humor, determination, organization, and optimism. “What makes a student resilient is the relative strength of individual characteristics and external protective processes compared to the influence of risks and vulnerabilities in the external environment” (Winfield 1994, p. 38). Throughout the portraits, resilience was consistently defined as a dynamic rather than a static concept.

Theme 5: A Narrative of Self-Quest, Self-Discovery, Growth, and Agency. Expanding one’s horizons and arriving at a better self- and world- understanding were personal benefits that the ESL student participants noted quite frequently. The students’ actual experience matched the IEP director’s prediction that “I hope that they get more of a sense of themselves. For all of us, that is kind of a life-long sort of journey and I hope that it begins here for them in a large degree because there are so many opportunities here” (*sic*). To some extent, the ESL student participants’ stories built a case for the Spiral Dynamics transformational model developed by Beck and Cowan (1996) which argues that human nature is not fixed and when forced by circumstances, humans adapt to the environment by constructing new conceptual models of the world to be able to handle new challenges. The acculturation and adaptation processes beget transition and transformation, which in turn, result in full assimilation for some, resistance for others, or still a sense of multiculturalism. Self-discovery meant that something unexpected was unfolding. For instance, some ESL student participants were amazed at their new ability to now dream in English. Many of the ESL student participants described how self-rediscovery was accompanied by the emerging consciousness of additional layers of personal abilities and/or the unexpected opportunity for self-realization in some particular area.

Theme 6: A Narrative of Pain. When emotions are inordinately intensified, they negatively affect experience. Many of the ESL portraits were drowned in narratives of hurt, disappointment, confusion, and a sense of injustice or discrimination. There seemed to emerge a *requiem* of pain. The descriptors of pain included: peer pressure, ego, language formation and identity formation, shaken patriotism, loneliness, personal status (wealth in America *versus* poverty in home country), lack of camaraderie and community, adjustment, patience, and stress. The *requiem* of pain metaphor should not, however, be regarded as a reflection of the IEP’s programmatic effectiveness. Rather, it evidenced the linking of ESL students’ experience to that of a U-curve, starting up high with excitement but meeting with certain despondency as students collided head-on with the mainstream culture. Wisdom-experience would be the only final yield over time with the benefit of reason *and* reflection added to the layer of pain.

Theme 7: A Narrative of Friendship and Community Ultimately, the ESL students' stories was a discourse of "in-betweenness," of a sense of dichotomy, of standing between not only two cultures or two languages, but also between a "former" or an "evolving" self. Friendship was experienced as a means to bridge the "brokenness" and feel "whole" and "in one piece" again (*sic*). Because they participated in many non-academic events sponsored by the IEP together, the ESL students did not see themselves as isolatable entities but rather always in relation to one another. Friendship was perceived as not only a means of socialization, a way into the culture, but also as a means towards achieving a sense of belongingness, rootedness, and identification with a broader community. To some extent, the ESL student participants added a new layer of meaning to the notion of community, unwittingly putting forth an idea that much resembles that of "intimacy-in-community" – a phrased coined by Liston and Garrison (2004):

> Like intimacy as it is commonly understood, intimacy-in-community embodies trust, the sharing of meaningful experiences, a degree of mutuality and reciprocity among participants, a commitment to open communication, and depth of feelings. Intimacy-in-community requires a large group of people sharing common experience, transforming isolated "Is" into a sense of "We." (p. 40)

Theme 8: A Narrative of Liberation The majority of ESL students were recent high school graduates. One participant journaled: "I am free at last, free at last!" (*sic*). One participant explained how she was free to recover her unique voice and form her own critical opinion, something she was not permitted to do in her home country. Another expressed how free she was to re-invent herself as a future "would-be American" and housewife. Another expressed how he enjoyed being able to return to his dormitory at a time that suited him – without curfews. Still, another described how free he was to travel everywhere. However, now freed from parental supervision and other locus of control, in a foreign and far-away land, their sense of freedom was also accompanied with a more acute sense of responsibility and wisdom. The correlative of the sense of in-betweenness aforementioned was precisely the freedom to become whomever they wanted.

In sum, there are many themes here. And yet, each seems to say something significant about the phenomenon of ESL students' experience in an IEP. Like the spokes of a wheel, a theme radiates and presents myriads avenues for exploration, pointing to related meanings, places, people, and situations in which the phenomenon under investigation is precipitated and intensified (Douglass and Moustakas 1985). Inevitably, the themes above are not exhaustive of the full meaning of that experience. "Expressing the fundamental or overall meaning of a text is a judgment call. Different readers might discern different fundamental meanings. And it does not make one interpretation necessarily [truer] than another" (van Manen 1990, p. 94). The themes, however, do clearly establish that the ESL students' experience ballooned out of exclusive language-experiences into fuller, life-size living-experiences, including the rainbow of joys and sorrows.

5 Discussion and Implications for ESL Praxis, Curriculum, and Theory Making

In this section, I would like to emphasize the gains a phenomenological approach has afforded me as an ESL instructor and educator preparation professional. Next, I will discuss some of the implications of the findings against the larger backdrop of rethinking diversity in the 21st century. Specifically, it is my hope that some of the ensuing ideas can ricochet into the heralding of new practices specifically salient to educator preparation.

With the aid of phenomenology, I realized the limits of using a single version of reality. Now reflecting on my investigation, I could not concur more with van Manen (1990) that "phenomenological projects and their methods often have a transformative effect on the researcher [herself]. Indeed, phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness, and tact" (p. 163). I have learned to breathe the students in, to expand and extend myself to allow myself and others to be more, and to step out of my skin of ESL instructor solely as the provider of language skills. I have been transformed by the dynamics of human relationships. I have derived the sense that the ideal ESL instructor must never strive to explain or impose his or her vision – but simply invite the students to stand by him or her to see for themselves, with their own eyes and being, and form a mental picture of the destination and the paths to take on their own. Eventually, ESL instruction is but an invitation and the ESL instructor, an unobtrusive host, subtly accompanying the learners so that the fullness of experience can occur. I can now see things I could not see before for I have come to know the students' experiences not by reading scholarly books and articles but, rather, by living fully, side-by-side with them. I borrow the words of Moustakas (1994) to express how significant the gain has been for me:

> This connectedness between what is out there, in its appearance and reality, and what is within me in reflective thought and awareness, is in truth a wondrous gift of being human. The whole process of being within something, being within ourselves, being within others, and correlating these outer and inner experiences and meanings is infinite, endless, eternal. This is beauty of knowledge and discovery. It keeps us forever awake, alive. (p. 65)

The ESL student participants have done more than affording me with the gift of their *lived* experience. They have opened up a space for personal and professional illumination and taught me that "one must be open to the call of what it is to be deeply human and heeding that call to walk with others in life's ventures" (Pinar et al. 2000) in order to receive life. Sadly, the *vibrancy of lived life* is precisely what is missing in ESL discourse, textbooks, theories, curriculum, etc.

To be clear, trying to understand the ESL students' IEP experience is like looking at the facets of a crystal, which, as it is turned over, reveals yet another facet, catching, holding, and reflecting the light according to its own particular slant. All human experience occurs within a certain context and specific parameters. The supporting structure of the ESL students' experience can be constructed around five major beams: (1) cognitive/intellectual/linguistic, (2) spiritual/personal, (3) affective/rela-

tional, (4) active, (5) communal – forming a *continuum of experience paradigm*. Experience takes manifold natures as it is shaped differently along the continuum from inner to outer areas, depending on the position of each individual student along the continuum and on the perceived magnitude of the different domains or horizons for them.

When positioned against the literature, the findings of this study led to a departure from the Deweyan stand that some educational experience can be *mis-educative*. Most of the ESL students' narratives powerfully conveyed that even when painful experiences occurred, they chose to move on filled with the hope of brighter future promises and a resilient attitude. Beyond any value judgment on the Deweyan argument, it is a fact that we learn the most in the crucible of pain. The ESL student participants made the case that an experience is as educative as the measure of one's openness to it.

One of the many advantages of the researcher as a "third" eye on the face of experience resulted in the exposure of variances and discordances even amidst the *emic* perspective. The members of the *emic* culture were not always unified in their judgment or appraisal of a given reality. For instance, the ESL instructors expressed being genuinely interested in the ESL students' cultural backgrounds and being sensitive to the fact that certain temperament styles or teaching styles might be received in varying levels of acuteness across cultures. For the ESL students, however, it was precisely those teachers who allegedly claimed to be more open and erudite about cultural differences who, in the end, were perceived as noncommittal and more culturally biased. Likewise, the ESL instructors and IEP director did not speak profusely about difficulties the ESL students might have been experiencing nor did they refer to relationships with classmates and roommates – two areas that eloquently surfaced in the ESL students' narratives.

A legitimate question would be "why weren't the ESL instructors and IEP director more articulate about the difficulties and pains of the ESL students?" Quite naturally, as human beings, we flee in the presence of potential pain. However, is not dealing with pain one of the unspoken *pedagogic duties* of any teacher? While ESL educator preparation in the United States of America is increasingly standards-based and driven, findings of the present study suggest an innovative and plausible approach founded on the recognition of the ESL student as an *experiential learner* and on the integration of his/her experiences as the basis for ESL curriculum design, praxis and theorizing. This approach has the potential of stretching the meanings of "diversity" from merely a buzz word into an actual lived experience for both student and educator. I perceive the ensuing recommendations as a *hidden curriculum* to which ESL practitioners could orient themselves. Ideally, my hope is that any ESL instructor who reads this chapter would come to embrace a stand of higher self-awareness and pedagogical perceptiveness as vehicles for an enhanced, spiritualized, and holistic approach to ESL instruction, curriculum, and theory making.

Implication 1: Self-Awareness and Pedagogic Critical Reflection. One major implication of the research findings is the primordialness of critical self-awareness and pedagogic reflection in the daily praxis of ESL educators. We need to be reflec-

tive practitioners. There are many advantages to a critical reflective pedagogy. First, the practice can heighten awareness of how environing and personal conditions such as personality and teaching styles impact the experience to be had by students. Second, the practice of intersubjectivity and reflection mean that students become *essentially accessible* to ESL educators – i.e., that both parties are aware of their mutual *co-presence* in achieving an *intentional* communication. Third, critical reflective pedagogy stretches the descriptive and interpretive sensibilities of ESL educators by breaking away with the traditional hierarchic dynamics between students and teachers. Self-reflection is the manner by which pedagogy tries to come to terms with self and other. "Self" and "other" are fundamental in the pedagogic relation (van Manen 1990). In a nutshell,

> A primary responsibility of [ESL] educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth, and extract from them all what contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile. (Dewey 1997, p. 40)

Implication 2: An Ethic and Praxis of Love, Tact, Hope, and Compassion. The language of objectives, aims, teacher expectations, intended learning outcomes, etc. is a language of hope out of which hope has been systematically purged. It is a language of *hopeless hope*. The point is not that curricular language of educational aims and objectives is wrong. Rather, we lack a certain fundamental understanding: what it means to hope for students entrusted in our care. To hope for them, we must *love* them. Love that signifies an *acting and active* presence. Love is foundational for all knowing of human experience. Knowing is not a purely cognitive act. Specially, where I meet the other person in his/her weakness, struggles and pains, I experience the undeniable presence of *loving responsibility*. When I love a person, I want to know what contributes toward the good of that person – so, the principle that guides my actions is a sense of *pedagogic good*. Do most ESL educators approach their daily praxis mindfully with this heartfelt stance?

Implication 3: A Pedagogy of Growth Through Intersubjectivity. The findings also suggest that ESL daily practice should be not only concerned with growth but *inherently directed to holistic growth* (as opposed to just linguistic or academic growth), affording ESL students the proper support and guidance. This is echoed in Dewey (1997): "it is argued that growth is not enough; we must also specify the *direction* in which growth takes place, the *end* towards which it tends" (p. 36).

Implication 4: A Pedagogy of the Unique Amidst Diversity. Given the unique quality of the narratives that emerged, there is ample evidence that ESL instruction should be *pedagogy of the unique*. A theory of the unique begins *with* and *from* the single case, searches for the universal qualities, and returns to the single case –

meanwhile being enriched by the journey. ESL daily instruction demands that ESL educators deeply absorb themselves into the unique experience of each ESL student.

Implication 5: A Pedagogy of Relations, Listening, Sensitivity, and Here-and-Now Presentness. In contrast to the literature, which primarily emphasized the cultural and linguistic challenges of ESL students, this chapter posits that ESL instruction should be *pedagogy of relations and openness* – i.e., openness to self and others, openness to pain, openness to the moment (as *lived* experiences are situated in the *here and now*), openness to the human, openness to the multi facets of truth (and not simply *teacher*-truth), and openness to growth. ESL instruction is *presence* instruction whose power resides in "*in-the-moment*" availability. Listening means being open and glorifying what students have to say as equal meaning-makers and truth-holders. Being *fully* present means fully *encountering* the other. When we turn away from another human being, we not only miss encountering that individual in his/her humanity, but we also miss a moment of self-discovery. Everyone we meet deserves our attention for his/her sake and because of the potential the encounter has to shape our becoming. An ESL daily practice centered on relations is, ultimately (at least ideally), a practice centered on community building, where the "I" and the "Thou" cease to be threatened by each other.

Implication 6: A Life-Large ESL Experiential Curriculum. The literature brought forth the usual debate over skills or content instruction in language acquisition. This chapter makes the proposition that *lived* experience itself be supplemented to the subject matter of ESL instruction as in *a life-large experiential ESL curriculum*. One foreseeable consequence of embracing a life-large experiential ESL curriculum would be the bursting of traditional (and often physical) definitions of the ESL classroom. A life-large ESL curriculum would imply that the ESL classroom be extended beyond "four walls" into life itself, into the students' *lifeworld*. This transcending definition would satisfy the finding in this study that the ESL students' IEP experience cannot be curtailed to the academic content of the usual classroom. A life-large ESL experiential curriculum would entail that the ESL classroom be fused into life itself, that the stage of life actually becomes the ESL classroom. Exposure to life in a different culture is in itself educational. Concretely, such a curriculum would imply a need to increase and prioritize outdoor activities such as field trips, partnerships, etc. in which cultural and social interactions – as they would occur in the normal, natural flow of life – would be the objective. The feasibility of a life-large experiential ESL curriculum can be conceived through the systematic integration of extra-curricular activities or meta-courses in curricular designs geared towards creating a community with a shared experience.

Implication 7: A Spiritualized Curriculum. Teaching is not just an academic or cognitive exercise. It is a *spiritual investment* – spiritual not in a religious sense *per se* but instead in the sense of what points to the fullness of spirit, to that which is intelligent, vibrant, sentient, breathing and alive in a person.

> "Spiritual" in the sense of yearning with the largeness of life, of moving beyond left-brain ways of thinking, of befriending ourselves first so as to befriend others, always transcending, reaching for higher levels of awareness and meaning" (Iannone and Obenauf 1999, p. 6).

Based on this definition, could we venture to put forth the possibility of a spiritual ESL curriculum? A spiritual curriculum would honor students' journeys of meaning making and set free the dormant spiritual capacity within them. As Palmer (1988) states:

> We need to shake off the narrow notions that 'spiritual' questions are always about angels or ethers or must include the word *God*. Spiritual questions are the kind that we, and our students, ask everyday of our lives as we yearn to connect with the largeness of life: 'does my life have meaning and purpose?' 'Do I have the gifts that the world wants and needs?' 'Whom and what can I trust?' 'How can I arise above my fears?' 'How do I deal with suffering?' 'How does one maintain hope?' inwardly, we and our students ask such questions all the time. But you would not know it to hear us talk to ask questions that are not the deepest: 'Will that be on the test?' or 'How can I get a raise?' part of that risk is the embarrassed silence that may greet us if we ask our real questions aloud. When people ask these deep questions, they do not want to be saved in a religious manner but simply to be heard, they do not want fixes or formulas but compassion and companionship on the demanding journey called life…. Spiritual mentoring is about helping young people find questions that are worth asking because they are worth living, questions worth wrapping one's life around. Spiritual questions are embedded in our own lives. Whoever our students may be, whatever subject we teach, ultimately, we teach who we are… As long as we take ourselves into the classroom, we take our spirituality with us! Our only choice is whether we will reflect on the questions we are living and how we are living them in a way that might make our work more fruitful. 'How can I get through the day?' is not as promising a question as 'what truth can I witness to today?' (p. 6–8)

Implication 8: An ESL Transformative Learning Theory Approach. A predominant fashion in the review of the literature was to reduce the talk about ESL students to second language acquisition debates and intensive English programs to the controversy over skills versus content-based instruction or to discussions of best ESL instructional strategies. Phenomenology, on the other hand, asks how the educational experience can change the vision so that the world is encountered in a different, *deeper* way. Findings reported in this chapter point to the possibility of *transformative learning theory* as an additional powerful, impactful means of supplying a layer of meaning to ESL theory making. According to Mezirow (1997), *transformative learning theory* is the "process of effecting change in a frame of reference" (p. 5) equipped with the following arms: centrality of experience, critical reflection, and rational discourse.

> [We] have acquired a coherent body of experience – associations, concepts, values, feelings, and conditioned responses – frames of reference that define [our] life world. We transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our

> interpretations, beliefs, and habits of minds or points of view are based. Self-reflection can lead to significant personal transformations. (p. 5)

Rather than solely focusing on the best language acquisition techniques, a transformation approach to ESL theory making would redirect some of the focus on the ESL students' learning to the life of the learner – to include personal, academic, psychosocial, emotional, spiritual, and cross-cultural change promoted by the educational experience.

Implication 9: Relational Pedagogy as the Basis for ESL Theory. One other implication for ESL theory making would be a risk-taking attempt to shift the focus from primarily language acquisition theories to what Sidorkin (2002) has defended as the theory of relational pedagogy or pedagogy of relation. Restoring the power of relations is a stand I take. Such orientation can help reinvent the dynamics of interactions between ESL learners, ESL educators, and ESL theory-makers. Sidorkin (2002) argues that as teachers enter a dialogical relation with students, they cease to be authoritative figures, the power imbalance being somewhat lessened. Perhaps, ESL theory should not center solely on what teachers do (professional development, workshops, instructional techniques, materials design, test preparation, etc.) but rather on the building of genuine, unique, pedagogical relations.

Implication 10: ESL Theory, Human Action Research, and Narrative Inquiry Last, but not least, the study herein has brought forth the need to incorporate more human action research in the ESL field which would not reduce ESL learners to mere components (language, behavior, etc.) but establish them as fully conscious and intentional beings, seeking meaning, recognition, awareness, and the exercise of their own sense of agency. If the phenomenological investigation herein were to be extended, another route might consider the integration of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry would make deeper use of the letters and journals the ESL students generated.

> Life, as we come to it and as it comes to others, is filled with narrative fragments. Experience is a key concept in narrative inquiry. We study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. (Clandinin and Connelly 2000 p. 142)

There exists a dialectical relationship between language and experience. The challenge is to stay in touch with experience as much as possible for experience precedes any theory.

6 Limitations

It can be argued that it is impossible to describe any given human experience in its fullness. It may be that the ESL student participants herein were not fully conscious of their own experience: either because they were too busy living it to be asked to

add a reflective layer on every details of their experience, or because they all selected those features of experience "that seemed relevant and meaningful to their ongoing problems, needs, wants, and ends" (Pope 2002, p. 417). Clearly, the iceberg of the students' experience is much more profound than that which appeared in the individual portraits. However, even the inarticulate can serve as a repository for new experiences. While the sample size was small, ESL students' IEP experience emerged as an orthogonal and multidimensional phenomenon. It is a conglomerate of things and the "messiness" of it can be daunting to the phenomenological processes of reduction, interpretation, and synthesis.

7 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to report the findings of a study of how a phenomenological exploration into ESL students' experience in an Intensive English Program (IEP) could inform ESL instructional, curricular, and theoretical practices in rethinking diversity in K-12 classrooms, higher education settings, and more specifically, educator preparation programs. This conclusion cannot be a conclusion for, regardless of the level of our mindful attention to it, *experience alone reigns*. It knows neither boundaries nor peripheries. The ESL students went on experiencing even after this study had "formally ended." However, a phenomenological approach to the field of ESL has unearthed richer and deeper descriptions of learning and teaching when clothed with the very skin of human experience – which is as elastic and stretchable as there can be no single interpretation of human experience. The core lesson for ESL educator preparation is, beyond the common "not one size fits all", the urgency to tap into the fullness of life: phenomenology reminds us that there is a constant need to refer back to the world for effective ESL daily praxis, curriculum development, and theory building. As a framework, phenomenology spurs us on to mindfully awake to who we are as educators and researchers, what we do, why we do it, with whom we live and interact, whom we teach, what makes us who we are, how we influence one another, and to painstakingly engage in creating meaning collectively. Because phenomenology focuses on the individual's experience for the creation of meaning rather than the abstract experiences of others, it does promote inquiry, critical self- and pedagogical reflection. When ESL students' experiences are valued enough, ESL instruction can become enlivened with novel understandings of a creative force, with unprecedented ingenious ideas and innovations, with new perspectives that can augment the environing predictors of similarly powerful, impactful experiences. Phenomenology has the power to "humanize human life and human institutions to help human beings to become increasingly thoughtful, and thus, better prepared to act tactfully in situations" (van Manen 1990, p. 21). In the everglades world of standards, accountability, proficiency, quality assurance, ESL instructional effectiveness, ESL teacher preparation requirements, ESL student learning, theories of language acquisition, etc., phenomenology opens up a fresh outpouring into the quintessential purpose and end of education: the

shaping of human experience and of the human journey. That is why it should be increasingly valued and established in the fields of English as a Second Language, Teacher Preparation, and Education in general. *To the things themselves*!

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Part III
Transformative Practice for Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century

Getting Comfortable with the Uncomfortable: Conversations About Race, Culture, and Transformative Pedagogy in an Urban-Based Professional Learning Community

Althier M. Lazar and Danielle Nicolino

Abstract Teachers who know themselves, their students, and their practices are best positioned to create humane classrooms where students feel validated, cared for, and important. Teachers can acquire this knowledge through study, dialogue, self-reflection and a willingness to grapple with issues such as race. This chapter describes Danielle's (second author) attempt to invite her colleagues to join her in a professional learning community to explore the three pillars of transformationist pedagogy: knowing self, knowing students, and knowing practice (Howard 2006). The chapter details teachers' responses to these learning sessions and sets an agenda for professional learning communities that focuses on transformationist teaching.

Keywords Race · Culture · Transformative pedagogy · Professional learning community · Teachers' perspectives

1 Background

In today's classrooms, the majority of students of non-dominant backgrounds are often taught by white, middle class, and monolingual teachers. Some have acquired deficit notions about students and families of color who live in economically disinvested communities as a consequence of living in a racially and socially stratified society (Sleeter 2001). Unless these notions are unpacked and challenged, they may

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"default to the banking method of education critiqued by Paulo Freire (1973)" and see themselves as needing to "fill up supposedly passive students with forms of cultural knowledge deemed valuable by the dominant society" (Yosso 2005, p. 75). Also, even though educational research has long established the significance of seeing students' capacities, knowing and respecting students, and teaching in culturally sustaining ways (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1995; Paris 2012), there is no guarantee that teacher education programs will foster teacher candidates' dispositions toward these goals. These programs vary considerably in their missions and structures and some do not foster the kinds of orientations that teachers need to teach in socially equitable ways (Zeichner 2009). This leaves many teachers ill-prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students in underserved communities (Lucas 2011).

Conditions within schools can also make them less welcoming places for learning. Standardized teaching and high-stakes testing are common elements in these schools, constraining teachers' ability to differentiate instruction around students' knowledge, experiences, and heritage (Derman-Sparks and Ramsey 2011). Teachers are often pressured to focus on the material that is to be tested. Without a strong ballast of understanding about themselves, their students and their practices, teachers can become engulfed in the kinds of standardized teaching routines that relegate students' voices and experiences to the margins of the classroom.

To create culturally welcoming classrooms, teachers need to understand their own cultural identities, their students' everyday experiences and knowledge traditions, and their practices. These three dimensions of professional development are known collectively as transformationist pedagogy (Howard 2006). In the area of "knowing oneself," Howard invites teachers to explore issues of cultural identity including how they have been privileged and or subordinated across a range of cultural dimensions, including race. By examining issues such as racial privilege, colorblindness, and institutionalized racism, white teachers can move beyond the guilt and denial that is often associated with studying these issues, to seeing their responsibility for anti-racist actions within classrooms, schools, and society. From Howard's perspective, self-transformation is not merely about cultural awareness, but it is more broadly focused on the role that "White educators can and must play in understanding, decoding, and dismantling the dynamics of White dominance" (Howard 1999, p. 5). While Howard directs his message to white teachers, it is important for educators of all cultural groups to engage in the kinds of study and self-examination that he proposes.

Transformative pedagogy involves knowing about students' knowledge traditions, everyday experiences, and heritage. Students bring funds of knowledge to school that include historically accumulated practices across several knowledge domains (cooking, childcare, health, finances, travel, etc.) that are used to maintain households (Moll et al. 1992). These understandings and skills can be recognized and validated in the classroom. For instance, González et al. (2005) describe a teacher who learned from families that many of the children in her class sold candy. She then created a literacy-based "candy-making and selling" unit that addressed school standards in the areas of mathematics, health, science, and consumer economics. By integrating students' unofficial knowledge with academic content, the teacher created a third space in the

classroom to stimulate student engagement and learning. Part of the transformative teachers' responsibility, then, is to capture and reflect on how knowledge of self and students' knowledge can be used to inform teaching.

A transformationist orientation also aligns with the notion of critical caring. *Critical* caring involves knowing how factors such as race, ethnicity, and language shape the sociocultural and political conditions of students' lives and educational opportunities (Rolón-Dow 2005). Teachers who understand and use this knowledge to maximize students' learning "care with political clarity" (Valenzuela 1999). They demonstrate caring by challenging unfair policies and practices that undermine students' learning. They go beyond what Noddings (2005) calls *authentic* caring, which focuses on knowing students and building relationships with them, and *aesthetic* caring, which centers on students' academic performance.

To create classrooms where students feel validated and cared for, teachers need systems of support where they can explore elements of transformationist pedagogy. Professional learning communities (PLCs) can offer safe and supportive contexts for teacher learning and inquiry (Archer 2012; Bitterman 2010; Brucker 2013; Cochran-Smith and Lytle 2009; DuFour et al. 2005; Hipp and Huffman 2003). In these learning/inquiry groups, teachers work together to solve problems, create plans, share ideas, and generate questions. They also develop strong relationships with one another, and it is within this comfortable environment that teachers can grapple with uncomfortable situations and issues. Often precipitated and led by teachers, "PLCs are based on a rationale that when teachers work collaboratively, the quality of learning and teaching improves" (Stoll et al. 2006, p. 611). Teacher-led PLCs can increase the social capital among teachers and also "provide opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles related to bringing about changes in teaching and learning" (Stoll et al. 2006, p. 237). In most PLCs, teachers choose topics of study that are most relevant to their needs. Teachers interact with other teachers to construct knowledge, reflect on their practices, and make plans for future inquiry. In this way, professional development is mutually supportive, collaborative, and ongoing (Hunzicker 2011).

As one of the lead teachers in her school, Danielle organized a short-term exploratory professional learning community (PLC) to engage her colleagues in elements of transformationist pedagogy in order to set an agenda for learning about transformative teaching. These group meetings allowed her to test the waters of the PLC experience and solicit teachers' perspectives of transformative teaching so that she and her colleagues could plan a longer-term study of transformationist pedagogy. In this chapter, we describe Danielle's and her colleagues' reactions to this experience and provide a set of recommendations for constructing a more permanent learning community to explore transformationist teaching.

2 The Study

This work is rooted in our personal and professional journeys as white educators who have evolved in understanding issues of equity and how they inspire our work. We have come to recognize the privileges associated with whiteness, the structural

and institutional inequalities of schooling and society, the varieties of cultural wealth that are embedded in underserved communities but are often overlooked in schools, and our responsibilities to work with educators, families, and members of communities to enlarge students' literacy learning opportunities. Danielle, a teacher in her 30s, had been teaching in her urban-based school for 7 years and had studied the concept of transformative pedagogy while in her doctoral program. She became invested in helping teachers create learning environments where students' backgrounds and knowledge traditions would be valued. Althier, one of the teacher educators in Danielle's doctoral program, had taught a foundations course where she shared her own evolution as a white ally and teacher educator committed to social justice work (Lazar 2004). She later served as Danielle's dissertation advisor, allowing both authors to pursue a joint investigation of teacher learning through the professional learning community model.

Danielle conducted this preliminary study at an urban elementary school located in an underserved community in a major east coast city. The school, Shelton Elementary (pseudonym), served a large population of students from non-dominant cultural communities: 60% African American, 22% Asian and Pacific Islander, 12% Latinx, and 6% White, 98% of whom received free or reduced-price meals. Students' literacy performance on the state's standardized test had been slowly increasing, and school leaders were continuing to take steps to improve it by adopting multiple standardized programs. These standardized programs included scripted curricula in all subject areas that were to be delivered with fidelity by all teachers. Students also participated in a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) model where teachers analyzed data from standardized assessments that were given each marking period. This data determined the type of interventions that the teachers would deliver to the students based on their needs. Students also took part in standardized test preparation once a week, which taught test-taking strategies such as highlighting, eliminating answers, and creating graphic organizers.

Committed to helping her colleagues construct transformationist orientations, Danielle invited all of the teachers in her building to join with her to form a short-term study group to explore this topic. She explained that transformationist pedagogy involved the study of oneself, students, and one's teaching practices. Four teachers indicated that they would participate in the experience (pseudonyms are used for these participants). Jane, an African American teacher in her 40s, had taught the upper elementary grades in the district for 15 years. The other three teachers were white, including Dorothy who taught second grade and had been teaching in the school for 5 years. Suzie, a first-grade teacher, had taught at the school for 3 years and Mary had taught third grade for 4 years.

To make these sessions relevant, Danielle invited her four colleagues to describe, in writing, who they were as individuals and as teachers. She also asked them to describe their students, their motivation for participating in a learning community with colleagues, and their interest in the topic of transformational teaching. Danielle used their responses to structure a six-session exploratory PLC that would introduce her colleagues to elements of transformationist pedagogy. We distinguish this PLC from most others in that topics were planned by Danielle, based on teachers' initial interest in the topic. We refer to this PLC as preliminary or exploratory, as it was

designed to elicit teacher feedback so a more organic, teacher-driven PLC could be designed.

The first two sessions were devoted to learning about oneself, the second two were focused on learning about students, and the final sessions were centered on learning about practice. The first two sessions focused on sharing autobiographical writing, discussing cultural identities including similarities and differences between teachers and students, and a focus on racial identity formation. Sessions three and four included discussions about race, funds of knowledge, and the significance of families and communities in students' lives. Teachers were also introduced to the Descriptive Review process (Carini 2011) in which teachers methodically share students' artifacts to generate rich, complex portraits of students and their academic abilities to inform their teaching goals. In the final sessions, five and six, teachers reflected on what they could do to bring students' voices into the classroom, create more meaningful classroom environments for students, and improve relationships with students (a complete description of goals and key activities is included at the end of the chapter).

Danielle acted as a participant observer in the PLC. Her role varied from session to session. She facilitated discussions, kept time, took occasional field notes, and participated as a learner who co-constructed knowledge with her colleagues. She audio-recorded the discussions for each of the meetings and asked teachers to keep reflective journals of how these meetings shaped their thinking. At the end of the sessions, she conducted hour-long interviews with each of the teachers which focused on how the PLC shaped their thinking about themselves, students, and their instruction. Open and axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998) were used to generate assertions about the impact of the PLC on teachers' understandings about transformative teaching.

We used Howard's transformationist pedagogical model (2006) to organize data from teachers' group sessions, their interviews, and their reflective journals. Findings from these data sets fit under Howard's categories of knowing self, knowing students, and knowing practices, allowing us to see differences between these teachers' orientations. Surfacing in these data were some of the elements that shaped teachers' orientations, leading to new questions about the nature of teacher development and the need to reconsider one dimension of Howard's framework.

3 Findings

3.1 Knowing Self

Howard (2006) defined the element of "knowing self" as "a deep sense of my identity…acknowledging that race matters in my life…a passionate commitment to confront and unravel issues of dominance in my own experience" (p. 128). Teachers explored this topic in the first two sessions, with initial explorations of racial bias in the first session and discussions about Howard's White Identity Orientations framework in the second session. Descriptions of race were not included in the

autobiographical pieces that they shared when introducing themselves at the start of the first session. All of the teachers recognized the importance of knowing themselves in order to teach effectively. Mary stated:

> If you don't know who you are, you can't help change someone else or make them improve…if you don't know what you're made up of, or things that you need, or things that affect you as an individual, you can't do that for someone else.

Similarly, Jane indicated that knowing yourself is being conscious of one's beliefs and values which ultimately shapes how one teaches:

> Knowing what we believe in and what we stand for. I just think it makes an impression on them because we bring who we are into our classroom…it shapes your classroom. It shapes your atmosphere…whether we want it to or not.

These descriptions underscore teachers' understandings about the significance of knowing themselves as a condition for being effective teachers.

After watching clips from the PBS series *American Denial*, which addresses the conflict between the American ideal of inequality and the continued realities of racial inequality and taking the implicit association test, teachers were invited to share their thoughts about these clips in relation to themselves and their work with students. Danielle noted that the white teachers in the group were hesitant to share. Some awkward moments of silence passed when Jane tried to prompt a conversation by asking: "What do you guys think?" "Do you guys feel uncomfortable?" "Let's discuss this." Despite these invitations, the three white teachers remained silent. Jane approached Danielle after the second PLC session privately and discussed her concern about why the other teachers were reluctant to delve into discussions about race and asked if her color had something to do with this. Danielle indicated that her white colleagues were probably not used to discussing issues of race and that they may have been uncomfortable about the topic and fearful that they might say something offensive. Both teachers thought it would be best to discuss this at the next meeting.

At the start of the second session, Danielle noted that there was silence around the issue of race during their prior discussion of the video. Mary explained that she was, in fact, nervous to say something that would be misconstrued, so she decided to stay silent. Jane shared her perspective that talking about race was something she and other African Americans frequently did as a consequence of their minoritized status: "We talk about race because our race affects our way of life more than it affects yours. You aren't questioned based on your color. We are, so we talk about it a lot." Danielle then invited group members to examine Howard's White Identities framework and talk about the role of race in their lives. As the white teachers began to speak, however, they avoided the topic of race and focused instead on class differences between themselves and their students. Dorothy, for instance, discussed how class was the primary construct that shaped her identity:

> Like you were just saying about being a brat, and that's what I wrote too. That's how I grew up. Not that I am a brat, but I was a brat and then now I finally after growing up realized all the things that I was given from my family and how different that is for my kids in my classroom. It's hard to then pull yourself back and then think...I don't know. Do you feel bad about it? How do you feel about it? Are you not supposed to feel bad? I don't know.

> My dad grew up similar to these kids. A family of seven, struggling, and then he I guess decided, "Let's give my kids a completely different life. Let's take them and give them all that," and then I don't know. I feel like we didn't work hard enough for the things that my dad gave us and then my mom was able to provide for us so that I feel like it's just weird. This was hard for me to write about.

In this commentary, Dorothy side-stepped specific terms associated with race. She discussed her family's economic mobility ("all the things that I was given from my family") and her current identification as "different" from her students. She compared her father's economic struggles with those of her students. Her father's decision to give his children "a completely different life" implied that he established a middle-class status through his choices and efforts. Dorothy did not acknowledge the ways that white privilege factored into her father's social mobility, her parents' ability to raise her, or her current class status. Instead, she embraced a meritocratic and race-neutral backstory to describe her identity. Further, her phrasing "it's weird" and "it's hard for me to talk about" was evidence that she was uncomfortable with this discussion.

Commentary from the other two white teachers was similar. All three white teachers avoided descriptions about white privilege and, in fact, denied that race was an issue in the lives of their students. They seemed to fumble over their words and refrain from any acknowledgment that they had benefited from white privilege. Suzie, for instance, explained her difficulty relating to the lives of her students. "It's hard for me to understand why their lives are so different. It makes me upset but angry at the same time." Both Suzie and Dorothy used words like "different" as markers for race. Also, Suzie referred to race, but dismissed it as a non-issue:

> I don't think race is an issue here. I think we do a good job of that, I think just by acknowledging how they feel, I think just by the books that we choose to share with them, our classroom libraries and just identifying with who they are and celebrating them. I think we do a good job of making them feel a part of a community.

In this explanation, Suzie indicated that race was something that she and others in the school handled well. Suzie believed "we," meaning the teachers in her school, did "a good job" with race because they acknowledged students' feelings, celebrated their culture, and provided books that represented students' lives and experiences. From Suzie's perspective, racial harmony was attained by providing students with comfortable and validating school conditions. In this way, race was narrowly confined to a set of in-school conditions that could be addressed by school staff. She did not conceptualize race as a sociopolitical construct that operated to advantage whites and disadvantage people of color.

White teachers' reluctance to discuss issues of race or acknowledge its significance in schooling and society meant that they were unable to move forward in formulating race-conscious identities. They did, however, explore the supportive relationships within their lives as an important dimension of their identities and how these relationships advanced their opportunities for learning and growing. Mary, for instance, discussed relationships with her parents, and realized that their constant support provided her with many advantages. Their focus on relationships became a consistent theme in their subsequent conversations.

3.2 Knowing Students

The second element of transformationist pedagogy is defined by Howard (2006) as a "complex kind of knowing, one that relates to the cultures, racial identities, languages, family backgrounds, home situations, learning characteristics, economic status, personalities, strengths and challenges, and uniqueness of each of our students" (p. 127). Teachers explored this concept in Sessions 3 and 4 of the PLC. Teachers' definitions of this element coincided with the one generated by Howard, although they were distinct in important ways. Jane remarked: "to know your students and where they come from allows you to make connections with them." Jane discussed caring for her students in an authentic way (Noddings 2005), by wanting to know them on a deeper level in order to build positive relationships with them. In contrast, Mary emphasized getting to know her students in order to support their academic success, a type of caring that aligns with Noddings' notion of aesthetic caring. She said: "having knowledge of where they are coming from and what they enjoy and what they know will allow me to somewhat teach them topics they need to learn but use the information they like."

All in the PLC group indicated that they would like to become more familiar with students' communities in order to know them better. None of the teachers lived in their students' neighborhoods, although Jane said that she had attended Saturday football games multiple times to show her support for students. Mary positioned herself as a cultural outsider in relation to her students' community and said that she ought to visit it in order to connect with her students:

> I am coming from a community where it is extremely different and not being in my students' situations it is hard for me to know exactly what they are dealing with. I always say that I need to go for a ride down the streets where they live in order to visualize and see where they are coming from and what they see every day.

Suzie shared similar thoughts during Session 3. She commented: "To understand how to reach our students and understand where they come from, we have to know more about the community that they live in." All four teachers discussed what they could do in order to be more active in the community in order to get to know their students. They generated ideas such as book drives, a teachers' versus students' sporting event at a local park, and teachers reading to students at their bus stops.

Teachers also discussed how they used classroom time to get to know their students. They shared information about their lives with students and invited students to do the same during their Morning Meeting time. Dorothy said she was able to find out about her students by inviting them to respond in writing to a question-of-the-day which they then read aloud to the class. Suzie and Mary stated that they attended the Family Fun Nights that are offered at the school. Suzie explained that these events "kind of put me in a different perspective where I'm not their teacher at that moment. It's more of *I can see them*, *I can see their family*, and then they come in the next day, and they're all excited." Toward the end of the session, teachers spent time brainstorming how they could include activities that would allow them to get to know their students on a deeper level and still adhere to the curriculum. They discussed replacing stories in the curriculum with those that reflected their students'

knowledge, having students write personal narratives, and changing math word problems to create scenarios that are relevant to students' lives.

In session 4, teachers participated in the Descriptive Review Process of students' work, which allowed them to construct complex portraits of their students' abilities and talents (Himley et al. 2011). All teachers referenced this work in their interview process. Suzie stated that looking at students' work "helped me look beyond the academic and more about their personality." Jane described how she enjoyed the activity: "I liked learning personal details about my student and digging deeper." The other two participants elaborated more on their thoughts. Dorothy felt the activity allowed her to get to know her students:

> It helped me look deeper at my students and their motivations. I hadn't thought to look that deep into writing pieces like that, but even though it was a pretty structured piece, I was able to find out quite a bit.

Mary found that this activity helped her to consider her students' preferences and interests, which in turn, informed her instruction:

> When we did the study looking at my students' work, it opened my eyes to what they are thinking and what they enjoy. We looked at the one piece, and we figured out that he is really into science and social studies and those types of topics, so I have used that information and have embedded it into my different lessons and just by doing that a few times I have finally been able to connect with him and have seen progress being made. I want to be able to continue to do this so that way I can have this success with all of my students. It truly makes a difference. The one student whose work I looked at I knew he wasn't all interested in different subjects in math but also knew he wasn't disconnected. By looking at his writing, I realized what he enjoyed and what he didn't (enjoy).

The teachers spent time sharing different strategies in order to know students' backgrounds, such as finding students' likes, interests, and knowledge. They realized they would be able to discover students' funds of knowledge by accessing the community and interacting with the parents outside of the school setting. Teachers discussed setting up events at the local fire station, community centers, local parks, and block parties. Additionally, they talked about having cook-outs, book give-aways, community clean-ups, and sporting events in their students' neighborhoods. They indicated that building relationships with students was the best way to get to know them and enlarge their educational opportunities.

While all of the teachers recognized the importance of knowing students as a way to inform their teaching, Jane focused on authentic relationships and character development. She observed: "Teachers, whether we want to be or not, we are role models…they look up to us and that shapes our classroom, it shapes the atmosphere. It shows them who we are made of and what we stand for." By including the phrase "what we are made of and what we stand for" Jane not only focused on teachers' responsibility for students' academic performance but also their roles in shaping students' character. To Jane, teachers are models of integrity and virtue. The other teachers focused on finding out about students in order to make their classrooms more welcoming and their teaching more relevant. Mary, for instance, communicated her desire to form a classroom community, "acknowledging how they feel, finding books they like, greeting them in the morning, having them share…I want them to feel like they are a part of a community." When asking Suzie

about how to make a better classroom environment for students, she responded with, "we need to motivate them, build relationships, empower them in order to educate them." Jane also elaborated more on the idea of relationships with students by stating "your students won't listen to you or respect you if they don't feel that you genuinely care for them." These remarks reflect different orientations toward knowing and caring for students. Jane's use of the words "genuinely caring for students," reflected Noddings' (2005) notion of authentic caring. The other three teachers focused on building relationships with students in order to help them achieve academically, which aligns with Noddings' concept of aesthetic caring. Jane saw herself as a role model, where the other three teachers saw themselves as providers of books and methods.

Unlike the awkward and halting discussions about their own racial identities in the first two sessions, all of the teachers were active contributors to the discussions in Sessions 3 and 4, and they became more invested in knowing their students more deeply moving forward. Although there were differing views about why building relationships with students mattered, all teachers recognized that knowing students was key to expanding their learning opportunities. Many came to this realization toward the end of this study by reflecting on the importance of family, friends, mentors, and role models in their own lives.

3.3 Knowing Practices

Howard (2006) describes the third element of transformationist pedagogy, knowing your practice as: "a highly complex set of professional knowledge, including curriculum, pedagogy, instructional design, development psychology, history and philosophy of education, legal issues, human relations, cross-cultural communication, conflict management, and more" (p. 127). Teachers were able to add to Howard's definition of what counts as professional practice by including knowledge of students and their communities, as Mary discussed: "knowing about my students' community and what they are interested in will improve my teaching practices." Dorothy added to this definition by explaining why she decided to take part in this study:

> I wanted to be a part of this study to learn more about my students and my school community/colleagues. I feel like we hardly even scratched the surface and I have already found ways to improve my teaching practice. I think the more I learn about my students, and the more I search for strategies and ideas, the better my teaching practice will become.

Dorothy's search for "strategies and ideas" to inform her practices is a key outcome of the PLC. Participating in these sessions inspired all of the teachers to do similar searches so they could foster student learning, as Jane described:

> I hope to become a better teacher by appreciating my students more! I love the fact that my class looks like the United Nations! My goal is to make connections with my students, whether it be greeting them with their native language, or allowing them to share some aspects of themselves.

Dorothy discussed some of the changes in her practice, based on her involvement in the PLC sessions. Interestingly, she began to prioritize knowing students over strictly adhering to the curriculum:

> I've already started to change how things work in my classroom. Yes, we will get to the curriculum. But if I want to know something about you, we are going to take a minute to talk about it. That doesn't mean I don't feel the pressure, but now I try to manage better. Some things are just more important. We talked about this in a session too – why did we all become teachers? It's because we so vividly remember those teachable moments we had during our schooling! If those go away, no one is going to want to be a teacher any more – not even the teachers.

Mary also already started to change her practice and discussed using the Descriptive Review process to find out more about her students and pledged to add to these practices. She also pledged to be more mindful of how her cultural biases influenced her practices. Mary commented:

> After completing this PLC, I added some things to my teaching practice. I added more things to get to know my students and (I will) try to spend more time in their community since it is different from where they come to school. I will use the practice of reading their writing or any work to get to know them better so that each day I can improve my teaching as the year goes on with the students. I also think that I will amp up my Morning Meeting to get to know my students better. Back at the beginning of the study, we talked about different biases. I have been trying not to have some of those biases with my students. I need to continue to keep a clear mind when it comes to the different students that are in my classroom.

In this commentary, Mary reflected on her practices in relation to earlier PLC discussions about race. She avoided, however, any direct commentary about race by indicating that she tried to avoid having "those biases" and she communicated the need to "keep a clear mind when it comes to the different students" in her classroom. Note her use of the word "different" as a code for "African American" students.

After discussing the significance of community involvement, all four teachers approached Danielle the next day to discuss ways they could become involved in their students' communities. They had also researched ways to address the problems that surfaced in the PLC sessions. One plan involved spending time in the community for a day of reading during their summer break, a plan that they discussed with the principal. Two of the teachers, Mary and Suzie, used the Descriptive Review practice and worked together outside the PLC sessions to try it with more students in their classroom, and specifically those they felt they needed to know more about. Also, research on their own enabled the teachers to explore specific areas of interest. Suzie found a few articles that discussed how to build positive relationships with students on tight schedules and shared these articles with the group. Dorothy found an article and video that helped with the issue of keeping students as active participants in the classroom by building relationships. She sent this through the district email to the PLC participants. Mary and Dorothy also spent considerable time using the strategies that were discussed. These teachers felt that the knowledge they constructed in the PLC provided a rationale they needed to reconceptualize teaching in ways that prioritized student knowledge. Dorothy stated:

> I wanted to be a part of this study to learn more about my students and my school community. I have already found ways to improve my teaching practice…I've already started to change how things work in my classroom. Yes, we will get to the curriculum. But if I want to know something about you, we are going to take a minute to talk about it…some things are just more important than the curriculum.

Mary had similar thoughts that showed these teachers valued the information they gained. Both teachers explained how they immediately used the strategies to change their teaching practice and began to search on their own to continue their work in this area.

Jane and Suzie, however, did not show as much investment in changing their practices. Both felt that this type of work was time-consuming and that for them to embrace this work they would need to feel less pressure from standardized testing. Jane explained that the strategies gained in the PLC sessions were "helpful, but time-consuming." Suzie discussed the constraints of having a scripted curriculum to follow. She reported: "I find that my imagination has decreased because everything is so scripted." Suzie felt that implementing the curriculum left little to explore her own dispositions and to know her students.

These teachers' different reactions to enacting the ideas generated in the PLC may have been related to their levels of teaching experience. As a second-year teacher, Suzie came to the group with limited experience working outside the curriculum. Experience allows teachers to develop their craft, making it easier to know when it is appropriate to work outside the scripted curriculum in order to connect with students. A veteran teacher, Jane was quite comfortable with her teaching practices and routines. Based on many of Jane's responses, she had come to the PLC having already established many of the dispositions associated with culturally responsive teaching.

3.4 Teachers' Reflections of the PLC

All of the teachers appreciated the time they spent with their colleagues constructing understandings about transformationist pedagogy. Jane saw the group as a safe forum for dialoguing with those she did not normally encounter at school:

> I felt privileged to be a part of this group! So often we never have an opportunity to talk with teachers in different grade levels, since we don't eat lunch together. It was refreshing to have a dialogue with colleagues about our profession. I felt safe because there were no administrators.

To Jane, the absence of administrators in the PLC sessions provided a low-risk environment for talking and constructing knowledge. The others felt the same about their work colleagues. Mary elaborated more on the significance of the group in helping her explore issues:

> It has been great to talk about certain topics and get ideas from others that may have dealt with a similar situation. Since it was a small group of teachers, I felt as though I opened up more than I would during a professional development or even if there were more people present. I would love if we could have more PLCs in our building possibly just to even talk about different things that come up in the classroom or the school. I love to seek out help and to get information to help make me the best person/teacher I can be.

Dorothy also explained how the dialogues allowed her to examine herself and her practices:

> This PLC helped me to look at my teaching differently. I think it has helped me examine myself all around in a different way. I have started to think even more about why my students may react the way they do - what things in their background may cause them to do something. The other teachers in our group helped me get to this point.

Dorothy's mention of "things in their background" was an ambiguous reference to her students' cultural backgrounds. She attributed her new understandings about her students to discussions with colleagues in the PLC. These teachers explained how they trusted their colleagues and the other participants in the PLC session, making supportive relationships with one another important criteria for teacher learning.

4 Discussion and Implications for Teaching

White teachers' resistance to discussing race meant they could only partially explore the first pillar of transformationist pedagogy, knowing self. This finding is not new as previous studies have established white teachers' resistance to discussing issues of race and admitting racial privilege (Picower 2009; Sleeter 2001; Solomon et al. 2005). What is noteworthy in this study is that resistance occurred despite participants' direct attempts to encourage dialogue. Jane pointedly invited a discussion about race, and in a sense, gave her white colleagues permission to talk. She also explained why it was easier for her to talk about race because it was something that she and other African Americans did as a way of managing their minoritized status. As the group coordinator, Danielle felt she had established a comfortable and trusting climate for exploring race. She thought her presence as a white educator who was open to talking about race would inspire her colleagues to do the same. This study showed how these invitations and assurances were not enough to engage teachers who were inexperienced with such conversations.

This finding underscores the importance of establishing trusting, caring relationships in PLCs to promote the kinds of candid dialogues that are required for teacher development. Danielle organized the group to share her knowledge of transformative pedagogy with her peers. She solicited interested teachers to join the PLC and indicated that conversations in the group would remain confidential. Jane remarked that she felt safe in such a learning community because administrators were not involved. These are necessary first steps to developing a foundation of trust, but

additional considerations are necessary for preparing teachers for difficult conversations involving race. We recommend that discussions about race take place after group members have had time to establish trusting relationships with one another. During this study, the topic of knowing your students was the comfort zone for the teachers. The teacher spoke openly and enthusiastically about their knowledge of their students and their classroom. We recommend starting PLC with this second element of transformationist pedagogy which would allow teachers to build relationships with one another while sharing their knowledge of students.

Once a level of trust is established, scaffolding is needed to help participants unpack the influence of race on their lives and their teaching. In this PLC, participants watched videos that addressed racial inequalities and then were invited to think about and discuss how race had shaped their own lives. The white teachers focused on their class privileges when discussing differences between themselves and their students. They did not identify relationships between race and class and did not acknowledge their racial privileges.

It would be important to introduce stories of how other teachers have transitioned from a state of colorblindness to one of color-consciousness. We believe it would have been powerful, for instance, if Danielle had described her own experiences as a colorblind teacher and how she grew to be more color-conscious over time through study and reflection. Models of these kinds of reflections are available in the literature (Chubbuck 2010; Lazar 2004). Our findings also suggest that teachers need opportunities to explore what colorblindness and color-conscious teaching looks like and the ways these modes of teaching shape students' motivation and learning. Juxtaposing videos of teachers who display these opposite orientations and investigating participants' teaching and practices through video-taping and self/group analysis (Schieble and Vetter 2015) would be important experiences for helping teachers understand the significance of color-consciousness in teaching.

Even though the teachers indicated a commitment to knowing their students, their inability to acknowledge race as a dimension of their own identities meant that they would most likely overlook race their understandings of students' lives and in their teaching (Stooksberry et al. 2009). Transformationist and critical caring perspectives indicate that teachers need to fully acknowledge the ways that race/ethnicity memberships impact their students' educational and social opportunities (Castro 2010; Valenzuela 1999). For this reason, it would be important to return to conversations about knowing students and teaching practices after in-depth investigations of self. Instead of focusing on self, students, and teaching practices in a lock-step, linear fashion, the material should be presented in a recursive, integrative fashion, that allows teachers to make connections across these dimensions. A recommended PLC structure would include: (1) trust-building among participants, (2) a deep exploration of self, and (3) opportunities to integrate ideas about self, students, and teaching. Finally, after PLCs are initially organized, it would be important to invite teachers to take charge of their learning by establishing areas for inquiry, selecting and sharing relevant articles and websites, and determining the short and long-range goals for the group.

While the PLC did not prompt teachers to acknowledge the significance of race, it did enable teachers to discuss the significance of supportive and caring relationships and how these relationships were instrumental in their success. It was not their understandings of race that propelled them toward further inquiry and action; it was the realization that their educational opportunities were based on access to people who cared for them, and that they could identify as these types of caring teachers for their students. This raises questions about whether transformationist pedagogy evolves not as a consequence of one's fully formed racial identity but as a consequence of making meaningful connections with students and community members which can then lead to deliberate investigations of one's racial identity.

Finally, this preliminary study did not provide enough time for teachers to deeply discover the three pillars of transformationist pedagogy. While the six sessions inspired teachers to learn about students and engage in the community, a truly transformative experience would require much more time. We envision the PLC to be carried out for at least one full year and beyond. This would allow teachers to set an agenda for sharing their cultural autobiographies, investigating students' lives and experiences beyond school, and look critically at their own and others' practices. A longer investigation would allow teachers to spend time in students' communities and teachers' classrooms. Teachers would be able to discuss how new understandings about self, students, and practices fit within the constraints of the school curriculum and standardized testing routines and expectations. They could also explore relationships between students' class and race memberships and inequitable schooling structures. These kinds of inquiries are fundamental to appropriating the kinds of critical caring stances that are needed to challenge inequitable systems and structures. PLCs could offer supportive forums for exchanging ideas about how teachers negotiate school expectations to accommodate the needs of their students, and how they could bring these ideas to fruition by writing and publishing their discoveries and initiatives.

5 Conclusion

The PLC sessions that took place in this study allowed for teachers to begin a dialogue with their colleagues about themselves, their students, and their practices. The PLC was a preliminary attempt to help teachers engage with the three pillars of transformationist pedagogy (Howard 2006). Teachers initiated dialogues about this framework and the importance of teachers being transformationist leaders in their classrooms and their schools. Studying these group sessions enabled us to generate some ideas to foster teacher growth through a PLC format, including the importance of establishing trust, scaffolding conversations about race, and restructuring the PLC format to include a more integrated study of transformationist pedagogy over time. Once teachers are comfortable with the uncomfortable, they will be better positioned to critically care for their students.

Appendix

Table 1 Topics addressed in the exploratory professional learning community

Session/ topic	Goals/key activities
1: Knowing myself	Goal: To begin to understand who we are in relation to our students.
	Sharing narratives/autobiographical story of "who are you"
	Listeners use 'key words, key images, or key ideas activity for discussion after word.
	Who we are as individuals group? Why is this important to think about while we are teaching?
	Who are you and what does that mean?
	How does knowing yourself allow you to be more relatable to your students?
	Activity: Watch American denial: The roots of racism and take the implicit association test
	http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/american-denial/implicit-association-test.html
	Discussion of results
	Reflection: What are some of the similarities and differences you have between you and your students? What are some tensions you feel in reference to yourself and the students we teach?
2: Knowing myself	Goal: White identity scale and discuss the barriers this may cause them in the classroom. The teachers will work together to become aware of who they are and how this knowledge can be used to their advantage in their practice.
	Share reflections…key words, key ideas
	What do you do to overcome these tensions you feel?
	Does this influence your practice?
	http://www.pbs.org/race/005_MeMyRaceAndI/005_00-home.htm
	Show slide show and discuss…what role does race play in your life and your teaching practice?
	Teach: Gary Howard's white identity orientations (researcher will be the teacher)
	Where do you believe you currently are?
	Where do you want to be?
	Readings
	Teaching while white (discussion in teaching tolerance fall 2015)
	Videos
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaqOkutHSpI
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEZJ5rDX9-E
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pv8mCHbOrs Part One
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neEVoFODQOE Part two
	Discussion…what are you thinking? How do you feel?
	For next time… how do you get to know the children? How do you see yourself in relation to the children? How do you envision the children's relationships to each other?

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Session/ topic	Goals/key activities
3: Knowing students	Goal: To understand the importance of knowing students and the community to improve practice; to find information about our community and create ways to bring the community into the school and the school into the community.
	Share reflections…key words, key ideas
	Reading
	Getting real about race (teaching tolerance 2015)
	What's colorism (teaching tolerance fall 2015)
	What do you already know about your students?
	http://www.pbs.org/race/002_SortingPeople/002_00-home.htm
	Complete activity…sorting people
	Compare to how we interact without students
	What do we want to know? What knowledge about our students will help us in our teaching?
	Funds of knowledge discussion. (researcher will be the teacher)
	How can we find out? In the limited amount of time we have these students how can we dig deeper into they really are?
	How can the community play a key part in knowing our students?
	How can we get more information from our community?
	Create a plan
	For next time, bring in one piece of students' work. Before you come…take a look at it and write reflection on what it is you can take from this piece of work that allows you to really know the student…(not proficient or basic)…really knowing them.
4: Knowing students	Goal: The teachers will work together to create a checklist on analyzing students' work to find out more about who they really are. The teachers will then use this checklist to analyze students
	Share student work and reflection…key words and ideas
	Going through reach piece of student work:
	Follow the rules for "descriptive review of Children's work" (Himley et al. 2011, p. 41)
	What can student work tell us about our students?
	What can we look for? How can this help our teaching practice?
	How can our classrooms and practice be more responsive to the interests and needs of children who stand out as different?
	For next time, answer the following questions…
	What are your hopes and expectations for the children?
	Describe the shape and rhythm of the work of teaching on a daily, weekly, quarterly basis.
	What materials and classroom activities are at the center of your practice?
	Does our curriculum reflect our student population?
	Teachers presenting next time complete the descriptive review of practice presentation as well as reflection.

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Session/ topic	Goals/key activities
5: Knowing practice	Goal: The teachers will analyze their own practice with the help and suggestions of others to determine strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.
	Share reflections…key words and ideas
	For each teacher follow the "descriptive review of practice" (Himley et al. 2011, p. 43)
	This process is extensive: Two or three teachers will present
	For next time, answer the following questions in a reflection form…
	What is it that we do everyday in our classroom that can have an effect on our students?
	Is there anything that has to change in our teaching practice to help allow the students to bring more of themselves in the classroom?
	How can we build better relationships with our students through practice?
6: Knowing practice	Goal: The teachers will analyze their own practice with the help and suggestions of others to determine strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.
	Share reflections…key words and ideas
	For each teacher follow the "descriptive review of practice" (Himley et al. 2011, p. 43)
	This process is extensive: Remaining teachers will present
	Final thought, answer the following questions in a reflection form: What have you learned/taken away from this process? Has this process changed your thoughts on who you are, who your students are, and your teaching practice? Where will you go from here not that this process has ended?

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Teachers' Storied Cultural Tensions of Curriculum as a Standardizing Practice

Candace Schlein, Christa Wenger, and Sara Crump

Abstract Increasing diversification of student populations, teachers' globalized experiences, and local level curriculum formation in schools has led to an enhanced top-down focus on curricular standards as a unifying measure. State-based standards are meant to unify and standardize the curriculum. However, utilizing a lens to position teachers as the curriculum on the regional and school-based shifting terrain of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) and similar state-based standards raises possible critical questions about the actual relationship between teachers and the curriculum. We discuss the findings of a narrative inquiry into the experiences of three teachers within various cultures and school cultures and as situated within state-based standards. We identify through exploration of our narratives and counter stories of experience how state-based standards highlight storied cultural curriculum tensions. We further consider how such tensions might identify possible systemic challenges related to envisioning curriculum as a standardizing practice.

Keywords Experiential curriculum · Teachers · Curriculum standardization · Narratives · Narrative inquiry

Increasing diversification of student populations, teachers' globalized experiences, and local level curriculum formation in schools has led to an enhanced top-down focus on curricular standards as a unifying measure. State-based standards are meant to both enhance and standardize the curriculum. However, utilizing a lens to

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position teachers as the curriculum on the regional and school-based shifting terrain of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) and similar state-based standards raises possible critical questions about the actual relationship between teachers and the curriculum.

In this chapter, we discuss the findings of a narrative inquiry into the experiences of three teachers within various cultures and school cultures and as situated within state-based standards. We identify through exploration of our narratives of experience how state-based standards highlight storied cultural curriculum tensions. We further consider how such tensions might identify possible systemic challenges related to envisioning curriculum as a standardizing practice. Shedding light on these potential curricular tensions is imperative for setting up a scaffold aimed at supporting culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995). This chapter is thus centered on 21st century diversity, equity, and transformative change that opens up spaces for counter stories in the face of storied curricular tensions (Clandinin et al. 2006).

1 Methodology

This narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) is formed around the concept of a "practical" approach to curriculum (Schwab 1983). In particular, we collected stories of experience as data (Connelly and Clandinin 1990). This research focus was guided by an understanding of the association between experience and education (Dewey 1938). Moreover, this study is built on the concepts of the intertwined relationships between teachers' practices, teachers' experience, and teachers' knowledge as curriculum (Clandinin and Connelly 1992; Connelly and Clandinin 1988).

Before formal engagement within this study, we had been informally engaged in discussions about the curriculum in relation to state-based standards. Candace is the Chair of Christa's and Sara's doctoral committees. Sara and Christa are both high school English teachers, whose work has been shifting with various recent curriculum reforms regarding literacy and English Language Arts (ELA) instruction. We decided to formally compile our discussions and reflections on the curriculum through narrative inquiry so that we could carefully attend to our stories of experience.

Our discussions are positioned within the context of an urban-serving School of Education that is located in a city that is renowned for its failed efforts at school desegregation (Gotham 2002). Candace's research and teaching efforts concentrate on issues of local, national, and international educational equity and diversity (Schlein 2006; Schlein and Garii 2017), and Sara and Christa have adopted a transformative stance in their doctoral work. While engaging in this study, Christa and Sara brought their past perspectives and experiences that have been shaped by living and teaching in U.S. schools. Candace added an intercultural lens through her experiences across the contexts of Canada, Japan, and the United States (Schlein 2018).

Over the course of 8 weeks, we shared weekly primary stories of curriculum experiences with each other via email that reflect curricular tensions. For each story,

we responded with our reflections as counter stories. We then worked together to tease apart common narrative themes from among the raw data. We read each story and provided discussion on thoughts about themes to each other, and we each responded to such discussions. This process was repeated until we attained repetitive themes and discussions as findings.

2 Data Analysis and Discussion

Within this section, we outline some of our storied cultural tensions of the curriculum as a standardizing practice. Instead of compiling a literature review section that is separated from our narratives of experience, we decided to actively embed a discussion of research as a response layer in connection with our experiential narratives. We thus identify below first-layer narratives as those experienced by either Candace, Christa, or Sara. Highlighting such stories through the lens of key literary works underscores a pertinent stage of data analysis, where lived scenarios of the curriculum are paired with curriculum theory.

In the following, we begin by relating one of Christa's lived experiences. We use this experience as a springboard for outlining potential cultural tensions of expectations for teachers and students surrounding state-based curriculum. Layers of complexity are added as we highlight counter narratives of culture and the curriculum that we experienced. These levels of narratives produce an experiential story and counter story pattern to engage a reader in dialogic interaction with this work and to encourage further considerations of the tensions at the heart of culture and the curriculum in diverse school contexts.

2.1 Christa's Story: Forcing Me to See Myself in a New Pedagogical Way

Recently I moved across the country from the suburbs of a major Midwestern city to a similarly defined geographical space in the Pacific Northwest. The change was a sudden and drastic one, and I found myself thrown into a world of different foods, traffic patterns, higher cost of living, and more densely populated neighborhoods and shops. It has taken me awhile to adjust to these changes—some welcome and exciting, others not— but I am learning to navigate my new surroundings, although this process is not without its bumps and tensions.

Learning the lay of the land is not the only adjustment I have made since I ventured out to the West Coast. As a high school English Language Arts teacher who earned her high school diploma from a Midwestern high school, completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at Midwestern universities, and spent a decade teaching in Midwestern public schools, it should not have been a surprise to me that

moving to a completely different region of the country would prove to be a major transition personally and professionally. Moreover, it would demand that I think critically about myself as a teacher.

Not only did my move force me to see myself in a new pedagogical way, but I begin to reassess my perspectives on curriculum and what this complex term might mean across various landscapes and contexts. My experiences as a teacher were, as Dewey (1981) claimed, being transformed "through the human context they enter[ed]…" (p. 251). Essentially, my moving to a new space demanded me to reconsider what it means to be a teacher and "curriculum maker" (Connelly and Clandinin 1988).

When either personal or professional changes occur, one cannot help but find herself comparing the old way of doing, thinking, and being with the new. Juxtaposing these different spaces is a way for people to make sense of their new surroundings. In attempting to make sense of my new educational landscape, then, I have often relied on my personal, practical knowledge regarding teaching and curriculum development (Connelly and Clandinin 1988). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) clarified that personal, practical knowledge is the notion that teachers create and live out the curriculum by their professional and personal selves. Such a term helps to "capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons" (1988, p. 25).

Relying on my personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin 1988) has assisted me greatly when I am learning to work in a new district, at a new school, with a new set of teachers and students. This reliance on past experiences allows for me to positively interact within a new context, yet living and teaching in the midst of this new context has forced me to think critically about my role as a teacher and curriculum maker as well.

During my teaching experience in the Midwest, my role as a teacher and curriculum maker was defined. I felt trusted to develop lessons and implement activities that were not only embedded in best practice but included my unique teaching style and personality. My feelings toward my teacher-role reflected Eisner's (2005) argument that teaching is a kind of art form that "requires sensibility, imagination, technique, and the ability to make judgments about the feel and significance of the particular" (p. 201). My teaching, I believed, reflected many elements of this so-called art form. It was clear to me that a primary role of teaching was to develop curriculum and implement that into my classroom since it was I who knew the ins and outs of my students and school environment. Moreover, when developing curriculum or Common Core-aligned units of study, it was district *teachers* who collaborated during the summer to create authentic learning opportunities rather than outsiders who were not privy to the educational landscape of which I was an active part. This experience was in direct contrast to the teacher bashing, accountability focus, teacher testing, scripted curriculum, or excessive mandates that often undermine teachers' roles in curriculum development and implementation (Schlein and Schwartz 2015).

In contrast, my experiences within this school district reflected Westbury's (2008) ideas concerning teachers and their relationship to the curriculum. Westbury

(2008) asserted that since teachers are the only ones who possess experience and practical knowledge about instruction, they are best suited for curriculum development. What is also important to note is that the district in which I taught in the Midwest closely adhered to state-mandated curriculum and assessment practices, which included the adoption of and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Curriculum. However, the CCSS served as a framework for how teachers might develop lesson plans and assessments and go about selecting texts for their classrooms rather than as an authoritative document that undermined or competed with the personal, practical knowledge of teachers.

Schlein and Schwarz (2015) built on this idea of teachers and their abilities to successfully apply their personal, practical knowledge in their classrooms:

> Teachers…bring to classrooms a wealth of knowledge and experience that might shape positive learning environments for students. Teachers have knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of teaching, and knowledge of their students and other contextual features of local curricular situations and interactions. They also bring their desires to contribute to communities. (p. 154)

From this quotation, the authors clarified that teachers could be much more than depositors of knowledge or unskilled laborers who merely implement pre-packaged lesson plans or adhere to far-away state and federal educational policies. Instead, teachers can create lessons and instruction that meet the needs of diverse populations. They can also use their past experiences to improve learning as well as their knowledge of day-to-day school business to "plan, enact, assess, and revise curriculum" (Schlein and Schwartz 2015, p. 155), and they go so far as to name the teacher as curriculum itself.

My experiences with teaching and curriculum have changed significantly since my move across the country. My current teaching landscape, like my former one, has adopted and implemented the Common Core State Standards. However, the Standards, in addition to other pre-packaged curriculum products, appear to function more as mandates than frameworks that help teachers guide curriculum development and assessment. My feelings of autonomy and artistry have been replaced by restrictions that limit not only what I can teach, but how I can teach it.

For example, Kittle's (2013) and Gallagher's (2009, 2011) ideas about writer's workshop, mentor texts, classroom libraries, and choice reading were recently adopted by this district. There is nothing inherently wrong with these programs, and I have often used ideas from both in my *own* curriculum-making and teaching. However, the all-district adoption of this curriculum not only ignores the unique educational contexts in which Kittle (2013) and Gallagher (2009, 2011) work, but it also limits that ways by which teachers think about curriculum and their role in its development. While Kittle's (2013) and Gallagher's (2009, 2011) works are to be understood as frameworks for teaching reading and writing, too often teachers transform these useful and effective frameworks into one-size-fits-all curriculum implementation and attempt to emulate exactly what happens in Kittle's (2013) classroom and Gallagher's (2009, 2011) rather than their own. The adoption of pre-packaged curriculum might exacerbate the struggle of teachers who wish to be

viewed as professionals and to gain recognition for their skills, a struggle which results in the disempowering and "deskilling" of teachers (Giroux 2012). Teachers can greatly benefit from professional development from practitioners like Kittle (2013) and Gallagher (2009, 2011), as I certainly have! Yet, it is important that teachers do not attempt to mimic what has been done in other people's classrooms but instead use their personal, professional knowledge to "make judgments about… the particular" (Eisner 2005, p. 201).

Teachers viewing themselves as agents in planning and developing curriculum might be empowering for educators, who often see themselves as powerless and under attack from policymakers and the general public. In fact, Schlein (2013) suggested that teachers begin to see themselves as having an active role in curriculum planning rather than viewing themselves as only implementers of the curriculum. If teachers envision themselves as autonomous agents of change, then students will benefit from the curriculum that is developed and the pedagogy that is employed by these empowered individuals. Most importantly "teachers must trust [their] own personal, practical knowledge, understand [their] narratives, and decide what is needed in the particular mix of [their] classrooms" (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, p. 152) regardless of the landscape in which the teaching and learning might be situated.

2.2 Candace's Counter Story Response: Subtle Nuances of Change

As I initially read through Christa's written narratives of experience regarding the curriculum and standardization, I was surprised at how much I connected with Christa's need to re-align her personal practical knowledge from a new cultural context and a new school culture landscape. I explained to Christa and Sara how I had previously experienced a major transition when I had moved from Canada to Japan and began to teach in Japanese public schools. I also related how I had considered this shifting personal and professional landscape, and my connected shifts to my personal practical knowledge, and I referred to the notion of teaching and learning interculturally as engaging in the process of "(un)learning to teach" (Schlein 2018). The parentheses in that term indicates for me how teachers build from what they know while actively learning a new way to be a teacher, and then shaping something that is new, which is perhaps the third space in one's personal practical knowledge.

I reflected on how Christa's narrative reminded me of how it can sometimes be even more difficult to reconcile differences that are subtle and less drastic. Christa has recently attained a new position in her new city after a year of supply teaching in that city, filling in when regular teachers are absent or unavailable. The time that she spent supply teaching might be seen as a period of acculturation, and it is only

during this academic year that she is facing the tension in her stance as a teacher. We all considered how Christa's move meant that she had given up her role as a knower, or as a teacher who was well-steeped in content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and who had a wealth of personal and professional experiences defining her personal practical knowledge, while underscoring her capacity to be the curriculum in ways that make sense to both her and to her students.

Christa in her new city and new school context, much like I had been in my former Japan context, is facing tensions in the story that she is living out as a teacher. She is learning about the culture and school culture of her new school setting while reconciling her positioning on the school landscape in relation to the formal state-based curriculum. We discussed how it seems that she is at once learning about how to shape meaningful lessons for her students from her new surroundings while also figuring out some of the subtle nuances of change that might be involved in different approaches to or stances on the Common Core Curriculum Standards and the "planned," "enacted," "experienced," and "embodied" curriculum (Schubert 2008).

Clandinin et al. (2006) emphasized through teachers' experiential narratives of practice that teachers' stories and stories of teachers might be seen as either conflicting or competing stories. Teachers who compose curricular experiences that are in line with expectations and mandates live out the sacred story of schooling. However, when curricular interactions differ from expectations, they are either supported or dismantled by those in authority. We analyzed Christa's narrative of experience with the curriculum as situated on a shifting landscape and as positioned in an era of enhanced standardization and uncovered how Christa is seemingly currently engaging in learning about the sacred story of the curriculum at her school in relation to the CCSS. At the same time, she is making rapid adjustments to her personal practical knowledge as a means of rendering her own experiences and practices acceptable for her setting, as middle ground competing stories.

Such a tension is fascinating, as it might showcase a pivotal moment of growth at the border of cultural and curricular tensions. When teachers experience such tension, attending to those personal and professional stories might be illuminating as shifting stances in relation to teaching and learning. It is such storied tensions that further underscore the curricular stance of "teachers as curriculum" (Schlein and Schwartz 2015). Positioning teachers as the curriculum on the regional and school-based shifting terrain of the CCSS, standards meant to unify and standardize curriculum, raises critical questions about the actual relationship between teachers and the curriculum. "The idea of experience and what curriculum people do led us to the verb structure…" (Connelly et al. 2008, p. xii). In this era of increasing standardization, as expressed through CCSS and similar state-based standards, Christa's story highlights how a narrative exploration of teachers' personal practical knowledge and related storied curriculum tensions might identify and intertwine with further systemic tensions of competing and conflicting stories of curriculum as a standardizing practice in which the curriculum as a document is being lived out as an active and interactive verb.

2.3 Sara's Counter Story Response: Pendulum Swings

As a response to Candace and Christa, I deliberated over how they raised observations about the tensions teachers experience as 'pendulum swings' of shifting instructional theories and classroom practices. I related how when I had first started teaching in a suburban district that was shifting to a more urban demographic, I was told by the principal who had hired me, "Sara, we do the best we can with the students and then we hope they do the best they can in life." I also related how I would never forget that moment, not only because it was my first time to sign a teaching contract and step into a classroom on my own, but because I eventually learned that there was a lot of wisdom in the principal's words. I taught there for 13 years, which I felt was enough to see the very landscape that had been familiar shift dramatically to an unrecognizable place when I left that district in 2004.

It was 1992 when I first started teaching high school English, and the focus among the teachers in the building was content–driven, steeped in the students' knowledge of classical American literature and analytical skills. The other skills emphasized included memorization and recall, or rote types of instruction. Also, I believed that the context included a lot of room for creativity and authentic learning, namely through simulations and role-playing and cooperative learning strategies. Standardized testing, however, was not mentioned. Students took the ACT for college entrance, but the school district did not offer ACT prep classes, ACT tutoring after school, or ACT preparations embedded in the curriculum. In the spring of my first year there, a teacher told me that Missouri Mastery and Achievement (MMAT) tests were approaching and that the students would do fine, not to worry. The attitude about standardization was still there, but it was more focused on knowledge of content. In that time period, stakeholders felt that students need to know certain facts, plot elements, and themes from the classics. From my experiences, the attitudes about standardized testing were seemingly ambiguous.

I came to see that, as landscapes shift, so do the aims and objectives of curriculum structures. Apple (1993) argued that standardization is used to structure the educational system for teachers under the guise that this will enable them to be accountable not only to the organization of the school day and within the district, but to state and national educational and civic aims. At the same time, Westbury (2008) claimed that curriculum reform efforts might not necessarily translate into actual changes to teaching and learning. In fact, he stated that the aim of curriculum reform efforts might not be connected to teaching and learning. Instead, such efforts to change the curriculum might stem from the need to appease the voices of curriculum stakeholders within a political platform.

Contemporary efforts to enhance curricular standards and standardization are further nested in a series of historical curriculum reform movements. Such curriculum reforms are layered with social and political themes. It is thus essential to unpack these curricular inheritances to understand the cause and shape of recent curriculum reforms that approach the curriculum as standards and standardization.

This recent activity regarding standards and reform in the curriculum highlight how efforts to modify and coordinate the relationship between curriculum and teaching through standards and standardization are not based on neutral decisions. In fact, curriculum reform and standardization have been described as efforts to placate the public by politicians and methods of manipulating teaching and learning in cycles to mark the appearance of making real curricular changes (Welner and Oakes 2008). That is, curriculum reform efforts and changing teaching and assessments, and efforts to shape standardization across states might be seen as connected to societal concerns beyond the realm of schooling (Apple 2008) and to indicate areas of "national panic" (Ladson-Billings and Brown 2008). This feeling of mistrust might lead to the tension described by Candace and by Christa when considering the role of the teacher, the possible obfuscation of aims and benchmarks, and a general state of panic regarding the change that reform embodies.

In considering shifts in the pendulum of curricular engagement, I reflected that today's landscape is vastly different than the viewpoints shared with me in 1992. Currently, the literature on curriculum shifts toward standards and standardization have shaped a relationship between curriculum and teaching that is dependent on standards and testing. Such a perspective is indicative of our current take on curriculum development as "a highly symbolic concept now" (Pinar 2008, p. 493) since the curriculum is associated with learning standards that are not created by actual classroom teachers. Moreover, this vantage does not account for interactions between teachers and students as curricular engagement. This evolving viewpoint on the relationship between curriculum and teaching is essential to understand the shifting professional role of educators and the changes in their duties as keepers of standards and testing data, which might be very different from understanding educators as professional, who are "curriculum planners" (Connelly and Clandinin 1988) or seeing the "teacher as curriculum" (Schlein and Schwartz 2015).

Schlein and Schwartz (2015) additionally shared that the relationship between teachers and the curriculum has been seen as historically connected. They described the history of Quintilian, who was the first paid teacher in first–century Rome, explaining that "The teacher was the wise, able person from whom one could learn philosophy, one's trade, and much else. The teacher was and remains a model, the exemplar of the *curriculum in action*" (p. 155). The authors further argued for an understanding of "teacher as curriculum" (Schlein and Schwartz 2015). The role of the teacher as curriculum examines the functionality of curriculum in the classroom and the *how* and the *why* of instruction. Teachers have a certain rapport developed with a group of learners that only happens in a dynamic and personal way.

In doing so, the learning expectations today create a certain cognitive dissonance that causes teachers to question their relationship with the policymakers, the stakeholders, and their position in the classroom. For secondary English teachers, the increased standardization to meet the needs of state-based standards has increased these tensions to place much emphasis on reading strategies, reading skills, and higher-order thinking modes so that the students are best prepared for the demands of high–stakes testing.

Moreover, Newkirk (2012) expressed that in a world with these multi–modal literacies, the importance of "slow reading" is emphasized so that students think, interact, and analyze what they are reading while they read (p. 197). Slow reading is similar to the more commonly understood concept of "close reading." However, Newkirk (2012) specifically defined "slow reading" as the reader being "present in our reading" (p. 7). This process is integral to the machinations of the actual process of interaction with text, as students learn to think about what they are reading, how the author implements syntax and what the meaning of the message is on a macrocosmic scale, as well as what the text means to the student personally based on his or her life experiences (Sternberg 2008). In developing these reading instruction practices from the vantage of multiple literacies, Carneiro and Gordon (2013) explained that educators might also help students to become discerning citizens in stating that "literacy is not just a crucial skill for the individual but is a vital component of economic prosperity and social well–being" (p. 476).

As Christa had described, the landscapes continually change, which creates the possible tension described by Candace regarding current trends in curriculum–making. Although the scenery has completely shifted from the beginnings of my teaching career in 1992, I maintain that the philosophy undergirding education remains the same, which is to help the students to grow their thinking about the world so that they are capable of navigating the complexities of the 21st century, including reading across multiple formats and engaging in intercultural interactions.

3 Conclusion: Navigating Cultural and Curricular Expectations

Reflecting on our experiences regarding teaching and the curriculum we return to Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) ideas about the teacher as the curriculum planner. Throughout our various experiences with shifting landscapes and tensions between those landscapes; however, one aspect of all of the lived and told experiences seemed to remain constant: the role of the teacher. Our narratives and counter stories of cultural tensions of the curriculum as bracketed by state-based standards and contextual crossings indicated that teachers might not be centrally acknowledged by policymakers or those with decision-making power. The narratives of experience that we analyzed above display the possibility that teachers, their experiences, their cultural positionings and understandings, as well as the culture of local contexts and school cultures, are a driving force concerning the ways by which curriculum is developed, implemented, and interpreted.

Ladson-Billings and Brown (2008) argued that the curriculum is not a static or neutral concept, but it is dynamic and represents various ideologies. Thus, whatever the intentions of curriculum developers might be, teachers filter curriculum through their personal practical knowledge as it is implemented in the classroom, which

includes teachers' knowledge, their experiences, their cultural situatedness, and their beliefs and expectations regarding culture. The curriculum and teacher, therefore, cannot be removed from one another.

Christa's narrative above underscored her need to feel like she had a voice in the ways by which curriculum is implemented into her classroom for her students. This lived scenario has significant implications when there is a potential lack of balance between state-based curriculum standards implementation in a school setting and the tightly interwoven relationship between the teacher and curriculum. In similar curricular circumstances, where state-based standards are expected to guide what is planned, taught, and enacted in classrooms as formal and prescriptive curriculum, finding teachers' voices across educational landscapes might be a necessary tension to reconcile. This can be especially pertinent when teachers move among schools, school districts, and even across states or countries.

Navigating curricular and cultural negotiations will continue to be a tension for teachers as they learn to relate to their school landscapes. This might be needed since curricular stances will shift across time and teachers are expected to navigate new situations and interactions through the curriculum. Elbaz-Luwisch (2007) argued that: "Understanding teaching requires that we pay attention to teachers both as individuals and as a group, listening to their voices and the stories they tell about their work and their lives" (p. 359). Our stories suggest that if standards for curricular practice become rigidly enforced, they might shape culturally-based curricular fractures.

Elbaz-Luwisch's (2007) focus on teachers reinforces our experiential assertions of teachers as prime curriculum stakeholders who might unintentionally shape and be shaped by curriculum resistances. When the curriculum is employed as a standardizing practice for knowledge and skills, teachers' (and students') storied cultural experiences arise as tensions without resolution. Teachers' cultures and experiences cannot be pushed to the sidelines within teacher education programs or educator professional practice. Instead, space should be included for the negotiation of teachers' (and students') cultural experiences in teaching and learning for a curriculum of growth, equity, and transformation rather than a limiting standardizing curriculum. This is of growing relevance given the enhanced diversity in schools and the increasingly varied cultural experiences of teachers within the 21st century.

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Repositioning Art Education within Educational Equity in K-12 Urban Schools: A Partnership between Philadelphia Public Schools and the Barnes Foundation

Carolyn L. Berenato

Abstract This chapter repositions art education within educational equity in K-12 urban schools by exploring how teachers and students experience art. Using John Dewey's notion of art as experiential learning and the practice of democracy, this study is positioned within critical research aimed at repositioning art as a medium of teaching and learning aimed at educational equity. Participants in this study comprised teachers from 19 schools in the School District of Philadelphia involved in the Art of Looking Program coordinated by the Barnes Foundation. Teacher surveys, interviews, student assignments, observations, and documents from the program provided evidence that an alliance between the School District of Philadelphia and the Foundation's art program contributed toward addressing the equity gap in art education that is evident in many urban schools. Findings showed that art education provided teachers with teaching tools for developing and enhancing students' creativity, reflection, and critical thinking across content areas such as math, science, and social studies.

Keywords Urban schools · Art education · Art as experience · Educational equity · K-12 schools

Urban school districts in the United States encompass 25% of all school-age children, 25% of students who live in poverty, 30% of English language learners, and nearly 50% of all children of color (Tighe et al. 2002). In recent years, many urban school districts have struggled with budget cuts or have been threatened by school closures due to low graduation rates and depressed standardized test scores relative to those in middle class and well-to-do suburban settings (Gottfried and Johnson 2014). Urban school districts that are already under threat of closure have a troubled

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relationship with art education in the curriculum, as art is often the first subject to be compromised or abandoned in the era of high stakes testing and the push for increased funding for STEM fields. This has led to a reduction in funding for the creative, visual and performing arts. Haberman (1991) characterized this type of instruction that is marked by deprivation in funding that affects the quality of education as a "pedagogy of poverty," in which there are few opportunities for students to develop their creativity and higher-order thinking skills.

In contemporary times, pedagogy of poverty is most visible in urban schools where art education continues to face decreased funding, fewer art supplies, reduced numbers of art teachers, and little art space on school premises. According to The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University (2013), academic inequities that persist do not emerge from mental abilities of children, nor are they grounded in differences at birth by race, class or gender. Rather, inequities become visible at age two as a direct consequence of early life experiences, not least among these is access to art education, an essential variable in the growth and development of children.

Research documents that art instruction fosters learning, creative thinking, innovation, and higher levels of critical thinking and problem-solving. Therefore, reducing art education in schools closes opportunities for students to develop their full potential, thwarts the Deweyan idea of art as a practice of democracy, and contributes to educational inequities that persist in urban schools. When schools undergo budget cuts, children attending affected schools are deprived of art education, which becomes one of the variables that contribute to the achievement gap in later years of schooling. Historically, courts have intervened in states when school funding systems perpetuate inequities by imposing school finance reforms in at least half of all states since 1971. These reforms, however, have done little to advance art education in K-12 schools (Gottfried and Johnson 2014).

Children and teenagers who participate actively in art education programs show positive academic and social outcomes in comparison to students who do not have access to art education (Catterall et al. 2012). In spite of documented evidence, the Pennsylvania Alliance for Arts Education (2011) estimates 50% of students in the state do not have access to art education. According to the Pennsylvania State Education Association, in 2011–2012 the state budget for K-12 public schools was cut by $860 million resulting in 1000 teachers losing their jobs, mostly from fine art, dance, and music. These conditions mean that art education is an inequitably distributed resource across schools that privilege some children with access to art in the school curriculum while others are deprived of the creative, affective and cognitive benefits of art in their education. In support of the perspective that art education is essential to educational equity, this research explores how teachers and students in an urban school district experience the Art of Looking Program.

1 Literature Review

Across America during the entire twentieth century, more Americans tended to stay in school longer, graduate from high school, go to college, and earn post-secondary degrees. As Americans became better educated, a growing proportion had obtained

access to school-based art lessons and classes (Rabkin and Hedberg 2011, p. 41). According to Dewey (1934), learning is a consequence of experience, and arts education is "refined and intensified forms of experience" (p. 2) that make unique contributions to human learning and understanding. In the progressive tradition of Deweyan thought, art and music education was offered in all elementary schools and the combined creative and performing arts served as electives in high school wherein students choose any one area within the arts.

The National Art Education Association, (NAEA), founded in 1947, is a leading professional membership organization exclusively for visual arts educators. NAEA's mission advances visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding. The NAEA position statement on equity in the arts (2015) states:

> *Visual arts education is committed to goals that advocate both excellence and equity for all students through differentiated educational opportunities, resources, and systems of support. A successful art education program respects a range of diversity in the uniqueness of all students, their similarities, differences, and learning characteristics. Included in the range of diversity are students at risk; those with special needs; students from a variety of economic, multicultural, and global backgrounds; and those who are highly creative, gifted and talented. Art teachers should incorporate students' prior knowledge and experience into classroom practice by respecting and valuing their students' unique strengths through creating equitable classroom communities. Instructional materials should present diverse populations as role models in various aspects of the visual arts. To this end, instruction and assessment should be designed so that all students, based on their abilities and backgrounds, are afforded opportunities to communicate what they know and can do through the visual arts* (p. 1).

Similarly, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2002), claims art as a core subject. Art education affirms and embraces interdisciplinary links between the arts and academics by advocating a balanced approach that asserts the arts are a vital part of interrelated art education for all students - not simply an instrument to raise test scores, but also a domain of knowledge on equal footing with other school subjects considered academic and integral to a holistic education for all students (Zimmerman 2010; Gibson and Larson 2007; Clark and Zimmerman 2004; Constantino 2002). In 2002, NCLB revision of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, the arts were symbolically used to represent core ideals of education (Milbrant 2012).

In spite of the NAEA and NCLB, the peripheral role of art education in many urban public schools has remained unchanged in the 21st century and, in some cases, worsened. In fact, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) (2009) reports that teachers at schools identified as needing improvement, as well as those with higher percentages of minority students, were more likely to report a reduction in time spent on the arts. Also, the report examined the average amount of change in weekly arts instruction among teachers who reported a change. Teachers of low-income students reported a decrease of 49 minutes per week in art education while teachers from schools in moderate- or high-income areas reported increases in arts instruction (GAO 2009).

In August of 2009, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan reminded legislative and educational decision makers that the arts had been designated through NCLB (2002) as a core academic subject and a part of a comprehensive education for all

students. He emphasized that the arts play a significant role in a well-rounded education. He highlighted that students could become team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think. He stressed these qualities are especially important in improving learning among students from economically disadvantaged circumstances (Duncan 2009). Despite Duncan's call to promote arts education, many schools seem to devalue arts curricula. In public perception and traditional educational policy planning, the arts are widely assumed to be expressive and affective, with little or no impact on cognitive or academic achievement (Rabkin and Hedberg 2011). The arts are often associated with play and luxury, not with work ethic and discipline associated with school and academics. Many school districts in the United States ignore the benefits of art education and have been eliminating art curricula. Those in underserved communities are most affected by the marginalization and exclusion of art education in the school curriculum, with negative consequences for children who may not have the resources to fill the access gap created by schools battling budget cuts.

Recent studies show that students living in poverty are receiving less art education than their higher-income peers (Rabkin and Hedberg 2011). Over the past 30 years, arts education participation has dropped significantly especially for students of low-income communities. Based on the 2009–2010 school year data collected by the NCES, 19.4% of 5 to 17-year olds in families are living in poverty in the United States. Of these students, about a quarter live in urban settings. Students living in poverty face a double injustice when they must navigate financial hardships and attend schools that are ill-equipped to impart a holistic and equitable education to all students reflected in the deprivation of art education from their school curriculum (Varghese 2015).

The literature shows there is an urgent need to bring art education back into focus in K-12 schools so that all students have access to art education not separate from mainstream education but as a core component of learning through equal access to quality content, pedagogy, and opportunity for promoting students' cognitive development (Efland 2002). The literature also documents that art education gives meaning and coherence to learning through mastery of skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and aesthetic development (Eisner 2001). In support of this growing body of scholarship, this chapter repositions art education within educational equity by exploring students' pedagogical experience of the Art of Looking Project in K-12 urban schools.

2 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Dewey's (1938) notion of art as experiential learning essential to K-12 education that contributes to the greater good in a democratic society. Dewey looked to art as a way to combine and exemplify democracy: the experience of art should be accessible to all as it is a transformative process that fosters the growth of its citizenry. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) reminds educators that art is a

form of experience that is closely related to inquiry, reflection, and transformation. Education is defined as growth with the development of the faculties with which every normal child is born (Dewey et al. 1929). Dewey saw growth as being gradually fostered using communication between the individual and the world, and art becomes a medium that facilitates this process (Dewey et al. 1929, p. 10). For Dewey, art is educative as it conveys a message that has a moral purpose, provokes reflection, and prompts change in one's perceptions through increased awareness of one's responsibilities in society. According to Dewey, an art curriculum "provide[s] the material affording … A consciousness of the world in which he has to play a part" (1897, 75–76), thereby, moving one from the self to a deeper understanding of the world.

Speaking of the artistic process as a means to transformation, Dewey states, "What is called the magic of the artist resides in his ability to transfer these values from one field of experience to another, to attach them to the objects of our common life and by imaginative insight make these objects poignant and momentous" (1934, p. 118). In other words, the experience of art makes one aware of the self in relation to society. Equally important for Dewey is the understanding that art, artists, and the context in which art is produced and viewed is the dialectic between art and its audience that generates inquiry and theory. Underpinning Dewey's emphasis on art as experience is going beyond objects of art to the development of critical thinking and analysis as essential to democratic education. Dewey purports, experiences are composed of material interaction with the physical and social environment (1925). As Dewey states: "Objected to be treated, used, acted upon and with, enjoyed and endured, even more than things to be known. They are things had before they are things cognized" (p. 28).

Dewey had first-hand experience with art education when he served as Director at Barnes Foundation. When speaking of the role of art museums in a child's education, Dewey's theory of art as a transformative experience leads the way. Drawing from Dewey's notion of art as a transformative process, this chapter reports on findings from research that explored how K-12 teachers and students in urban schools participated in the Art of Looking Program in Philadelphia.

3 Research Methods

3.1 The Art of Looking Program

This study was conducted in the 2011–2012 school year with Philadelphia schools that participated in the Art of Looking Program. The Art of Looking Program was developed by Barnes Foundation, an educational art institution in Philadelphia dedicated to connecting schools and the community to art as an educative experience. The program emphasized the visual arts as integral to learning across the curriculum and it takes student understanding of art and life to a deeper level of reflection,

inquiry, and critical thinking (Barnes Foundation 2012). Built upon Dewey and Barnes' partnership for promoting the experience of art through plastic elements, the Art of Looking Program developed out of the need to meet Philadelphia's interest for more impactful teaching and learning about art. The program was created specifically for 5th and 6th-grade students of the School District of Philadelphia to fill the void for students with limited access to art resources as a result of the 2011 Pennsylvania state budget cuts. The program was designed for urban students and integrated art into key curriculum standards in math and science. The program also encouraged teachers to use the resources of the Barnes Foundation as a teaching tool to facilitate learning and open students to the world of art. Barnes' educators visited schools and offered talks on art at no cost to the school or students. The program also subsidized busing and admission to the museum, provided art supplies, and developed pedagogic materials for teachers and students. The goal of the Art of Looking program was to connect students to art, open the museum to teachers as a pedagogical site, and provide the community with a public space for the appreciation of art.

The Art of Looking Program was built on the philosophy that learning should be accessible and student-centered, engaging students not with facts about artists but by learning from seeing and analyzing the artwork first-hand. The founding mission was to assist people of all races and stations in life to achieve a greater awareness of the aesthetics in their everyday lives and relationships. Students explored looking at and responding to art in the Barnes museum while building literacy skills in science, mathematics, and social studies. Teachers could choose to bring art to the classroom and/or show art in the museum. Bringing art to the classroom meant providing lessons within students' regular classrooms which were taught by a museum educator who integrated art education across the curriculum. Field trips involved students viewing the museum's art collection and engaging in activities that used visual literacy skills introduced by the museum educator in the classroom lesson. The field trip consisted of a 90-minute experience with a museum educator serving as a guide and a 45-minute lesson on-site with a teaching artist.

The philosophy of the Art of Looking Program emphasized education as the "full and free development of all the capacities with which an individual is endowed at birth" (Barnes 1925, p. 1). The foundation wanted students to know they could approach a work of art with confidence because children are ingrained with knowledge and learning potential. Through the experience of the Art of Looking Program students would be able to incorporate new ways of perceiving objects in context - skills necessary to understand and more fully appreciate art. According to the foundation, part of those skills is the ability to relate art to other areas of life, change one's perceptions, and "see not only pictures but every other object and situation in life" (The Art of Looking, p. 3). For participants in the program, understanding and appreciating a painting went beyond analyzing its formal elements, and included the ability to relate the art to real life experiences.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research methodology was utilized as it allowed for rich and thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study, specifically, how teachers and students' experienced the Art of Looking Program and how art education facilitated teaching and learning across the curriculum. A historical approach was used for data collection which consisted of documents, surveys, and interviews to explore students' experience of the Art of Looking Program. Using Gottschalk's (1950) definition of the historical method I examined how art as an experience shaped students' learning opportunities. I explored the following questions:

How did teachers and students experience the Art of Looking Program?
How does art as an experience develop students' literacy across the content areas?
What are the implications of art education for promoting educational equity in 21st century urban classrooms?

3.3 Context and Participants

Philadelphia school district and the Barnes Foundation, an educational institution with a world-renowned museum of nineteenth and twentieth-century European paintings, served as sites for the study. Educators at the Barnes Foundation were interested in working with teacher educators and teachers based in Philadelphia to develop curricular support that would facilitate the use of the museum as an educational resource and contribute toward bringing art education into schools through an organized art program, namely, the Art of Looking Program. The program focused on using concepts and application of line, light, color, and space to build and advance students' understandings of content areas such as science, math, English and social studies. Students were also invited to analyze the way the collection is displayed in a symmetrical wall arrangement. As a teacher educator and former school principal, I was contacted by the foundation which led to a research project to explore how teachers and students experienced the Art of Looking Program. Thus began this research study with formal approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Participants in the study consisted of 42 teachers from 19 schools who taught general education, special education, and art to 2031 students from the School District of Philadelphia. Students in the school district were ethnically and racially diverse: 36% white, 11% Latinx, 43% black, and 6% Asian. About two-thirds of the students lived in low socioeconomic households (School District of Philadelphia 2013). The students who participated in the Art of Looking Program reflected the demographics of the school district.

Data for this qualitative study consisted of museum documents, teacher surveys, observation of classes, student KWL charts and other assignments, and teacher interviews. Museum documents included the Art of Looking Program information

and pedagogical materials, lectures and tours by the museum's educators. Teachers were asked to fill out a pre and post survey before and after students and teachers had participated in the Art of Looking Program. The interviews were conducted directly after the students and teachers had participated in the program and included unstructured and open-ended questions. Interviews were approximately 30 minutes for each participant. The focus of the interviews was teachers and students' experience with the Art of Looking Program within the context of art education in K-12 classrooms. According to Kvale (1996), in interview conversations the researcher listens to what people themselves tell about their lived world, learns about their views on their work situation and family life, their dreams, and hopes. Accordingly, during the second year, a follow-up interview was conducted with teachers to provide feedback on the impact of the program.

The KWL chart served as a measurement of student knowledge before, during, and after participating in the program. Before the program, students wrote down what they already knew (K) about art, followed by what they wanted to know (W). The last part of the chart was completed after the visit to the Barnes Foundation which enabled students to explain, what they learned during the program (L). Student assignments such as writing descriptive and analytical essays about art as an educative experience was also part of the data.

Analysis entailed open coding of the themes to examine students' responses to the Art of Looking lessons, based on classroom observations, students' assignments, and surveys and interview data from teacher participants. Axial coding helped with making connections between different data sources and checked the integrity of emergent themes across the data, ensuring internal validity and confirming similarities and differences between data (Strauss and Corbin 2008). Analysis of the survey generated assertions about the teacher and student experience before and after participating in the Art of Looking Program.

Analysis consisted of three steps. First, students' assignments based on the Art of Looking Program was examined quantitatively coding Know, Wanting to Know and the Learned outcomes. Student knowledge was measured by an evaluative tool called the What I Know About Art, What I Want to Know About Art, What I Learned About Art (KWL) chart. Student assignments such as essays provided documented evidence supporting teachers' feedback on experiential learning that advanced students' creative and critical thinking skills in several content areas. Second, teacher feedback was gathered using an online pre and post survey. Interview transcripts were studied to identify and refine categories of influences on teachers' understanding of student learning and the Deweyan emphasis on art as experiential learning. Third, all pedagogical and curricula documents provided by the museum were analyzed to align the goals of the Art of the Looking Program with experiential outcomes of art education. Participants had the opportunity to member check the accuracy of the transcribed and interpreted data.

Data gathered from the assignments, survey, interviews, and documents was placed in thematic categories and subcategories. As themes emerged, data were organized on an organizational chart. The organizational chart helped with relating themes and categories, and assertions were made about the impact of the Art of

Looking educational experience for teachers and students. Specifically, data were explored for evidence on how the program served as a teaching tool for teachers and the influences at play in students' participation in the Art of Looking Program. Data were also explored to identify how students were able to connect the art experience to learning across content areas. Emphasis was placed on how the experience differed from traditional classroom experiences and how it shaped students' perceptions of art as an educational experience that promotes learning.

4 Findings

Three themes emerged from the analysis of data: the arts-based partnership between Philadelphia public schools and the Barnes Foundation addressed the gap in resources for urban schools, the art experience offered through this partnership contributed pedagogically to teaching and learning across the curriculum, and art education provided experiential learning opportunities for K-12 students.

4.1 Art-Based Partnerships that Impact Urban Schools

Both educators and students responded positively to the Art of Looking Program. The online survey results showed that 100% of participating teachers wanted to continue the program. Educators from all 19 schools felt the program provided creative enrichment for their students. Of the 42 teachers who participated in the study, 26 completed a Post Visit Art of Looking survey. Interviews were conducted with 8 teachers who volunteered to be interviewed after completing the Post Visit Survey. Interview data showed teacher interest in sharing this experience with students in their schools who did not attend the program. According to one teacher,

> The students were very excited to learn that Dr. Barnes grew up in Philadelphia and attended Central High School, a school in the School District of Philadelphia. The students also were able to identify with what it meant to be an art collector. The students shared their own interests in what they collected and how that helped them.

Teachers felt the program had helped them use art to develop math and science lessons that were interactive and unique. Many teachers wanted to expand the program to 7th and 8th grade, building a continuum for learning using arts-integrated pedagogies they had acquired.

The 5th-grade teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the Art of Looking experience in meeting the Pennsylvania State Standards for Art and Science. Of those who completed the post-survey, 20% replied that the course was "very effective" and 80% replied "effective." The 6th-grade teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the Art of Looking experience in meeting the Pennsylvania State Standards for Art and Mathematics. Of the 80% who completed the post-survey, all

replied "very effective." The responses to the 5th-grade teachers' survey response to meeting the standards showed a need for improvement. During the interview portion of the study, I was able to have the teachers elaborate on how they would have improved the experience.

Through the suggestions in the online survey, 95% of the teachers expressed interest in expanding art-making activities through partnerships such as the Art of Looking Program that brought local community resources such as the Barnes Foundation and the School District of Philadelphia to collaborate on integrating art education across the curriculum for 5th and 6th-grade students. Subsequently, an advisory committee of six teachers representing schools across the School District of Philadelphia continues to serve the partnership between schools and the museum and coordinate teachers and students' curriculum needs in art education. The benefits of such partnerships in promoting art education as an educative experience highlight the need to institute experiential learning programs in art education for students and use local resources to develop creative and critical thinking skills that extend across content areas.

4.2 Art Experience Contributes to Teaching and Learning across the Curriculum

Along with 12 visual arts teachers who signed up for the Art of Looking program, general education teachers also collaborated and facilitated the integration of the program into their pedagogies. The benefits of the cross-curricular lessons inspired teachers across content areas to view the visual arts as a teaching tool for improving student learning in their own subject areas and promoting cross-curricular practice. The program encouraged teachers to discuss how to make art relevant to science and math. According to a science teacher, 5th-grade students utilized the scientific method to learn about light and shadow in art and compared how scientists and artists used light by examining artwork from the museum. Students then created self-portraits by incorporating what they had learned.

The survey also asked the 5th-grade teachers, if they were encouraged to incorporate art with science or science with art and asked the 6th-grade teachers if they were encouraged to incorporate art with mathematics or mathematics with art. All of the 5th and 6th-grade teachers stated, "they were encouraged to use cross-curricular activities." During the interview process of the study, I was able to ask the teachers how they would use art in the subjects of science and mathematics. Eighty percent of the teachers interviewed "had activities in mind," and 20% were "not sure how to do it but would look into it."

In individual interviews, a math teacher discussed how 6th-grade students investigated the role of mathematics in art compositions by exploring how different artists arrange geometric and organic shapes to make compositions look three-dimensional. Students then demonstrated their knowledge of the concept

learned in a hands-on activity. According to the English teacher, participation in the Art of Looking Program had helped build students' vocabulary and improved writing skills while the social studies teacher expressed how the museum's brochures and lectures aroused students' curiosity about Europe and the cultures reflected in the art. he experience urged teachers to explore the possibilities of including art into their content teaching and collaborate with art teachers on projects that bring several subjects into play.

4.3 Impact on Students' Experiential Learning

The findings show a positive impact on students' experiential learning which was evident throughout the program. The goal of the program was to create meaningful learning opportunities for students while meeting curriculum requirements. One of the science teachers stated that she collaborated with the Math, English and Art teacher to design a lesson wherein the main objective was for students to be able to analyze a work of art using art vocabulary of color, light, line and space. According to the KWL chart that students had completed, one student wrote, "What I Know About Art is that art has a lot of symbols, colors, and patterns." In the W section the student stated, "What I Wanted to Know about Art before their lesson was, "how to be an artist." In the final section, the student reflected, "Wow, art is full of symbols and patterns that have meaning in science and math too." In many cases, students used the KWL chart to detail how they were fascinated with the way the art, language, science, social studies and math work together as a shared experience of learning. The KWL chart also showed consistent growth in students' use of language skills and enriching their vocabulary. For example, a student wrote "What I Learned about Art is that aesthetics means a sense of beauty." Another student stated "What I Learned about Art, is how to express what I want to say through different symbols." The data revealed several students used art vocabulary on light, line, color, space, patterns, and symbols to describe projects in science and math in a more skilled manner."

Overall, 80% of students completing the KWL chart showed the experience led to a deeper understanding of art as well as math and science concepts taught through art. Students' assignments showed their more active engagement with elements of art appreciation such as color, light, line, and space and their math and science projects showed increased use of art vocabulary. The experience of integrating the tools of appreciating art with math and science literacy was extended to social studies as students learned to use observation and analytical skills when studying sculpture, paintings and artifacts as a composition of time, place, and historical eras. Students also showed increased interest in learning about art from diverse cultures and making comparisons between modern and contemporary art as representations of life during specific time periods. Findings show first-hand experiential learning through the Art of Looking Program offered students opportunities for developing a greater

appreciation of art and how to use the tools of studying art to learning across content areas.

Teachers revealed student discussion of artwork was integral to the activities in both the in-classroom lessons and the museum tour lessons; and, students were able to articulate their understanding of the differences among individual expressions of art. One student wrote, "I really liked all of the famous artworks by Cezanne, Seurat the Dot, and many more." Students also analyzed how different artists expressed diverse ideas using the four elements. They were able to explain how artists and art speak to everyone differently. The experience gave students a deeper understanding of diversity in art and differences in viewer perspectives toward art.

Through the Art of Looking Program, students were asked to experiment with elements of art and compare their experiences with that of artists represented in the museum. In the 5th grade program, students learned about using light in a composition by shining flashlights on their faces and recording the shadows they see in a mirror onto their paper. They then incorporated what they experienced into the creation of a self-portrait with shadows in the composition. The 6th-grade program's learning objective focused on shape organization in space by experimenting with cutting two-dimensional shapes and pasting them on a board to represent three-dimensional space. The activities allowed students to make personal connections while using kinesthetic techniques to interact with the art and each other.

5 Discussion

While reduced funding to schools has led to the marginalization and exclusion of art education from urban school curricula, cities such as Philadelphia are rich with learning resources that schools often underutilize. Cultural sites such as art museums and educational programs such as the Art of Looking are opportunities for schools to address the gap in art education in school curricula. On the one hand, research shows that art education is integral to the growth and development of all students, especially when it comes to acquiring creative and critical thinking skills that can be transferred across content areas such as math, science, and social studies. On the other hand, the marginalization of art education deprives students of opportunities for experiential learning and adds to widening the access and opportunity gap among students.

Teachers and students recognize the Art of Looking Program validated Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning and provided hands-on experience that created an ideal learning environment for students. Interpreting a work of art helps students critically understand the visual world and recognize that the world is made up of diverse perspectives. When students make observations, interpret, and articulate what they see and experience, they are actively making meaning of their world. Sharing their interpretations was a teaching opportunity for teachers to emphasize how differences in viewer perceptions reflect diversity in the world.

Art education is an opportunity for showing students the commonality as well as the individuality of peoples through artistic interpretation and developing respect for culture, art and diversity. When students analyze art as a group in the classroom and participate in field trips, they learn how to articulate their ideas and respect diverse perceptions and interpretations of their peers. Such experiences not only nurture art as experience but offer students opportunities for opening their perceptions to diverse ways of viewing the world.

Experiential learning through programs such as the Art of Looking introduces a new kind of educational experience that takes best practices from art education to expand and enrich student learning in and out of school. Art as experience provides innovative kinetic learning activities that enable students to gain a deeper understanding of art elements through interdisciplinary experimentation. In Deweyan terms, through various types of hands-on experiential learning, inquiry, and discovery, art education offers the pedagogical space and tools that enhance learning and critical thinking skills. For example, students can work with a professional dancer to interpret the concept of how a line can express emotion. Students may line up or use blocks, scarves or ribbons to form a line, and then compare how lines from art around the world can be expressed. Once students experiment with the concept of line in the classroom space, they gain more in-depth and more personal understanding of how artists such as Matisse, Cézanne, Renoir, or African carvers have used line in the composition of their works.

6 Conclusion

This research calls for repositioning art education in K-12 urban schools within educational equity as a pathway to developing critical skills for effective teaching and learning across content areas. This research also highlights a need for urban schools to create long-term partnerships with community-based art organizations and programs and utilize the resources offered in a large city. Urban school districts at the receiving end of budget cuts benefit when curriculum advisors and administrators support community partnerships and programs that include art education for all students. The partnership between Philadelphia School District and Barnes Foundation is an example of how schools might expand outreach in the classroom, build pedagogical relationships with teachers and the outside community, and engage students in experiential learning for addressing educational inequities and improving academic outcomes. Such programs and partnerships enhance learning without increasing school costs. They also provide platforms for students to exhibit their artwork and creative expressions.

Community partnerships also provide larger and improved spaces, in addition to the Gallery exhibition space, which is equipped with state of the art technology so that educators might include more field trips into their school programs. While field trips provide the artifacts to explore, campus classrooms offer opportunities for in-depth examination of art through hands-on activities. Future inquiries might include

the use of quantitative and qualitative research to capture students' experience with art education through community-based partnerships. Future studies could also look at how online virtual museums and programs serve as a resource to supplement the elimination of art and music disciplines from school curricula. Such work would be a meaningful step in addressing the limited resources of urban school districts.

In conducting this study, I recognize that art education, especially one that includes field trips to a private art collection or museum that predominantly showcases Western European art is positioned to be controversial for reinforcing Eurocentric culture and promoting cultural imperialism as a form of social control. I also recognize that Philadelphia is a city that houses global, mostly European works of art in world-famous museums, while artists of color display their work on street murals and public spaces fueling the debate about race and the marginalization of some kinds of art. At the same time, school and community partnerships can address cultural imperialism and the inequity it engenders by bridging the divide between those who have access to knowledge and those who do not, between global art that is considered elitist and local knowledge that has been historically underrecognized and excluded from school curricula. Art education can provide a meaningful catalyst to engage students, teachers and communities to take action around issues of equal opportunities and access for all students and challenge inequities in schools and society as a move toward social justice.

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Engaging Difference in the Digital Age: Learning with/from Three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, Female YouTubers

Diane P. Watt, Kayf Abdulqadir, Fartousa Siyad, and Hodan Hujaleh

There's not much diversity in the high school curriculum. As a teenager, the search for identity is so central to your life. When you tell a story from your point of view it helps you develop confidence in who you are. I think it's really important that we teach youth how to use video to do that. Our experiences on YouTube show that teaching kids how to express themselves through media can be very powerful. (Siyad)

I use my culture in my process of media making… We just want to get some discussions going. (Abdulqadir)

Abstract This collaborative visual ethnography engages the creative work and perspectives of three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, Black female youth YouTubers. The groundbreaking videos they produce and share outside the classroom speak back to absence in the Ontario High School Curriculum and stereotypes circulating in the spaces of popular culture. In this chapter we highlight examples from their work and argue educators and researchers can learn a great deal from the innovative New Literacies practices youth are engaging in outside of school. Kayf, Fartousa, and Hodan's videos: (a) provide insights into the lived experiences of youth from marginalized communities; (b) point to the need to reconceptualize teacher-student roles in the digital classroom; and (c) demonstrate the power of youth-produced videos to intervene in critical conversations on difference at the intersections of religion, racialization, gender, social class, and ethnicity. To rethink difference and transform teaching and learning, K-12 teachers, teacher educators, and researchers need to pay attention to how youth are representing their identities and perspectives outside the classroom using digital technologies.

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1 Introduction

Canada has an international reputation as a welcoming, diverse society with its official policy of multiculturalism (Government of Canada 1988). The discourse on Canadian official policy as one that welcomes diversity and respects multiculturalism fails to take into account the complex lived experiences of different cultural groups of minority youth who encounter marginalization in school and society as an everyday reality. Growing up in the nation's capital, Kayf Abdulqadir, Fartousa Siyad, and Hodan Hujaleh (co-authors in this chapter) identify as Somali-Canadian Muslim female youth who do not see themselves represented in the Ontario high school curriculum, or in the spaces of popular culture associated with youth. All three women have had to negotiate absence in the school curriculum and work through stereotypical representations of Muslim women in the unofficial curriculum of the mass media and popular culture (Awan et al. 2010; Kassam 2008; Watt 2016). Almost two decades after the tragic events of 9/11, Islamophobia continues to be of great concern in Canada. A recent Angus Reid (2017) survey reveals that nearly half of all Canadians consider the presence of Muslims to be "damaging" to the country. According to data from Statistics Canada (2017), the number of police-reported hate crimes targeting Muslims tripled between 2012 and 2015, even though the overall number of such crimes decreased during the same period.

Resisting stereotypical and misinformed media representations, these three Somali-Canadian, Muslim, Black female youth produce and share videos on YouTube to portray their reality of everyday life and "claim a representational space of their own" (Siyad). Having access to this digital platform greatly expands their ability to express their identities, perspectives, and lived experience (Watt et al. 2016). In this chapter, we discuss two of the YouTube videos produced by Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa outside of school. We argue that bringing videos into K-12 classrooms created by students offers exciting new approaches to engage with diversity and cultural difference and transform teaching and learning for the 21st century.

Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa are the first female youth in the Somali Diaspora – and among the first Muslim women – to create and share comedic content on YouTube which can be viewed on our project website: www.muslimfemaleyoutubersspeakback.com. These groundbreaking videos draw from lived experiences and powerfully speak back to media stereotypes, which impact the lives of Canadian, Muslim, Black female youth and shape how schools perceive and interact with them. The videos provoke conversations on cultural difference at the intersections of racialization, religion, gender, ethnicity, and class. Creating and sharing media texts based on diverse youth experiences provides a window into everyday youth literacies both in and outside the classroom (Sanford et al. 2014). Digital technologies have opened up – independent of teachers, schools, and the mandated curricu-

lum – forms and places of teaching and learning that are powerful provocations for rethinking school knowledge on K-12 diversity and difference (Ávila and Zacher Pandya 2013; Lange 2014).

Proponents of New Literacies and multiliteracies studies (Lankshear and Knobel 2011; Leu et al. 2013) regard literacy as a repertoire of emerging pedagogical practices for communicating in diverse and multiple social and cultural contexts. This broadened notion of literacy accounts for the expanded role digital technologies play in everyday life and in classrooms. An important aspect of emergent pedagogical practices is critical literacy which focuses on the ability to read and interpret power relations by deciphering underlying meanings constructed through texts and asking uncomfortable questions about the construction of knowledge (Freire 2000). Critical questions on who is represented in a given text or representation and who is not, whose representation is valued and why, are of ongoing concern for education, a field where creating, dispersing, maintaining, and investigating knowledge is of utmost importance.

The use of the term "critical digital literacies" thus marks a shift to include a focus on digital tools and spaces that transform how we understand and engage with the production of knowledge, school curricula, and pedagogical practice. Advances in digital technologies have created pedagogical spaces for production of alternative knowledge enabling individuals, not limited to teachers, to "engage with, respond to, and create both text-based and multimodal forms of literacy" (Ávila and Zacher Pandya, p. 30). Therefore, to be considered literate in 21st century media-rich environments, youth and educators need to develop an ever-expanding range of literacies that include critical digital literacies.

Digital video technologies have become an integral part of our social, economic, and political landscape; however, their use in classrooms remains limited (Johnson et al. 2016; Miller 2013). Therefore, in this chapter, we theorize that video production is a form of digital literacy which involves knowledges, skills and dispositions that enable one to critically read and co-create digital, multimedia texts of lived experience. We argue educators and researchers can learn a great deal by paying attention to the New Literacies practices that YouTubers, particularly minority youth, engage with outside the classroom. First, these videos provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of youth from marginalized communities that otherwise would be unavailable to educators. Second, the media making processes and use of digital technologies by minority youth suggest a need to reconceptualize the roles of teachers and students in the classroom, shifting power dynamics so youth become more engaged in the production of knowledge as teachers decenter authority as keepers of knowledge. Third, this study demonstrates the power of videos shared face-to-face and online to provoke conversations on diversity and difference in-between the local and the global that go unrecognized in school curricula. We hope our study prompts researchers, teacher educators, and K-12 classroom teachers to rethink difference in 21st century classrooms and transform practice for teaching and learning in an increasingly diverse digital age.

2 The Research Context

This research draws from a 2-year collaborative visual ethnography started in 2016 and continues to the present day. As a teacher educator, my (Diane, the first author in this chapter) previous research highlighted how Muslim women are represented in the North American news media, and what it is like for Muslim girls to grow up in the post-9/11 discursive and material context, where they are routinely depicted as *other* (Watt 2011a, b, 2012).

In 2012, listening to Kayf and Fartousa being interviewed on C.B.C. Radio one December morning, I was impressed by how their video powerfully spoke back to mainstream understandings of Muslim and Somali female youth. That evening, I went to hear them speak at a panel on youth media at an event entitled, Beyond the Sound-Byte (2012), co-sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration and the United Nation Association in Canada initiative, *Multimedia Multiculturalism*. We met again in 2017 at a workshop sponsored by *Women, Action, and the Media*, which was the start of our media and research collaboration. Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa were born and raised in Ottawa by immigrant parents who fled from the Somali civil war of the 1990s. They completed their schooling in Canada, and as the children of immigrants became adept at negotiating expectations in-between school and home. It is from this perspective that they create their characters and storylines: the father who thinks everyone speaks and understands the Somali language; the mother who expects her daughter to marry a doctor or an engineer; the teenager who is constantly questioned about wearing hijab.

The purpose of our collaborative research is to: (a) inquire into the video-making process and what that work meant to the producers and their audiences; (b) share the videos depicting the lived experiences of Muslim female youth with K-12 students, teachers, higher education faculty and researchers, and community audiences; and, (c) provoke changes in how the academic and social communities view and interact with cultural diversity and difference.

This project is a collaborative visual ethnography (Pink 2013, 2016; Rose 2016) inquiring into the making and sharing of visual digital texts. Accordingly, this chapter is based on research into the co-production of our visual digital text. While vision is what the eye is physiologically capable of seeing, *visuality* refers to how vision is constructed in various ways (Rose 2012). As Berger (1999) points out, "we gain a great deal of information about others solely on the basis of visual perceptions" (p. 17). Exclusionary practices often take place based solely on what someone looks like (Nelson and Nelson 2004; Watt 2012). In the post 9/11 period this form of exclusion has been an issue in the lives of many North American Muslim women who may be identifiable as "other" by the scarves they wear on their heads; therefore, must negotiate the limited meanings associated with this symbol of Islam. We stress that the ability to read the self and other beyond the dominant narrative should extend into visual digital spaces.

With this in mind, we began our inquiry with open-ended interviews, video and audio recordings of our conversations, and content analysis of documents and the YouTube videos. Our primary focus quickly expanded in directions beyond the

boundaries of traditional approaches to data collection and educational research. Such constructs were artificial and colonizing, and did not fit well with our team's emerging priorities. Instead, we found ourselves *actively engaging* with many people, in many contexts: sharing laughter-filled conversations around a meal; working with professional filmmakers on our short documentaries; organizing a high school media club for Muslim female teenagers; traveling to the Paley Center in New York City where Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa accepted three international awards; presenting at academic conferences and in university classrooms; conducting video production workshop for teachers and marginalized youth; participating in a video shoot in Kayf's residence. Our collaboration became action-focused because of the work Kayf, Hodan and Fartousa do as their comedic videos provoked critical conversations on diversity and difference. Kayf, Hodan and Fartousa's strong sense of community and commitment to social justice resonated with their audience.

Given that three members of our team are not officially identified as academic researchers, we believe that the need to categorize and label the research process is "less significant than the impact" (De Meulenaere and Cann 2013, p. 559) of the collaborative work. Our first priority was to share the unique perspectives expressed in their YouTube videos with educators, youth, and community audiences through the co-production of short documentaries. During this process, knowledge is constructed between collaborators and what we were able to represent using video technologies (Pink 2013, 2016). Co-producing our video thus involves multiple levels of meaning making: video as mode of inquiry, as mode of representation, and as mode of dissemination (Mitchell 2011).

Issues around representation are central to the video projects Kayf, Hodan and Fartousa undertake. Representing our collaboration as written text also raises ethical issues. Even though this text emerges from our collaboration, as lead author, my voice dominates. I seek de-centered, less colonizing modes of knowledge production by speaking nearby, or together with, rather than speaking for, or about (Trinh 1989, p. 101). However, this chapter is filtered through my theoretical and cultural lenses as a privileged, white, female educator/academic, and therefore needs to be acknowledged as the telling of *my story* of *their stories*. Our project has social justice and advocacy goals, so we each contribute based on our experiences and shared co-editorial authority.

3 Theoretical Perspectives

Our team distinguishes between *difference* and *diversity*, as we find ourselves working in-between these two concepts, depending on the context. Diversity is the mainstream term denoting difference from the dominant culture presumed to be 'white' and defined as the norm. We are also aware of the limits of language and that alternative concepts shift taken-for-granted meaning of terms and open language to other possibilities. Bhabha (1990) draws on Derrida's (1968) conceptualization of différance – displacement within the linguistic sign – to critique the notion of cultural

diversity, the bedrock of multicultural education. Although cultural diversity may be celebrated, it must also be contained. Bhabha (1990) contends a "transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'" (p. 208). He points out in societies where multiculturalism is encouraged racism is still rampant in various forms because, "the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests" (p. 208).

Drawing on the notion of différance, Bhabha (1988) deconstructs claims to the inherent originality or "purity" of cultures. He maintains that it is "the in-between, the space of the entre that Derrida opened up in writing itself – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (p. 209). He refers to this as the "third space of enunciation," arguing that it is the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference. Although the third space is unrepresentable in itself, it constitutes "the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew" (p. 208). Therefore, all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. This is not about tracing two original positions from which a third emerges. Rather, for Bhabha (1990), it is this third space "which enables other positions to emerge" (p. 211). The process of cultural hybridity "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (p. 211). It is the productive capacities of Bhabha's third space that interests our research. Hodan, Kayf, and Fartousa's YouTube videos work this generative third space to provoke critical conversations on difference that disrupt stereotypes within received knowledge.

Khan (2002) observes Muslim women "are seen in simplistic and limited ways as part of the undifferentiated group, *Muslim women*" (p. xxii). Through its categorizations, hierarchical binaries, and hostility to difference, humanism's structuring of language plays a decisive role in perpetuating exclusions. It may be difficult to see a Muslim woman beyond a limited and fixed meaning because of the powerful hold language has over us. Khan (2002) disrupts the notion of a normative Muslim female identity by drawing on Bhabha's (1988, 1990, 1994, 2006) theorizations of a hybrid third space. She envisions spaces where Muslim subjectivity is no longer "boxed in rigid boundaries" (p. xvi). She argues for the production of "supplementary discourses as sites of resistance and negotiation" (p. 114), for a third space exceeds binaries and moves us beyond dichotomous thinking.

According to Khan (2002), within this third space, "Muslim subjectivity is no longer about an identity politics making claims about absolute knowledge boxed in rigid boundaries, an identity that a few can control (such as Islamists) and others can vilify (such as Orientalists)" (p. xvi). Khan contends that "the unstable, hybridized Muslim identity is no longer a trait to be transcended but a productive tension filled with possibility" (p. xvi). She argues for rethinking how Muslims are positioned in a pluralist society, by producing "supplementary discourses as sites of resistance and negotiation" (p. 114), for a third space exceeds binaries, moves us beyond

dichotomous thinking. With Khan, we seek in-between spaces where binaries might be shown to be something other than ontological absolutes. As we will see, Kayf, Fartousa, and Hodan's YouTube videos produce such supplementary discourses that act as sites of resistance and negotiation.

Aoki (1990) brings Bhabha's notions of in-between spaces into education by inciting us to rethink curriculum so as to sink more often into "the lived space of between – in the midst of many cultures, into the 'inter' of interculturalism" (p. 382). He moves away from the identity-centered "east and west" into the space between east and west, undoing the instrumental sense of curriculum. Aoki notes that although the multicultural curriculum emphasizes "many-ness" and diversity, opening up the "closed-ness" of the monocultural and bicultural worlds, the museum approach to distinct cultures, "assumes the structure of the viewer-viewed, of subject-object separation. As such, it is reductive–reducing others to objects, allowing a study about" (p. 381). Our team believes that researchers, teacher educators, and K-12 teachers could transform teaching and learning by dwelling in this third space. This implies decentering practice to learn with and from students, creating a living, productive space where power is shared and knowledge is constructed in collaboration (Abdulqadir et al. 2014). Diverse student identities, experiences, and perspectives are valued and invited to participate in the teaching and learning process.

4 Literature Review

Digital technologies have become an integral part of our socio-economic and political landscape. Mobile devices and editing software make it possible for anyone with access to technology to shoot and edit video, yet many K-12 teachers have yet to realize the potential of integrating student video production across the curriculum. Jenkins et al. (2006) suggests social networking sites such as YouTube are potentially more inclusive cultural public spaces where diverse voices can emerge. YouTube expands possibilities for minority youth to express perspectives absent in the school curriculum and public sphere. Being literate in the 21st century requires critical engagement in digital environments.

Sanford et al. (2014) use the term "everyday youth literacies" to highlight that youth engage in multiple literacy practices in a vast array of contexts. Digital technologies provide new sites for youth identity positioning and construction. In the context of new literacy practices, youth discursively position themselves within the texts they create, using a range of multimodal resources as they continuously construct and negotiate their identities (Sanford et al. 2014, p. 2). Access to the Internet and digital tools allows youth to connect directly to the world and share texts with their peers. As Sanford et al. explain digital technologies have transformed the way youth learn and share information:

> Youth are moving into spaces traditionally occupied by 'experts' as they develop sophisticated understandings of diverse literacies, and create and respond to multimodal forms of texts. Because these spaces, affordances, and skills are known (and often developed) by the youth themselves, adults frequently learn from them; roles are, in some instances, reversed. Youth are now not relying solely or even predominantly on school to learn literacy skills; instead they glean much about communication through participation in informal spaces, both online and in face-to-face social sites. As a result, there is often a disconnect between what youth know, can do, and want to learn, and the requirements and expectations of parents, teachers, and schools. There is also an increased blurring of education, entertainment and civic engagement as the play-work connection weaves in multiple iterations of youth literacies…a connection that often includes youths' insistence on being taken seriously as they engage in meaningful social issues (p. 4).

In spite of the ubiquitous use of social media such as YouTube, we know relatively little about New Literacy practices being taken up by youth outside school (Jocson 2013; Sanford et al. 2014) and potential implications for the K-12 classroom.

A national survey (Steeves 2014) of students in grades 4–11, confirms Canadian youth are enthusiastic users of digital technologies outside of school. This includes video production, which in the past required specialized equipment and expertise most schools did not have. Internet access is now universal and youth are highly connected. They routinely construct their identities through a combination of text, image, and video. YouTube is particularly significant for inquiries into outside-of-school youth literacy practices because as a user-created content community its size and popularity are unprecedented (Burgess and Green 2009). YouTube is certainly extraordinarily popular among Canadian youth, with 75% reporting it to be their favorite website (Steeves 2014).

Evidence also suggests that although children and youth are comfortable with modern technologies, they are likely not using them to full educational advantage (Miller 2013). This is confirmed by a national survey (Steeves 2014) of 5426 students in grades 4–11 that considers the role of networked technologies in the lives of Canadian youth. They are "confident and enthusiastic users" (p. 3) of networked technology, but they tend not to use networked devices to their full potential. For example, although 75% of respondents share videos on YouTube, 67% report that they do not creatively use digital media such as posting homemade videos online. This suggests students are major consumers of digital video messages, but less often utilize this influential medium to create their own messages. Given advances in technology and the shift from print to visual texts it is not enough to have the capacity to critically read media messages; youth today also need to be producers of visual messages for enjoyment, employment, and participation as citizens in a democratic society.

In addition, new technologies introduce forms of knowledge that are continually shifting the power dynamics in the classroom by "disrupting authority relations" between students and teachers (Luke, in Attarian 2004). Youth are often competent with digital technologies, while many teachers struggle with how to utilize the full potential of media and technology in the classroom as a pedagogical and democratic

tool for producing knowledge. Students are also less likely to be engaged if the knowledge, skills, and ways of learning they experience outside school are ignored in schooling contexts. At the same time, children and youth may have technology skills and a comfort level with digital media, but cannot necessarily read or use them critically (Steeves 2014).

It is important that teachers ensure students develop critical digital literacies. Equally important, it is critical that teachers work with students as collaborators as it makes for engaged learning (Ito et al. 2008). This is also an approach endorsed by Prensky (2010), who promotes "partnering pedagogies" where students and teachers learn with and from one another. Research also demonstrates students are more likely to succeed at school if they see themselves represented in the school curriculum and included in the production of knowledge (Ontario Ministry of Education 2009; Watt 2011b).

Although a developing body of literature advocates K-12 and teacher preparation classrooms include critical digital literacies in their curricula and instruction and student-teacher collaborations on social justice video projects that recognize diversity, little research in teacher education focuses on the power of video production for raising consciousness on specific issues such as the lived experiences of Muslim women from immigrant families negotiating Islamophobia in the West and stereotyped misrepresentations in popular culture, schools and society. Addressing this critical gap, our research uses collaborative video production via YouTube to study the lived experience of Somali-Canadian Muslim Black female youth from immigrant families in Canada with the aim of expanding viewer awareness of cultural diversity and difference. In what follows, we present findings from our study and elaborate on the lived experience of Kayf, Hodan and Fartousa using two of their video productions entitled, *10 Types of Somali Girls* and *Three Things You Should Know About My Hijab* (www.muslimfemaleyoutubersspeakback.com).

5 Lived Experience of Three Somali-Canadian Muslim Black Female Youth

As Somali-Canadian Muslim Black female youth, Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa did not see themselves represented in the school curriculum, which they believe impoverished their schooling experiences and contributed to a sense of alienation. Our findings elaborate on how Kayf, Hodan and Fartousa address this absence, resist stereotyping, and produce knowledge on their own terms.

Video: *10 Types of Somali Girls.* One of the first videos Kayf and Fartousa conceptualized, shot, edited, and posted on YouTube is entitled, *10 Types of Somali Girls* (Abdulqadir and Siyad 2011). Fartousa describes the evening she and Kayf decided to make this particular video:

> We were watching sitting in Kayf's bedroom watching Issa Rae on YouTube… It's about her, about being awkward and black. It was really funny. And Kayf and I asked ourselves, why not watch some Somali videos? And I say, there has to be some Somali videos, right? So we searched YouTube and couldn't find anything that wasn't related to pirates or poetry. That's all that is out there – pirates, poetry, and politics – the three P's! But we didn't see any stories being told. There were a few Somali guys on YouTube, but there were no Somali girls anywhere to be seen…The more we talked about it, the more we thought to ourselves, why are we waiting for someone else to create this material? Why can't we just make it ourselves? So in that moment we decided to do it.

Fartousa, Kayf, and a friend improvised a script and acted in the above video. As YouTubers, they are DIY specialists; they use whatever is readily at hand to construct their message. As they could not afford professional video equipment or editing software, they used what was available or borrowed.

Kayf underlines that it was especially important to her and Fartousa, "to target Somali Muslim girls and what we do in our everyday lives, to humanize us." Renee Hobbes (2018) notes via Twitter that, "when lived experience is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of knowledge, it maintains existing power dynamics and the social status quo, alienating people from their realities. Social media like @youtube can disrupt these hierarchies." Not only was making this video empowering for the Kayf and Fartousa as video-makers, their audiences also responded positively to seeing other young women from their own religious, ethnic, and cultural communities acting up on the screen. Kayf describes what they set out to do with this video:

> We wanted to show different types of Somali girls. The never-hijabi, the ditsy valley girl, the hood hijabi who plays basketball a lot and always wears sweats and blasts rap music, the religious hijabi, and the bookworm hijabi. We wanted to show the diversity of what it means to be a Somali girl.

In one scene Kayf and Fartousa are in an elevator together, with Fartousa loudly and enthusiastically reciting poetry. Kayf is ill at ease being in a confined space with a strange woman, and frantically pushes all of the buttons on the control panel to exit the elevator quickly. One cannot help but find the comedic situations and characters they portray, hilarious. Considering the narrow range of representations of Muslim women circulating in the mass media, and an almost total lack of representation of Somali females, the response to this YouTube video is understandable. A video they shoot and edit in an afternoon powerfully speaks back to stereotypes of Muslim women as somber, backwards, exotic, and oppressed.

Steve Goodman (2018), founder and executive director of the Educational Video Center in New York City, spent three decades facilitating youth-produced videos. He describes the importance of providing opportunities for youth to tell their own stories through this medium:

> [Youth] find power though the process of storytelling, learning that their stories matter and that spreading them out into the world can lead to change. Within this context, we can understand their storytelling as a radical political act (p. 8).

As female members of a marginalized community, Hodan, Fartousa, and Kayf offer unique perspectives not found in school textbooks, the news media, or popular culture and audiences are listening to what they have to say. The intended audience was

originally only their immediate circle of friends. They had no expectation that their video would go viral, but when it did they became instant celebrities at home and around the world. It was the first time Somali females had ever posted a comedic video to YouTube, and it resonated for youth in the Somali Diaspora. Through YouTube's detailed analytics, Fartousa determined who was watching their video:

> Our biggest audience is in the U.K., by a huge margin. I think we had 140,000 views from there. The U.S. is next with 114,000 views, and then Canada with 76,000 views. That is actually where the Somali Diaspora is concentrated, in these three countries. We also had 39,000 views in Sweden and in other places, like Kenya. The majority of our viewers are between 13 and 17 years old – like 30% in the U.K. – so a lot of our viewers are high school students. About half our viewers are female, and half male, which is really cool.

What began as a response to their dismay at the lack of representation of Somali Muslim females in the Ontario school curriculum and misrepresentation in popular culture, transformed into a global conversation on the lived experiences of Muslim women and youth diaspora in several countries.

Taking note of the global and cultural conversations generated by *10 Types of Somali Girls*, the local Canadian Broadcasting Corporation station in Ottawa invited Kayf and Fartousa for a radio interview. They were also offered a United Nations internship, and were invited to present at workshops and special events on youth media activism. Recognition of their voice and interest in their experiences helped shape their sense of identity as media activists:

> At first it was about not seeing ourselves represented, but later once the videos were a hit and we had more audience response, we realized it was a lot more than that. Getting power into our own hands to create media, being media makers, became a lot more important to us. We realized it was important to act and to involve other youth. Creating a community became our mission. It became about building a Somali YouTube base because we just aren't represented. (Siyad)
>
> By representing ourselves we hoped, and we still hope, that it would create a chain reaction. Maybe all those other females would represent themselves, too, especially Muslims because we are so heavily represented by the media and we never see ourselves in those representations. (Abdulqadir)

Making this video gave Kayf and Fartousa confidence that as young women they have a voice and could make a difference in the world. As Goodman (2003, 2018) notes, issues important to them and their community were also relevant for other youth. Drawing on their everyday experiences, their videos also provide important insights into the lives of youth from marginalized communities.

Hodan joined their team in the following year as an editor, script writer, and actor and their team went on to produce a number of humorous videos that depict characters and scenes based on family members and their experiences. These include: *Somali Problems, Normal Reactions vs. Somali Reactions, Hoyoo Gives Valentine's Day Advice, and Somali Aabo Farah*. The experience of Somali immigrant parents negotiating life in-between languages and cultures are a frequent source of inspiration.

Video: *Three Things You Should Know About My Hijab.* Unlike some of their videos, *Three Things* was created for a mainstream audience. Entered into the *Plural Plus Youth Video Festival Contest*, its purpose was to use humor to address three common questions they are asked as Muslim women who wear hijab. Kayf and Hodan shot and edited this video and their friend, Sarah, co-stars in the production. Kayf prefers to work quickly, when ideas are fresh and the level of excitement about a new project is high. They being with some idea of what they will shoot, but as Hodan explains, they mostly improvise. The three questions they address in this short video include: Are you hot wearing that? Are you bald under there? Do you shower in that? Questioning someone about religious practices or other aspects of their identity can be a form of exclusion, as the recipient can be left feeling they are considered different, and do not belong. In this quirky video, Kayf and Hodan use music, bright colors, costumes, odd camera angles, and a shower scene to signal to the audience they are challenging assumptions in a light-hearted way.

Kayf insists Somalis "love making fun of themselves" and that their videos are intended as satires that use humor to send a powerful message by "making fun of stereotypes." The content consists of "funny anecdotes from their lives, stupid little things" (Siyad). Many audiences do not expect Muslim women to be funny, and mainstream audiences find the satirical or humorous aspect of their work surprising. Fartousa explains:

> We are trying to battle the stereotypes through comedy. We didn't see any Muslim women doing comedy on YouTube. Most people believe Muslim females are modest, shy, quiet, and kept in the background, be it in mainstream culture or in our own communities. But no one is funnier than hijabis. No one makes me laugh more than Muslim women. But for some reason we hesitate to show the world how funny we are, whether it is for fear of being criticized by the media or our own peers. We are seen as needing to uphold the honor of our entire community.

Fartousa, Hodan, and Kayf believe using comedy is a less threatening way to challenge assumptions. They have fun making and sharing their videos, but their intentions are serious. The powerful and serious message of the experience of diversity, migration and exclusion in *Three Things You Should Know About my Hijab* was recognized by winning three international awards at the *Plural Plus Youth Video Festival*. The purpose of the video festival is to encourage dialogue, partnerships, and action on critical issues facing immigrant youth worldwide. The video was screened at the Paley Center for Media in New York City, and the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. After the screening at N.Y.U. Hodan reflects on what this experience meant to her:

> Hopefully we can enter more film festivals and expand our growth, and grow as people. And hopefully [we can] pursue this media thing, and go in full throttle, and explore the world with it.

Three Things You Should Know About My Hijab was also selected to screen at the Hamptons International Film Festival. Kayf and Hodan were interviewed for the magazine, *Women Across Frontiers* (Pilgrim 2015). Kayf explains in the article that

by putting themselves out there on screen and making people laugh, she believes people feel more comfortable talking about the hijab. Hodan adds that they hope their work will inspire other Somali females to make videos.

Another exciting moment for the team was when their video appeared on a big screen in Times Square (International Organization for Migration 2015). In 2016, Kayf was also invited to participate in a United Nations Alliance of Civilizations youth conference in Baku, Azerbaijan (U.N.A.O.C. 2016). Later that year, the Barbados Association of Muslim Ladies flew her to Barbados to lead a seminar to encourage girls within the local religious community to embrace video-making (Tasher 2016). The international attention *Three Things You Should Know About My Hijab* has attracted, demonstrates youth produced videos have the potential to intervene in social justice issues. To stress this point, we also produced a short documentary, which tells the story of this video from production to screening at the Paley Center in New York (Watt et al. 2016).

A year after it became available, Jenkins et al. (2006) had hope that YouTube could become an alternative public cultural space where seldom-heard voices might find expression. While we remain cautious about privacy concerns, the commercial aspects of YouTube, and overstating the democratizing potential of new media in general terms, for Kayf, Fartousa, and Hodan producing and sharing videos on YouTube has had an enormous impact on their lives and sense of identity:

> Making these videos has impacted my life 100%. Through the interviews and panels [we participated in as part of this research collaboration] I started to identify as a media maker. I now identify as a Somali-Muslim woman media maker. For me the awards mean I get to raise my voice a little louder in certain spaces. (Siyad)
>
> I thought about who I was, what I represented, and that I had the power to represent myself the way I wanted to be represented, and strike up conversations that otherwise would never have been brought up…We don't want to be represented by anybody else… That is our worst nightmare. People do get our ideas and it is validation for our work. They are listening and they want to hear more from us. Our message is being received with respect, and I think that's a big thing. (Abdulqadir)

Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa consider their work transformative, not only in terms of how they view themselves, but also how Somali Muslim females are viewed by schools and society, in popular culture, in their own communities and beyond. Their media making and sharing exemplifies the possibilities that open through the use of critical digital practice as a classroom tool (Ávila and Zacher Pandya 2013). Through the use of humor participants represent their identities and unique perspectives in videos, which they can now share with a local and global audience. Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa have become powerful voices of female youth from marginalized communities, and are challenging assumptions about what it means to be Somali-Canadian, Muslim, racialized, black females growing up as immigrant families on the North American continent.

6 Implications for K-12 Teaching and Learning

Somali-Canadian Muslim Black Female youth speaking back to dominant narratives through video provides a theoretical and pedagogical resource for educators and researchers. Given the growing importance of media literacy in school curricula across North America, this research provides information for pedagogical projects that connect media production, curriculum and instruction, and social justice issues related to diversity and difference. Educators can learn a great deal from YouTubers Hodan, Fartousa and Kayf's videos which provide teachers and students with valuable insights into the lived experiences of youth from marginalized communities. The videos provide a window into what it is like for Muslim students to grow up with the backdrop of the tragic events of 9/11 and ongoing war on terror, which contribute to increasing Islamophobia, stereotypical media representations, and their exclusion from school curricula. In spite of their growing presence as a minority student population, Muslim youth remain largely misunderstood and unacknowledged in the school curriculum.

Muslim female students who are visually marked by Islamic covering have unique challenges negotiating their identities within a complex, shifting discursive terrain between family expectations, absence in the school curriculum, and mass media representations. In dominant media and school discourse, Muslim women are often portrayed as backward, oppressed, or exotic, which influences how the educational community views and interacts with them (Kincheloe 2004; Kincheloe et al. 2010; Sensoy and Stonebanks 2009). By drawing on examples from lived experience, critical media portrayals expand viewer awareness of cultural diversity and difference and transform how knowledge is produced, disseminated and understood.

This study demonstrates the power of videos shared face-to-face and online to provoke conversations on difference in-between the local and the global. Videos can serve as pedagogical tools for starting conversations on difficult topics such as Islamophobia, racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression and marginalization. Documentaries or YouTube videos are generative spaces that open teaching and learning to informational texts outside traditional school curricula. Such texts give voice to lived experience absent in school curriculum and policy, provide a space for audience to respond to texts, offer a safe environment to have difficult conversations on Islamophobia, racism, sexism, social exclusion, and shift our perceptions of the role of the mass media in shaping how education views difference. The scenes depicted in the videos prompt us to consider ourselves in relation to difference. Given that the videos also offer critique of some of the cultural and religious norms, participants such as Kayf, Hodan, and Fartousa show they have to negotiate some of their own cultural norms, as part of a larger diaspora, and as the *other* in their immigrant homes.

Bringing the work of YouTubers into the classroom is also an open acknowledgement of the value of the New Literacies practices youth are engaging in outside of school. By creating opportunities for such texts to be viewed and critiqued as part of the school curriculum, teachers may bridge the growing divide between out-of-school and at-school literacy practices. Educators cannot afford to ignore youth

experiences and their production of knowledge through digital texts. Including digital texts in the classroom that are made by students, having students produce knowledge, not only increases the likelihood of increased student engagement but are opportunities for teachers to reinforce critical digital literacies through texts drawn from students' lived experiences.

Based on our experiences working with numerous teachers and youth, our team strongly believes teachers do not need to master the technology or know more than students. In fact, this is an unnecessary and unrealistic expectation since youth are often already working at the cutting edge of these technologies. In the digital classroom we envision new roles for teachers and students, shifting power dynamics so youth take on more responsibility for learning and teachers decenter their authority. According to Kayf, teachers "should not be ashamed of not knowing" because they do not need to know everything, and fear prevents us from taking on new challenges. Kayf considers the student-teacher relationship central to all learning, and when students and teachers share power, everyone benefits. Hodan stresses the importance of collaboration and engaging the collective knowledge and skills of everyone in the classroom as "everyone can learn from each other." Speaking from her own experience, Hodan also underlines the need to create a safe space in the classroom where students are comfortable being themselves and ask questions in an open discussion.

Finally, to understand the potential of video production across the curriculum to transform teaching and learning, teacher candidates need to be introduced to the new technologies such as video production as a component of their teacher education programs. Practicing teachers also need access to professional development through funded projects such as *The critical digital literacy project: Engaging curriculum and diversity through video production in teacher education* (Watt 2017; For more information visit the project visit at: www.thecriticaldigitalliteracyproject.com). In this project, Kayf and Fartousa first share their videos and what that work means to them, and then we have teacher candidates collaborate in small teams to produce their own short video, bringing in critical perspectives as well. We lead critical video workshops for educators (Canadian Institute for Digital Literacies Learning 2017), teacher candidates, and youth; screen short documentaries we created; and share our work with educators and youth audiences about the pedagogical possibilities of media making in the lives of youth. Perhaps of most significance, critical digital literacy projects have taught us that when teachers have the opportunity to make a single 30–60-second video, they become enthused about having their own students make videos, and fear of technology disappears.

In addition to their religious identities, as racialized black females whose parents emigrated from Somalia, Hodan, Kayf, and Fartousa found themselves having to negotiate their complex identities at the intersections of religion, racialization, ethnicity, class, and gender during their high school years. Weary of the narrow identity categories available to them both in and outside of school, they decided to take matters into their own hands by making and sharing a comic video with friends on YouTube. Never before had female members of the Somali Diaspora produced such content, and the video went viral. Within days, their work was attracting the attention of the mainstream media. They had claimed an entirely new and unique repre-

sentational space of their own, and their global audiences responded enthusiastically. For these young women, YouTube has fulfilled its potential as a cultural space where marginalized youth voices are able to find expression.

Educators interested in new perspectives on diversity in the 21st century can learn a great deal from the lived experiences of these YouTubers and the power of the videos have had so far to provoke encounters with difference. We can no longer ignore the online creative practices many youth are engaging in outside of school if we hope to make school relevant, for these are the now everyday sites of identity construction, highly valued by youth. K-12 teachers need to enable young people to tell their own stories through text and digital technologies such as video. As media activists, immigrant youth negotiate identities in highly tensioned spaces, both on and off line. Their videos circulate as counter-narratives that disrupt limited identity categories perpetuated in education, the news media, popular culture, and within their own communities. Their media-making and sharing multiplies opportunities for encounters with difference. Critical media literacy provide provocative spaces of inquiry, activism, and pedagogy for K-12 teachers and researchers in the 21st century… spaces where opportunities for rethinking knowledge emerge. Digital technologies offer new and exciting ways to engage difference in the 21st century, and youth are leading the way. It is time for educators to pay attention and participate.

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YouTube Videos *Somali Problems.*

Three Things You Should Know About My Hijab.
Somali Aabo (Father) Farah Teaser.
Chronicles of a Somali Girl.
Normal Reactions versus Somali Reactions
Hoyoo (Mother) Gives Valentine's Day Advice
*Kayf, Fartousa, and Hodan's videos and a teacher's guide are available on our website.

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