Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats

Discussions of Diversity in K-12 and Higher Education

Joseph R. Jones (Ed.)

SensePublishers

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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *FEATHER BOAS, BLACK HOODIES, AND JOHN DEERE HATS*

"*Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats* contains the voices of a new generation who help us understand the need to move beyond a "tolerance" of others to the *acceptance and celebration* of human differences. Through a series of rich narratives, Jones provides examples of attitudes, experiences, and institutional acts that continue to propagate the marginalization of people in our communities. Intertwined within these stories are thoughtfully selected ideas to help us understand that *embracing* difference, and not merely *respecting* it, can be the catalyst for real change in all of us."
– Cathy Sweet, EdD, Nazareth College, New York

"Through authentic experiences, *Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats* opens the reader's eyes to the ongoing marginalization of those in society, who, for various determinations are deemed to be of little substance. It is the story of the past and the story of the present, but it also contains a story for the future, complete with the hope of a better world, in a better tomorrow, as the book also provides strategies to address, and to hopefully eradicate the propagation of prejudices relevant to one's origin, race, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, or condition and subsequently, all that each of those prejudices residually breed. Professors, administrators, teachers, corporate and small business leaders, health care providers, and all others alike in search of improving cultural competence, either individually or within their organization, should read this book as it will expand each reader's knowledge of what it truly means to be multiculturally aware, to integrate authentic diversity practices, and to become culturally proficient either as individuals or within the organizational framework. The book provides readers proactive advice on what can be done to address the ostracization of others while seeking to shape change and to provide service to all. With *Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats*, Dr. Jones has once again made a significant contribution to the campaign for human rights by highlighting the necessity of awareness in both the public and the private sector. By giving credibility to the everyday prejudices and cultural biases that are enacted against countless numbers of faceless victims, but whose stories are critical to the human experience, the discussions generated within and by this book are life-changing."
– Susan Thornton, PhD, Dublin City Schools, Georgia

“As a young high school English teacher, I found the stories and research shared in this book to be both intriguing and genuinely helpful. I was prompted to do some research of my own upon completing the book, and I am excited to implement many of the practices shared. In a world where our identity is oftentimes stifled, it is becoming more and more important to worry about our students’ identities, difficulties, and stories. Even more importantly, we need to talk about them. I added this book to the shelf I most often go to for reference—I know it will be used again and again.”
– Grace Bellmer, Columbia County School District, Georgia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

As an educator, I witness daily the lack of true diversity in educational settings. As a college professor, I have worked on different college campuses in different parts of the country, and they all have one thing in common: a lack of diversity. Attending college is an act that is still somewhat confined to individuals with some level of social and/or economic capital, of whom mostly are White middle-class citizens.

In our current social and political climate, there seems to be a lack of true tolerance and acceptance of difference. Hate language and actions are overwhelmingly visible within our society. Racism, homophobia, and sexism, among others, are still blatantly present across our nation, and these types of acts are also happening in our K-12 schools and on college campuses. Therefore, we must begin examining how we are attempting to create a more diverse and tolerant community.

Numerous books discuss the scholarship of diversity and the ways in which a particular scholar believes diversity should exist within educational settings. There are books that examine the impact of all of the “isms” and how those influence schools and colleges. As a scholar whose work attempts to create safe environments for all students to grow and learn, I have written those articles and books that provide my view of how to create diverse and tolerant places in which to learn. However, in composing this text, I wanted to go beyond the scholastic arguments and viewpoints, and I wanted to give a voice to the people who are daily entrenched in the process of schooling. Often, educational academics forget the trials of the everyday practitioner. We forget the trials of the parents and students who are different from the majority population.

Further, as a White academic with social and economic capital, it is impossible for me to completely equip my students with the necessary tools to construct a fully inclusive school setting. By this, I mean that I can never fully comprehend how my Muslim American colleagues feel on a daily basis. I can never fully comprehend how our current process for creating diverse and inclusive settings impacts an African American family.

In order to fully comprehend and prepare our students to create inclusive classrooms and other academic spaces, we must listen to the voices of the individuals in the trenches. The best way to prepare the white middle class student in my classroom is to allow him or her the opportunity to view the world through the eyes of the individual who is different. Thus, the purpose of this book is to bring those voices into the academic discourse that we use in our classrooms. In this capacity, it is my hope that this book becomes a catalyst that engenders a different conversation about diversity and difference. In doing so, I posit that our students will be better prepared to create inclusive environments.

MADISON RALEY

1. VENTI LOW-FAT SOY, HOLD THE WHIP

I was judged for being a sorority girl before I even joined one. The disapproving looks I received from friends who had chosen against Greek life, the ones who warned me, "Trust me. You don't want to be a sorority girl." I remember the tales that my older friends recounted of girls passed out at parties or making out in the bathroom, who just *had* to be sorority girls. I get it. I know how it must appear. The girl who comes into her 9:00 am class in neon Nike shorts and an oversized t-shirt, her Greek letters proudly displayed on the pocket. She sits down with her Venti Low-Fat Soy Latte from Starbucks and pulls out her MacBook, adorned with her sorority letters and monogram. Her hair is effortlessly curled to give the impression that she didn't try too hard. Her makeup looks like a professional caked it on as she spills the details from the night before to her "sister" in the next seat. It tells people that she cares more about her appearance than she does about pre-algebra or English 101. Maybe they are right. Maybe sorority girls do care about their appearances more than most. I care about the way I look, and I probably care even more of what people think of me. I'm not sure that I did *so* much until I got to college, though. If I learned nothing else from being in a sorority, it's that you get the title. Regardless of your chapter's 4.0 GPA or the academic and philanthropic awards that your chapter has brought home over the years, you still get the title, the one that *Legally Blonde* and *House Bunny* so kindly stamped on the forehead of every sorority girl in America. Sometimes, in the right crowd, the title is certainly favorable. But I learned quickly in my college classes that it usually was not.

My high school graduating class comprised 147 students. It was one of the larger high schools in the county, yet I still knew almost everyone's name and where most of them lived. It was a close-knit family that I had become a part of, and I became unrealistically comfortable in my little niche. My hometown is also home to a large Air Force base, the largest in the state. My friends in school would come and go as their father or mother had received notice of another change. The diversity was prevalent; anyone could see it. But, rather than using it as a reason to shy away from newcomers, we welcomed them with open arms. I had become accustomed to this lifestyle. I refused to use someone's weaknesses or insecurities to isolate them. That was not something I had ever felt, and was certainly not something I wanted others to feel either.

Applying for colleges was a bit of a challenge. As I was growing up, the expectation to succeed was the white elephant in every room that I entered. The option of failure was not one that I was familiar with, and the possibility of disappointing my family

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 1–7.

was off the table. I worked hard throughout high school to achieve good grades and to receive frequent praise but, most importantly, to be able to choose where I attended college. I narrowed it down to three schools, the largest of which was the University of Georgia. I visited, I toured, and I fell in love with the most beautiful historic campus, a buzzing downtown, beautiful gardens, and 100-year-old trees. I was sold. I am not positive when it actually occurred to me, but at some point, it hit me that I would be attending a university that was 238 times larger than my high school graduating class. When it hit me, it hit me hard. This was not my comfort zone. This was not what I was accustomed to by any means. But I had made my decision, and I certainly was not going to be backing out now. I prayed and hoped that they would treat me with the same kindness that I had treated all of the "new kids" at my schools over the years. I desired their approval, the approval of people whom I had not even met.

There were a handful of students from my high school who made the decision to attend UGA as well. Most of my graduating class opted to stay at home for a year or two, attending the local college in town. When it came down to it, there were maybe five from my high school and a total of 10 whom I knew in the entire school. In the blink of an eye, I went from knowing every single student in my graduating class to knowing fewer than 10 people in a school of 35,000. At this realization, I made the decision to join a sorority. It was not because I was bursting at the seams with excitement to monogram all of my clothes or have wine nights watching *The Bachelorette* but because I needed that niche. If that meant being one of *those* girls—if that meant embracing the idea of sleepovers all over again or pretending I liked salad, then so be it. I was determined to do whatever it took to find a place where I could feel comfortable. The approval that I so strongly desired, I was going to get. I was essentially putting myself on a pedestal for 17 sororities to judge, critique, and decide if I was worthy of those three little letters that I craved then more than ever.

Rush was horrific. The 5:00 am mornings, girls with more makeup on than I'd seen on pageant queens, Lilly Pulitzer dresses, uncomfortable wedge shoes—it was a nightmare. Any girl who says that rushing a sorority was a pleasant experience is lying through her pearly white teeth. When rush began, there were over a thousand girls roaming Milledge Avenue in the sweltering heat, dabbing sweat from their lips and reapplying lipstick and powder after every round. I have never been so exhausted before in my life. But I pushed through. I met plenty of the sweetest, prettiest girls who seemed to desire the warm, comforting conversations that we had. Perhaps they were simply acting. I'll never know, but for those few miserable days of rush, the one tiny glimmer of hope that kept me alive was the chance that I'd actually find somewhere I fit in.

I came to discover too quickly that 80% of the girls going through rush were from Atlanta. So what? Big deal. Atlanta is the largest city in the state. There's no way that they could all know each other. Wrong. Every girl from Atlanta seemed to know every other girl from Atlanta. It blew my mind. They had friends in sororities, big sisters in sororities, mothers who been in sororities. I was out of my element.

These girls were getting the bid they wanted one way or another, and I was a part of the measly 20% of the recruitment population who were not from Atlanta. In fact, I knew no one. Of the 1,000+ girls who rushed that week, I knew none of them. I did not know my roommate. I did not know anyone in my classes. Though I was completely out of my element, I somehow managed to make it through "hell week." When bid day arrived, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that I had received a bid from a sorority that I really had loved. It seemed to me to be the most genuine; the sisters were academically strong and supportive of their philanthropy and each another and all around seemed to instill in their members the same values that I had embraced growing up. Despite the ridiculous rumors, the judgmental comments, and the silly stories, I did what so many warned against, and I joined a sorority.

Sadly, this incredible feat that I had so deeply needed did not provide me the instant confidence that I had hoped for. I soon learned that, even within my sorority, many of the girls had attended high school together, knew each other from church, or had gone to day care together. I was starting fresh. They didn't know me, and I had to make an impression. You join a sorority to feel accepted, but the reality is that you have to accept yourself first for others to accept you. I had no clue who I wanted to become, who I wanted to be. I knew my values and my morals, but I continued to play the stories my friends had told me of the sorority girls at UGA. *That* kind of girl was not who I wanted to become. Did I want to pretend as though it was? All that I had hoped for had happened. I had been accepted into the sorority that I'd wanted, surrounded by hundreds of girls whom I now called family, but none of them really knew who I was. I wasn't even sure who I was. So I just tried to be myself. The sorority stereotype is just that: a stereotype. I learned that the hard way. The stories stuck in my head, but day after day, my predisposition was disproven. I had become a part of a family that loved me for being me and truly seemed to care about who I was rather than trying to make me fit their mold. I made friends, went to the events, and transformed before everyone's eyes into a giggly, Starbucks-drinking, monogrammed-wearing sorority girl.

I'll admit it. I gave in to the unspoken dress code. I wore the oversized sorority t-shirts and the Nike shorts. I even caved and wore high white Nike socks with my tennis shoes. I usually brushed my hair and occasionally even curled it. Big mistake. Even without the rest, simply wearing those letters around the University of Georgia campus drew the eyes of nearly everyone whom I passed. It was because of what I was wearing—attire that screamed, "I like to party!" It told people that I cared too much about my appearance and that, because I wore three little letters on my T-shirt, I was dumb.

Since stepping foot onto UGA's campus, I was a part of the majority. I was White, and I was female. The girl-to-guy ratio at UGA was somewhere around 60:40. UGA is diverse. There are students of all races, ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic backgrounds, yet I was still the majority. But for some reason, it didn't feel like it. Back home, I was the majority, in most senses. I was White, middle-class, and Southern-Baptist, which are three of the most prominent labels in most rural Southern towns below the “Bible Belt.” When I was the majority then, I felt the rewards of it. I was not necessarily given special treatment, but I was treated with respect and kindness everywhere I went. Because I was the majority, people knew me—from church, from school, from my family. We seemed to be connected to everyone in some small-world way. At UGA, if I was still a part of the majority, why did it feel as though I was not? It was like, this time, I was a part of such a large majority—of so many—that I was hidden in the shadows of those other White female students who knew nearly every person whom they passed by. I blended in. Sure, people would see my sorority letters and perk up every once in a while, but aside from that, everyone had their own agenda, and I was not a part of it.

I was the only girl in my entire sorority who majored in English—mind you, a sorority of over 200 girls, and somehow I managed to be the only English major. This was yet another decision that seemed to seclude me further and further from the label that I had so desperately desired. My sorority sisters majored in a variety of subjects, from pre-med to broadcast journalism to studio art, but there was not another English major among them. In fact, the English Department, which was nestled in its very own building along with the Classics Department, was deprived of sorority and fraternity members alike in comparison to other college buildings. Rather, the English Department was home to a crowd of individuals who dressed as though they were headed to Woodstock when class let out. The first class that I took in the English building was English 101. I was among other freshman, still learning our way around the massive campus and discovering what group we were a part of. There were several sorority and fraternity members in my classes. At the beginning of the year, sorority girls fought to showcase the sorority that had “chosen” them, the one they had been fortunate enough to snag a bid from, wearing their letters on their t-shirts, shorts, laptops, iPhone cases, wallets, key chains, and even notebooks and pencils. The lower-level English classes were incidentally held on the lower floor of the English building. On the bottom floor, newly admitted fraternity brothers and sorority sisters roamed the hallways. However, the top two floors were reserved for the upper-level courses. Beyond the first floor, girls in sorority shirts with their Diet Cokes and Lilly Pulitzer iPhone cases simply did not exist.

When I began my junior year, I was taking two upper-level English courses. I was beyond ecstatic. English was my passion, is still my passion. Reading and writing are two things that I enjoy more than all else, and when I sat down in the front row of my very first upper-level English course and felt the judgmental pounding stares of my classmates *and* my teacher, my heart broke a little. I’d be lying if I said that I wasn’t disappointed. Slowly, I began to notice the negative side effects of being in a sorority. As if I had contracted a disease that my English-major colleagues were scared to catch, I slowly became the girl whom no one wanted to partner with, talk to, or even sit by. I was being quarantined. At a school where over 1,000 girls annually become new members of sororities, where the girl-to-guy ratio is unreasonably unequal, where sororities fight for the highest GPA, I was judged. When they did talk to me, they spoke as if I had never cracked open a book in my life. They never asked me for opinions on their papers or writings. When I was called on in class, it was to answer dumbed-down questions, as if they pitied my tiny brain for not being able to communicate with theirs. For a long time, I wallowed in their pity. I stopped wearing my Comfort Colors t-shirts and switched them out for “regular” attire. I rarely spoke in class and, for the first time, did not enjoy reading and writing at all. My English classes had become the downfall of my junior year, and I was beginning to question my major.

Though I was discouraged, I had signed up earlier in the year to attend a study abroad program at the University of Oxford. The University of Georgia set up a program that allowed a few English students to travel across the pond to one of the greatest universities in the world and take courses from actual, real-deal Oxford professors. Naturally, I was nervous. I was set to take a course on Romanticism and another on Shakespeare, two subjects that I was not very knowledgeable about. From the previous year, I had received the message loud and clear from my colleagues that I was out of place. And to be brutally honest, I had begun to think that I really was. For the longest time, I was too nervous to speak up in class for fear of saying the wrong thing and giving everyone the proof that they needed to justify their predetermined notions of who I was and what I was capable of. Before the day came to leave for my six-week adventure at Oxford, I listened to Shakespeare biographies on audiotapes, I read as many of his works as I could, and I became as much of an expert on Romanticism as possible in the few weeks that I had. I had no clue what I was getting myself into. I was going on the trip without any friends, and I was barely knowledgeable in the content I would be studying. I was worried.

Before I knew it, I was there, settling into my new home at Trinity College smack in the middle of Oxford, England. My professors were renowned and brilliant. I have, to this day, never spoken to individuals who articulated their thoughts so eloquently. They knew everything, it seemed. Not a topic arose in discussion that they had not studied or researched, and more than anything, they strongly desired to share it all with us. Out in the Oxford community, my classmates and I received a lot of judgmental looks. We were harshly stereotyped for being *those* Americans. The locals, and even other European and Asian tourists, were all under the notion that, because we were Americans, we were idiots. Truly, a great majority of the foreigners whom we met were surprised to find that we were not complete imbeciles. All over again, I found myself being judged by people who did not know me. They had no clue what I was capable of, but because I was an American and wore American clothing, it seemed a common assumption by the vast majority that I was dumb.

This time, I refused to let a stereotype define my skills and success. I wanted to prove to my Oxford professors that Americans, myself included, were not dumb and were instead capable of having meaningful discussions and producing thoughtful, significant pieces of writing. So I spent a great portion of my time at Oxford in the Bodleian Library, which is one of the most magnificent libraries in all of Europe. I spent hours every single day researching new topics, reading the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Keats, and Wordsworth, and then reading more literary research on their works during the week. We had papers due weekly for both courses that we were taking, and in addition, we were to attend a one-hour discussion session with each professor once a week with two other students. Essentially, we were to come with a paper written, questions drawn from our reading, and we were expected to be knowledgeable on that information—beyond enough to participate in an hour-long discussion with our Oxford professor. As most of you reading this know, this is not how courses at American universities are conducted. Lectures often reach upwards of 50 or more in attendance, and classes with three students are unheard of. Our weekends were spent travelling to Stratford-upon-Avon, Lake District, and London, not only seeing the beauty that influenced these magnificent writers but also coming into contact with actual first editions of their work. Of course, on our own, we wouldn't know where to begin. Our professors joined us, showed us the way, gave us explanations for the millions of questions we must have had, and did what no tour guide could have done. When it was all said and done, we had developed relationships with one another, but more importantly, we had developed meaningful relationships with our professors. I could sit down one-on-one with both of my professors and have extensive, enjoyable, scholastic conversations with them. They saw me as an equal though I was certainly not. I had never had that experience before. Our professors did not dread the fact that they had to babysit us on their supposed "days off," showing us places where they had undoubtedly been dozens of times. Rather, they revelled in the opportunity to educate us, even if it did mean using up their weekends. The beauty in the poetry that I read and the plays that I studied lit a fire that reignited the flame that had been slowly burning out back home. All over again, I felt my passion for writing and reading return stronger than ever all because my professors and classmates had taken the time to help me, to motivate me, and to admire me. They refused to judge me for my appearance even when society told them to. For once, I felt accepted, and I felt confident in my work as a reader and a writer.

I learned more in those six weeks, meeting just once a week with each professor, than I did in entire semesters back home. It reassured me, and it disproved the doubts that I had about myself. In the end, I received an A in both courses at Oxford, and my professors had nothing but positive, encouraging things to say about my work and the work of my colleagues. They were truly impressed by our determination to succeed in diverse conditions and by our dedication to learning so much independently when we were otherwise accustomed to the information being neatly laid in our laps. When I returned to America and began to prepare for my senior year at UGA, I made a decision. I now knew what I aspired to be as teacher, and I was motivated by both my negative experiences thus far and my positive experiences at Oxford to become that teacher. For the first time, I was not judged for being in a sorority, and for those six weeks in Oxford, my peers and professors saw me as a confident, well-educated student.

I see teaching as a kind of metamorphosis. I cannot possibly sit here and tell you all what type of teacher I'll be, what strategies I'll use, or how I'll behave around the kids. Will I be a mentor for them, or strictly their educator? Will I be stern, or will I be able to find that happy medium where we can be friendly, too? The answer does not come until you actually begin teaching. But if nothing else, I am positive that I'll give my students the confidence that they need to succeed in whatever they desire. I have been the student whom the teachers love, who does all of her homework and goes the extra mile on the projects. I have been the student whom the teacher notices and praises. But I have also been the student whom the teacher judges, ridicules, and ignores. I have felt the glares, the eye-rolls, and burden of a failing participation grade because I was too nervous to speak up. I have had all of those experiences, and when I was at my worst as a student, dropping classes I was fearful of failing, skimming the skirts of a B, I was not confident. It was because of my peers but also my teachers. No teacher should be the reason that a student lacks confidence.

While I do not know what type of teacher I'll be in the years to come, I do know that I will encourage and motivate, but most importantly, I will encourage risk-taking and accept failure as a means of learning from mistakes. Over the years, I've become all too familiar with the pit in my throat that appears every time I am on the brink of failure or disappointment. All kids need confidence, but they also need to know that it is okay to fail. While I missed out on that in college, I can still make a huge difference in the lives of the students who will come through my classroom. I can still give them that confidence that other teachers may fail to realize they need more than anything else. It's that confidence I finally felt when I studied abroad that I wish to pass onto my students and to use in order to help them to understand that they are capable of so much more than they ever dreamed.

ALEX OVERBY

2. CHANGING IDENTITY WHILE STAYING ME

A Story of the Overburys Who Buried

Overby. Overbury. Bury.

We are from England. We used to be Overburys, not Overbys. I say *we*. We is me. Because they are me.

Identity. Family. Heritage.

Bury. Overbury.

The name *Overby* never meant much to me. I once endeavored to inspire all my peers to be begin calling me *Overby*, not *Alex*—because the name *Alex* means even less. It didn't work. I'm still Alex. Well, Alex Overbury. I mean… Overby.

A couple of years ago—I was 21—my dad did a genealogy search. He paid money, I'm sure. I find that offensive. We are the Overburys—I mean Overbys—and We is me, which means that their—the Overburys' (you know what I mean)—presents are my histories and that their futures are my presents, which, if you're following, unquestionably means that I have a right to any and all information regarding We—every Overby.

I guess someone has to craft the algorithms. The website isn't free. I understand—I suppose. You can have our money, *Ancestry.com*.

But I digress. No. Rather, I am burying. Burying the point you're waiting for in pancake fluff—that is, putting so few chocolate chips of substance and fact that they'd never be savored amongst the egregious albeit syrupy amount of pancake. Or like a student who is, in reality, smart but buries his brains beneath a mask of comedy and apathy because he certainly can't let the girl two seats down have any impression that he's anything but cool. No chill? He has *all* of the chill. (That's something that young people say.) You know this boy and girl. She's been rolling her eyes at him, falling in love with him since the first day. He's been making fun of her, falling in love with her since the first day. I hope that they treat each other well. Or maybe it's not like chocolate chips in pancakes, and perhaps it's not genius analyses of theme and motif and character motivation beneath a mask of "I'm too cool for school!" Maybe it's a sinner who rambles about his good deeds a little too much, letting the world know that he's no saint. Yes. That's it.

Was this all fluff? A mask? A ramble of concealment? Are you witnessing a burial?

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 9–10.

My dad discovered when the Overburys moved to America. Then he took a shovel, started digging, and found the murdered corpses of slaves beneath soft Tennessee soil. The Overburys. WE owned slaves. WE bartered in human life.

Overby. Overbury. Bury. And if a normal amount of burying isn't enough, Over Bury.

I identify with my family. I identify with my history. I identify with an Overby. We are the Overbys. The We equals me.

Guilt. The We equals guilt.

Don't call it "White Guilt." That's a trivializing catchphrase, so cliché that it sucks all marrow from the bone, all meaning from the sentiment.

I buried. Hid the monstrosities of my ancestors from others and myself. Why not? If We are the Overburys and We is me, then it's only natural that I buried. I buried the truth like the name suggests. I buried the guilt like We buried slaves—without much thought. I buried the Overburys. But what I didn't understand then is that you cannot bury yourself and become not yourself. And if I am truly me—and if We (the Overburys) is me, through self-, but for my sentimental nature at least, wholly inevitable-identification, then I tried to bury myself. One cannot bury oneself to be rid of oneself. When you're alone in the hole, when soil fills your lungs, when you gasp and grasp for breath, when you water the earth out of your bladder and your fear, when the insects begin their morbid feast of flesh, and the putrid stench of your own rotting body and guilt fills your nostrils, then you are alone. You are alone. You only have yourself. You're only yourself. When you bury yourself, your body is stuck, unchangeable, stagnant, and forever You.

So don't call it White Guilt. Call it my guilt. Let me feel that guilt. Don't tell me it wasn't me. Because the Overburys are me.

It is only then, only when I accepted that chocolate chip of truth, only when I took off the mask, when I said to the world, "I too have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," that I could begin to fill my lungs with fresh air, claw my way up from the dirt shaking out the worms, that I could begin to consciously write a new present for myself, a new past for my future, and a new future for the Overburys and over-buried monsters.

You see, the Overburys are lucky. I am not just them. They are also me. And I will not bury. And I will feel, I will claim, I will shame, and I will feel shame—for them.

Overby. Overbury. Bury.

ERINN BENTLEY

3. NAMES AND NARRATIVES

Crafting Teachers' and Students' Lives into Our Classroom Discourse

Class had just ended. Students gathered pencils and notebooks, zipped shut backpacks, and streamed out the door. All except one student. The student who did not volunteer to speak during the entire period. With my class roster in hand, I slowly approached the student and asked, "Hi, can you help me for a minute?" She nodded. "I was hoping you would tell me how to pronounce your name. I'm not sure I said it correctly when I called roll. Your name is new to me, and I want to make sure that I say it the right way." The student quickly said, "Just call me *V*. It's easier." I considered what she said, how she said it—with her eyes dropping to the floor, her voice quiet. I replied, "Sure, I can call you *V*, if you'd like me to. But, I'd rather call you by your name. You decide." The student paused and then pronounced her full name clearly. I repeated it a few times, until she nodded and smiled. I have yet to call her *V*. Her name is unique. It is beautiful. It is hers.

After our next class meeting, I told the student about my own experience—how my name was once lost for years. When I first began teaching, I explained, I accepted a job in Japan. My name—Erinn—did not "fit" into the Japanese phonetic alphabet called *katakana*. Depending on how my name was spelled in that alphabet, it either sounded like *Ellen* or *Eileen*. Both were perfectly lovely names; however, neither one was *my* name. So for six years, I lost my real name. Of course, I knew deep down that being called *Ellen* or *Eileen* did not negate my Irish-German heritage or the fact that my parents had named me after my grandmother. Of course, I knew that my students, colleagues, and friends were doing the best they could to manipulate my name into their native dialect and alphabet. Still, I had spent the first 21 years of my life as Erinn. My name was part of my identity, and I missed it.

As my student and I continued to talk, I realized an important difference between our two stories. In my case, my name was not purposefully changed or ignored. It simply was adapted to fit the language used in my newly adopted country. This was not the case for my student. She was living in her home state, in her native tongue. At some point in her life, she had accepted being called *V* because "it was easier." Easier for whom? Thinking about this student and the many students whom I have taught in my 22 years as an educator, I wondered how many of them had lost their names. That is, did a teacher, an administrator, a peer, or another person tell them that their name was too difficult to pronounce? Too different? Too foreign? Did these students settle for being called a name that was chosen by another? Did they settle

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 11–15.

for being nameless—just another face in a blur of the 100+ students who filed in and out of a classroom every day? Or did they settle for being identified by another kind of name, a label, such as "gifted," "remedial", "advanced", or "special"?

As an English teacher, I recognize the power that words can hold. The words that we use to describe and name our students reflect not only how we view them but also how students learn to view their peers and themselves. Too often, students have entered my classroom saying, "I'm not good at reading, so there's no way I'll understand Shakespeare. Why can't we just read something easier?" or, "I know I'm a bad writer. You'll probably hate my paper." These students are defeated before they begin. They are repeating a narrative written about their lives, about themselves—a narrative most likely composed by someone else. So I tell them my own narrative.

When I first moved to Japan, I spoke or read almost no Japanese. I began my job there as a secondary ESL teacher equipped with just a few phrases such as *konnichiwa* (hello) and *arigato* (thank you). I quickly learned other words, words that seemed to form my identity, such as *sensei* (teacher) and *gaijin* (foreigner). After a few months of Japanese language study, I began to decipher various *kanji*, or characters. One of the first words in *kanji* that I translated was *gaijin*. Though roughly translated as *foreigner*, the two characters that comprised this word literally meant "outside person." Outside. Person.

Suddenly, my view of myself—as a person, a colleague, and a professional—changed. Yes, I realized that I had freckled skin, curly hair, and big blue eyes—physical traits that set me apart from my Japanese coworkers and students. Yes, I knew that my grasp of their language was still emerging, as was my understanding of their social norms, religious customs, and general worldview. No, after living the first 21 years of my life in a small town in the Midwestern United States did I believe that I could assimilate smoothly and easily into my newly adopted culture and place. Still, being called an "outside person" made me feel as if there were insurmountable, invisible barriers between this "inside world" that I had hoped to join and myself.

As my lessons in Japanese language study continued, I learned a new word. It became my word. My identity. By adding one *kanji* between the two existing *kanji* in *gai-jin*, I now had the word *gai-koku-jin*—literally translated as "person from an outside country." Not an outside person. Just a person from another place. That was me. Of course, using one word instead of another to describe myself could not change how others viewed me. That one word, though, could tell others how I wanted to be seen. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970/1996) asserts, "Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women can transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it" (p. 69). In my own small way, I had named my world—or, at least, I had chosen a word to describe how I viewed myself within that world. I did not allow my identity or narrative to be formed by someone else.

As an English teacher, I want my students to see that the words that they use—both spoken and written—hold power. One word, one text can change a person's viewpoint or opinion. I believe that each of my students possesses a unique voice, one that can be used to change their world. But how? How can this process begin, especially for students who have been told they are “struggling”, “developmental”, “difficult”, “different”, “special”, or “failing?” Especially for students like V, whose name has been altered or ignored? These students, I believe, need to begin at the beginning, with the simple recognition of their names.

This idea is one that I have borrowed from Linda Christensen, a veteran high school English teacher and prolific writer. Christensen’s work has focused on using literacy instruction as a catalyst for teaching about social justice. In her text *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*, Christensen (2000) describes beginning every school year with a “naming ritual” among her students. Quoting the Swampy Cree Indian saying, “To say the name is the beginning of the story,” Christensen requires her students to write a poem or story describing their names—the history and meaning of their names or their experiences and feelings about their names (2000, pp. 10–13). She explains, “[t]elling about our names was my way of saying up front that the members of the class are part of the curriculum – their names, their stories, their histories, their lives count” (Christensen, 2000, p. 10). Inspired by Christensen’s accounts, I have adopted this “naming ritual” in the classes I teach—from secondary English to TESOL to postsecondary literacy methods courses.

Over the years, we have brought our names and the stories of our names into the classroom. Together, we listened. I remember Yuko, who was one of three girls named Yuko in my 10th grade TESOL class. She did not want to be called the same name as her peers, so she insisted on being called *Jodi*. In her naming story, she said that she heard the name *Jodi* on an Australian television show. Her dream was to travel there, maybe even to live there, but her parents wanted her to go to a university in Japan. She thanked me for letting me call her *Jodi*, “the real me,” she said, for one hour each day. Then there was Darianna. The child of migrant workers, this seventh grader wrote her poem in a mixture of Spanish and English.

“Is it okay for me to use both?” she asked. “You don’t speak Spanish. Do you understand me?”

“Yes”, I told her. I could feel the emotion behind her words; I understood her. Then there was Kadir, a pre-service teacher enrolled in my methods class. He described his name as being “powerful,” but he described himself as an “invisible student” because he never saw himself in the books that he read in class, in the teachers teaching the class, or in the students sitting next to him.

Of course, not all of my students have taken such a vested and personal interest in this naming activity. I would like to think, though, that even those students who were not able or willing to share stories about themselves at that time still understood the goals of the naming ritual: to produce a self-created narrative and to share it in a supportive community. According to Christensen (2000), this activity allows her the opportunity to “talk about how people who have the power to name also have the power to tell the story” (p. 10). I agree. For me, this activity has also allowed me the opportunity to help the pre-service teachers whom I mentor analyze the narratives that they create about their K-12 students. Often, I hear them refer to students as "remedial" or being "tough" or "those SPED kids." I ask my pre-service teachers to consider how those names impact their relationships with their students and the instruction that they provide their students. Next, I share Christensen's (2000) words with them, which so eloquently echo my own beliefs:

> Teachers must see the gifts each student brings to class, not the deficits. The teacher must absolutely believe in the potential of the student, but even more essentially, the teacher must believe in the right of the student to have access to a rigorous education. And the teacher must convey those beliefs clearly to the student who may be working off years of failure and poor work habits. (p. 171)

Finally, I urge them to begin re-shaping their teaching narratives so that all students are included and valued. All students are referred to by name, by a name that is respected, not a name that is prescribed by someone else.

Over the years, I have wondered whether the naming ritual, the narratives, the lessons that I teach, and the pedagogies that I endorse truly make an impact. Recently, I received an email from one of my former students, and my questions were answered. Laura, currently in her second year of teaching high school English, wrote the following:

> I just wanted to share with you some of what's been going on with my teaching since we spoke last. First, I have found how very difficult it can be to accomplish some of the goals I set for myself when I took the practicum, especially when teachers are faced with things like state testing and kids in my 9th grade class who read below a third grade reading level or… are very difficult to handle in class… The book I ordered after we used it in your class—*Reading, Writing, and Rising Up*—has become such a valuable tool for me…
>
> I have searched my brain for ways to get across to these kids, and the whole time we've been doing "book work" and what the other 9th grade teachers on my hall are doing because it's what is "prescribed." Finally, finally, I thought, "why don't I give these kids a chance to do something creative?" I was scared they couldn't handle being out of a seating arrangement, scared they couldn't do the work or wouldn't do it, scared "To Say the Name is to Begin the Story" [Christensen's naming ritual activity] would be a huge flop. But the truth is I didn't know what else to try. So we did it. Many students didn't want to share their writing, so I shamelessly offered extra points to those who did. Suddenly I had kids sharing and participating. After we were done I had them write on a slip of paper (no names) what they thought of our activity for the day. Do you know I had one kid out of 17 say he/she would rather do book work??? Only 1. While several didn't want to participate or share opinions out loud, the majority of the class enjoyed what we did and said they wanted to do it again. I am astounded… I can't do it every day because of what we "must" cover, but I am trying and getting some amazing results. (personal communication, February 15, 2016)

In my first year of teaching, a student named Yuko challenged me to see her as a unique individual rather than just another name on my roster. Last month, a graduate student enrolled in my literacy methods class timidly set aside a name that others said was "easier" to pronounce to teach me how to call her by her real name. This year, my former student, Laura, has chosen not to call her ninth grade students "remedial" and acknowledges that they deserve a curriculum that extends beyond "book work." These students have shaped me as a teacher. They have helped me see—time and time again—that I do not teach English. I teach students. We all teach students. Students who have names, who have stories, who have needs, whose learning matters, and whose identities matter. I believe that, as teachers, we have a choice. We can write our students' narratives, we can endorse pre-made narratives, or we can teach our students how to create their own narratives and send them out into the world.

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VICTOR SALAZAR

4. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Only historical awareness can show a man as he truly is—and save him.
(Jose Ortega y Gasset)

There is quite a bit of literature on what makes for successful teaching. This is not one of those academic products per se, but as anecdotal as it is, I am going to share some of my personal story, one that involves a significant amount of time spent in organized education, both public and private, as teacher and the taught. It is this vehicle—my story—that, after being read, I hope will precipitate a rise in the level of sensitivity to and observation of students in your classroom, no matter who they are, what they look like, what language they speak, or where they come from. By increasing your awareness of who these young people are, you may even save someone's life, as a teacher did mine.

A single metaphor can give birth to love. (Milan Kundera)

I like telling stories. Not the kind that lies are made of. But the stories in which lessons may be learned. I remember reading *Aesop's Fables* a very long time ago and thinking about how the fox or raven might have had different outcomes if they had only been wiser. I also like to tell stories that get others to take a break from their own thoughts to join me on a journey and, perhaps, to stir some emotions and ultimately to try to get the listeners to draw conclusions about what they have heard. Because I like acronyms, I have placed one at the top of my teaching philosophy. That acronym is *ECTO*: Every Conversation is a Teaching Opportunity.

The stories are not told just for the sake of being heard. Listeners may arrive at their conclusions, but we can't know what they are until we engage in a discussion. A critical point to learning is, after discussing the story, that others draw *their own* conclusions. What did they see? What did they feel? How can they relate to the story?

I often use metaphors in an effort to connect students with a theme, a principle, an idea, or even a commitment. Metaphors contain recognizable applications but are not always universally identical. Most of the differences can be attributed to individual perspectives or worldviews. So at the beginning of any course I teach, when I'm in a classroom, facing the students, I take some liberty with my assumptions. Because I tell stories that are based on my personal experience, I am confident that the few assumptions that I make are correct. However, I am also certain that there is a body of literature that substantiates my claims.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 17–30.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature. (Samuel Butler)

First, I believe that every student wants to show me their best face. I begin my first session of an education foundations course wearing an expressionless mask. The preservice teachers who are seeing me for the very first time, wearing a mask are provoked, I hope, into asking themselves, "Why is he wearing a mask?" or, "What point is he trying to make?" And so, after a few minutes of administrative remarks regarding the course or syllabus, I remove the mask and ask those questions of them. As they come up with any number of conclusions, some touching the fringes of my purpose, I tell them.

Drawing from cultural anthropology, philosophy, biology, and ethics, I try to get to the root of human behavior. That is, one factor—if not the strongest factor—that drives all mankind is self-preservation. As biological beings, that drive is natural to all. Thus, to preserve an inner state of wellbeing, humans act in a manner that they believe will keep them safe from harm. Fight or flight. Therefore, there is no need to teach others how to preserve self because it is a very evident characteristic of human nature. What does the phrase "to save face" mean? To preserve self. Why do children tell fibs? To preserve self. Why does anyone change the way that they speak in the company of different groups of people? To preserve self. And why do students put on their best "face" for the teacher and vice-versa? To preserve self.

> *It's a very ancient saying, but a true and honest thought, that if you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught.* (Anna, "Getting to Know You," from *The King and I*)

A second assumption is based on the value-laden saying attributed to a few, including Teddy Roosevelt: "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." In other words, the student and teacher must both be aware of and willing to participate in a relationship before any formal delivery of course content may be received. That is, a relationship that is built on trust, one in which both believe that neither party is going to harm the other, is critical to the learning experience by students of any and every age. Unfortunately, there are too many students largely ignored in our classrooms, children who have not yet experienced the depth of learning, a by-product of an authentic teacher-student relationship, because the adult teacher has not responded to the students' universal human need to be connected to others.

During my foundation courses, one of which deals specifically with diversity issues in education, I share a practice with the preservice teachers to get them to focus on establishing the critical element of authentic relationships with students.

At the outset of any teaching opportunity, the very first time that they face the group of people for whom they are responsible, I ask the teachers to imagine everyone, including themselves, wearing an invisible backpack. They will not be identical, but each will be suited to the individual wearing it. It's not the pack that is most important; it is the contents of each, all that can be revealed and circumspectly weighed, for therein rests the essence of their true selves. In each backpack, there are unique life experiences, along with some common influences, that shape the way the students see themselves while, at the same time, showing others only those elements of themselves that they want to be seen and by which they want to be judged. Hence, the masks. They want to camouflage their backpacks, to keep the contents from being discovered. The contents of each backpack are not equal, nor should they be compared at all. They represent the factors that are common to all while, at the same time, showing how we are unique. Yet, what we all have in common, I believe, is that we all want to be seen as good, to be valued as important, and to be respected.

So let me show you what's in my backpack.

> *The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It's the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared.* (Lois Lowry, "The Giver")

After 50 years, the pain is still there. I can't think of a single incident that is responsible for all of the pain, or the many scars, that I feel, even after days or years of searching. No, I don't think that the pain exists solely because my mother bathed me in bleached water so that I might look less brown and more "normal." The bleach didn't hurt so much, but the fact that she believed that I needed to be cleansed from whom I was did.

It wasn't because of that time that I held a lit firecracker in my hand, even after it exploded, to see if it might hurt; it did. My older brother watched as I lit it and didn't say a word to me. Maybe he didn't think it would hurt me. Or maybe he did. I suppose that the error in judgment can be overlooked because I was only eight at the time.

Of the many beatings that I took, perhaps the most painful one was when I got caught trying to set the church on fire using a lit candle from the prayer offering box—but only after I had emptied it of the offerings that it contained (no paper money, only some quarters and dimes). No, there were too many violent disciplinary measures to count, so that one can't be the only one. And after the beating, being sent to bed without any supper wasn't really a punishment at all. Going to bed hungry was more common than not.

When my mother moved across town and shacked up with a man, leaving us kids to fend for ourselves, she never called or stopped by to see us. She literally left us to be happy but on her own, without us. That might have hurt a little, but two years later, she'd be back in the same house with us.

Nor was it the time that my mother's friend held my open palms of my hands over the lit gas burner for picking an apple from the neighbor's tree that was hanging over our fence. I know what I might do to anyone, friend or not, who punished any of my children with that method. What did my mother do? She hit me with a shoe for stealing. That really hurt, but it didn't stop me from stealing or from being hungry.

It seems that I was hungry for most of my days—and nights. Finding something to eat was a key to my survival, even if it meant picking through the contents of the school's garbage cans after school. Always the pragmatist, I could reason that a half-eaten apple or barely touched bologna sandwich was more than no apple or sandwich at all! I also discovered some strange concoctions of snacks, left on the floor of one of the local theaters, the one that had the triple feature for a dime on Saturdays. After each film, there was a new batch of trash on the floor. So, on my hands and knees, I would crawl through the rows of seats feeling for someone's spilled popcorn or, if I got really lucky, the remains of a large lollipop. A quick rinse of the sucker and it was just as good as if it was freshly wrapped. One too many times, though, I had to suffer through chewing a blend of cigarette ashes and soggy buttered popcorn. After all, there really wasn't any good reason for complaining. I wasn't buying snacks from a glass counter, so I couldn't be too picky.

There were also times, somewhat earlier in my life and before they were divorced, when I overheard my parents speaking a familiar, though not understandable, language to each other. I could tell that they were really connected to each other during these conversations because their exchanges were very intense, and—like the nearby Pacific ocean—their volume would ebb and flow in a range from whispers to full-throated roars. I would eventually learn that they were speaking Spanish. They could talk to their brothers and sisters, my uncles and aunts, but they didn't want us to know what they were talking about. In my heart, when they were speaking to each other in that foreign language, I just felt that they did not want me or my siblings to be part of their lives. And that hurt, too, but it was a different kind of pain. It ran deeper than the punishing fire on my fingers or the countless times that I felt the sting of my father's belt.

It would be many years later before I understood their shared motive for not teaching us their language. There was probably some merit in my belief that they wanted to keep their secrets to themselves. In fact, I found that each of the eight Salazar children, myself included, had some secrets. I believed that, by keeping them private, we were growing up the way that we were supposed to. Somehow, I got the impression that Hispanics (my mother often interchanged the word *Hispanic* with *Latino*, so I guessed that I was both, being that I saw no difference between the terms) were supposed to keep to themselves, and they were to never share what was going on in their home.

Another reason, explained to me much later by my mother—one that might have been true—was that they wanted to make sure that I, along with my three brothers and four sisters, would "get good grades in school." In my parents' minds, I suppose, thinking in a language other than English would be an obstacle to my lifelong success, whatever that means.

By the time I graduated from high school, I had attended 11 different schools. My transient life wasn't due to any noble cause, such as a parent serving in the military or conducting business in a multinational corporation. As I remember, we moved at about the same time every year. It wasn't until my teenage years that I found out what the word *eviction* meant. On the other hand, we were very lucky every Christmas and Thanks giving because my mother won every raffle that she ever entered. Well, I found out it wasn't luck at all. It was what some call "charity." Too embarrassed to admit to receiving handouts, my mother, who was now divorced and raising eight children on her own, had to stretch the truth so that her shame might not be shared by us, her children. It was one of many family secrets she would keep. That is, in terms of the backpack metaphor, that would be another weighted object that she would carry in her own invisible backpack. Perhaps that is why she tried to drown out the sounds or effects of shame, guilt, and failure with copious amounts of brandy, vodka, or beer.

Education seemed to be something that she valued. After all, she said as much by whipping us if we didn't come home with "good" report cards. But if she really valued education, why was it okay for her to only finish up to the eighth grade? I dared not ask, but there was another impediment to my learning, and she was responsible for it. And that was that she expected me to work. I learned very quickly that it wasn't the work that was important; it was the paycheck that she claimed as hers. After all, she reminded me on several occasions—sometimes at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, many times on a school night—and through her alcohol-fed and slurred speech, I heard her say that I owed her my life because she gave me my life.

> *What you say can preserve life or destroy it; so you must accept the consequences of your words.* (Proverbs 18:21, GNTA)

So up to this point, how full was my backpack? The funny thing about these imaginary backpacks is that they don't ever reach full capacity. They just make more room for stuff. So what more is there about attending school to be told?

I remember many times that others, specifically classmates and teachers, would mispronounce my name on purpose or give me an alternative descriptor: "Hey, wetback!," "Chee Cano", "taco bender", "salad jar", "salad bar", "sissy", "Sally", and—after Jeffery and Brian had used my head as a battering ram on the school trash cans—"muscle-head." And when we played the game at recess, with the teachers looking on, it wasn't dodgeball. It was "smear the queer!" Those red rubber balls would rain down on me and sting my face, my legs, and my back. Whoever is responsible for the saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never harm me" was either lying or in denial. Or, as was explained to me, "boys will be boys!" So, I guess, they got a pass for their behavior.

Their mean-spirited name-calling cut straight to my heart. I don't know when or if that pain will ever leave. As awful as I felt, I didn't have the courage or strength to share any of my inner turmoil with anyone in my family. I thought of the words from an old song: "You've got your troubles, I've got mine." And just as my mother had modeled how to cope with guilt, shame, and fear, even at a very young age, I knew that I was hurting, but I didn't know how to make the pain stop. So I would eventually, and ironically, follow her lead and raid her liquor locker, drinking in secret. And at that point, I still had two years of high school to finish.

> *Hunger, love, pain, and fear are some of those inner forces which rule the individual's instinct for self-preservation.* (Albert Einstein)

Sadly, neither of my parents—nor any of my classmates, nor my teachers, not even my siblings—understood or even seemed to care that, at nine years of age, I was dealing with adult-sized problems but dutifully continued to wear the mask of the model son and student. I know what it means to be so hungry that, for a can of corn, I would allow a grown-up to steal my innocence. After being confronted by my sister, who discovered what had had happened to me, I was forced to face the person in a courtroom and to make public what I thought was always going to be a secret. I know how deeply ashamed I was to have been placed in that courtroom, but I was terrified, traumatized even, when— as a result of my testimony—I had told the court, in so many words, that I was the one who was responsible. The judge asked me if I knew what I was saying, and I was screaming at myself, in my mind, "I want to get out of here!" The judge then said that the case was dismissed and that I should step down from the stand. My older brother was also there in the courtroom with my mother for a reason that I did not know until much later. He was also scheduled to testify what had happened to him, but he didn't get the chance to. I thought that I was the only victim! My mother glared at me and didn't say a word for hours. I know that, to her dying day, she was of the opinion that all of what transpired in that courtroom in 1965 was my fault.

And I was still expected to go to school, to wear my mask, and to "get good grades."

I wasn't quite ready to go back to the routine, so I did what anyone my young age would do; I decided to kill myself. I scratched a few words in pencil and left it on the kitchen table. I had the steak knife in my back pocket and decided that I would hide and wait to see what the family reaction to the note might be. Hiding under one of the beds, I waited and waited. I could see the feet of several of my siblings walk through the kitchen, and I was certain that my mother would see the note and be so very sad. Maybe she would cry. I hoped so. I fell asleep and during the night I awoke to find that no one had even bothered to look for me. My cry for attention fell on deaf ears. Not one of my family had even tried to look for me. I decided that I was going to go through with my plan but only when I felt that she was really going to miss me. I was still very hungry.

I went to school, mask and backpack on, and was moved, for a reason I do not know, to another classroom. Miss F. was not just *a* teacher. She was *my* teacher. She may or may not have known, but *I* know that she saved my life.

She gave me hope. She gave me validation. She gave me the attention, the love that I had been craving. And I see that it didn't cost her a penny to be so generous. She worked with me on my speech impediment. It didn't matter to her that my personal hygiene was very poor, that I always carried on my clothing what seemed to me to be the stench of an outhouse. But she always smelled so nice. And I can't remember a time in those elementary school years that I didn't have ringworm. And, most disturbing to me, she was truly sad when I told her I had to move. For the first time I can remember, I cried about having to leave a school. But it wasn't the school, the classroom, the playground, or the students. It was that I had to leave *my* teacher.

Many more decades later, on not a few occasions, when I made the deliberate effort to think deeply, I wondered, "What did I do that caused them to treat me so unkindly?" *They* referred to my classmates, teachers, and even my parents. I had no recollection of bearing resentment, anger, or ill will toward any of my tormentors at that time. In fact, I didn't even know that they were hurting me. I think that I was so desperate to be accepted, to belong, to be connected with others, that I judged their actions to be in my best interests. That was the way it seemed, that is, until the fifth grade.

> *It has been said, 'time heals all wounds.' I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone.* (Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy)

I was beginning the new term in my sixth school, and Miss S. was my fifth-grade teacher. I mostly enjoyed the ride on the court-mandated desegregation bus route, halfway across the city, from my minority-filled neighborhood to a part of the city that might be referred to today as a "highly exclusive" and "privileged community." Miss S. assigned seats, and I was placed in the second-from-the-last desk in row six of six. It was right next to the window, where I looked forward to hearing the different whirs, groans, squeals, and pitches of buses, cars, and motorcycles along with the occasional ring of a bicycle bell. And on the days that the fog had not lifted, I breathed with great delight deeply and slowly through my nostrils the slightly salted mist, and squinting with my ears, I listened for the eventual blast of the fog horn.

Nearing the end of each school day, I would also listen closely for Miss S. to call my name so that I could lead my class to the bus stop. In that familiar gravelly tone of Miss S., I heard, "Vic-tor! Take the class to the bus stop!" In my excitement and haste, I accidentally bumped the table of soaking paintbrushes, toppling all of them and spilling the liquid over the table and onto the floor. I heard my name called again, but this time it was spoken in a twisted, teeth-clenched tone: "Victor!! Clean up that mess, and don't you ever wear those pants to school again!" All of the other kids were staring at me; some smirked. I was so humiliated; there wasn't a hole deep enough for me to crawl into. I thought that since I had been wearing those trousers to class every day, Miss S. must certainly have known that those were the only pair of pants that I owned. I know that they didn't fit me well—I think the term was "flood water pants"—but since they had belonged to my brother before they became mine, they weren't really new. Now she had forbidden me to wear them! And, I quickly concluded, no one would ever like me or want to be my friend.

The drive inside me was strong; all I longed for was to be part of a group, to belong. To be connected. To be accepted. But Miss S.'s words, at that moment, drained me of any such hope. As I had done many times before, and without thinking, I just opened my imaginary backpack and added another weight. It would be many years later that I would come to understand that humans are wired to be connected to others. I wasn't abnormal; I was actually quite normal, in that context.

Perhaps, all was not so bad. After all, by the time I had entered Miss S.'s environment, I had the burden-lifting positive experience provided by Miss F., enough to keep some hope alive.

That positive feeling was confirmed one day when Mr. C. stopped in front of me and addressed me directly: "Young man!"

I thought, "Now what am I in trouble for?"

He continued, "Have you eaten today?"

Looking at his patent leather wingtip loafers, I could almost see my reflection. He always wore a black suit, white shirt, and a skinny black tie. He also slicked his hair back with a pompadour, probably using Brylcreem pomade. My head was always shaved for ringworm treatment, but I thought, "When I grow hair long enough, I'm going to wear it just like Mr. C. does!"

I answered him, "No."

He waved his ever-present clipboard over his shoulder and said, "Follow me."

Trying to keep up with this tall man's stride was tough. We walked down the flight of stairs leading into the empty cafeteria and headed straight to the doorway of the lunch line. He leaned slightly over the top of the counter and casually said, "Feed this boy." The cafeteria worker didn't turn around to see who was speaking and answered over her shoulder, "Lunch is over." His reply was probably heard across the schoolyard.

"I said, feed this boy!"

I knew at the moment he bellowed those five words that I wished he were my dad. I even moved a little closer to his side, just so anyone who might be looking could see that I was with him. It wasn't long before a lime-green plastic tray, the kind with the different sized compartments, was handed over the counter. It held two cheese sandwiches, a cookie, a red apple, and a small carton of ice-cold milk. Mr. C. walked to one of the upright folded tables and wheeled one over to open it.

"Young man. Take your time. I'll talk to Miss S."

"Yes", I thought, slowly chewing the soft crust of the white bread, "this is my domain!" I was king for a day in that cafeteria. I had it all to myself, and I imagined how nice it might be if I were this important, already confirmed by the words of the assistant vice principal, every single day. I smile every time that I remember his words, "Take your time," knowing that he meant exactly what he had said.

So after much reflection, what is it about sharing my story that I want to achieve? Essentially, I have committed to influencing teachers to value and respect children, including and especially those who are from different places and cultures than the local area. Teachers exercise tremendous influence and power over the lives of their students. That power, many times observed through the words they use and sometimes without even using words, has the potential to foster growth of or to dampen the dreams of students, in the same way that a surgeon's scalpel can be used to bring relief or pain to a suffering patient.

To more fully appreciate the value of people, especially the young, and to make the critical connections with their students, teachers must possess the capacity and, more importantly, the will to empathize with others.

> *You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive.* (James Baldwin)

There is more to empathy than just "walking in another's shoes" (Stripling, 2012, p. 20). Psychologists alone use 17 definitions of empathy (Yilmaz, 2007). Stout (1999) writes that the simple most interesting and difficult question in education is "Can we teach students to care?" (p. 22). Empathy has not always been well articulated as a communicable and teachable concept (Gerdes, Segal, Jackson, & Mullins, 2011, p. 110).

The concept of empathy has been the focus of attention for a few decades in various arenas. In the words of Coplan and Goldie (2011) in the opening chapter, they claim, "whatever empathy is, it's important" (p. 1). In fact, it is so vital to the teaching profession, it is understood to be a necessary element of teachers' disposition.

Understanding that there are several definitions of empathy, Coplan, and Goldie (2011) offer six of the most prevalent, as follows:

1. Feeling what someone else feels
2. Caring about someone else
3. Being emotionally affected by someone else's emotions and experiences though not necessarily experiencing the same emotions
4. Imagining oneself in another's situation
5. Making inferences about another's mental states
6. Some combination of the processes described in 1–5

A working definition posited by Coplan and Goldie (2011) that contains the essential elements of each of the above stated definitions is that "empathy is a complex imaginative process in which an observer simulates another person's situated psychological states while maintaining clear self-other differentiation" (p. 3). What makes empathy complex is that it is simultaneously a cognitive and affective process (Barton, 2004; Coplan & Goldie, 2011). Affect is a category of multiple mental states thought to involve "feelings and some degree of physiological arousal" (Coplan & Goldie, p. 4). For teachers, empathy refers to a combination of intellectual and imaginative capacity (Yilmaz, 2007, p. 333). Noddings (1986) links morality to empathy and the emotional closeness and understanding of others.

It is when teachers intentionally activate empathy, meaning to step out of one's own personal context and into those of others, that true understanding of what makes others "tick" can be known. Metaphorically speaking, it is when teachers have gained the trust of the student, so much that they are offered access to a student's invisible backpack, that they move closer to understanding who the student really is.

In my case, and much later in my life, and perhaps precipitated by the ubiquitous advertisement campaign question "What's in your wallet?", I was able to unpack my backpack filled with the weight of my personal history and to see the multiple influences of culture that shaped me and gave me my identity, that I was able to more clearly to know who I am. It was then that I became more sensitive to the motivations and learning needs of students. It was the cultural approach framework that helped me to unpack my personal history and come to recognize who I am so then I was able to understand others from their own contexts.

Man has no nature; only history. (Ortega y Gasset)

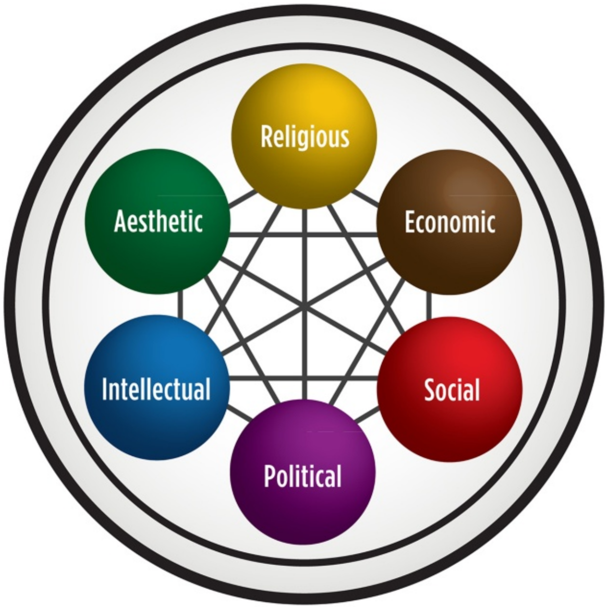

Figure 1.

The cultural approach framework allows us to see how humankind is connected while at the same time showing us how people, as individuals, are unique. The framework, as seen in Figure 1, illustrates the interaction of cultural influences that shape us into who we are. The illustration, as depicted, shows a state of being in which every category of institutions has equal shaping influence. While it may be assumed that mankind possesses many biological similarities, it may also be argued that much of what we do is rooted in a system of values. Thus, generally speaking, it is understood that values are what drive human behavior.

In my case, when thinking back on how Miss S. treated me, I can state with a great deal of confidence that there was something in her value system that conflicted with my value system, creating tension that needed to be relieved. Judging from her behavior, I can see that the only way that she knew how to deal with that tension between our respective value systems was to do what she might to minimize me in her view. What were those things about me that kept her from helping me unpack my invisible backpack? It might have been my speech impediment, my manner of dress, my name, my skin color, or any other number of characteristics. Might it be that she knew about my shameful past and concluded that I should be ostracized or isolated? Or it may be that there was nothing about me, but instead, it was whatever she was carrying in her backpack that influenced her behavior toward me. There wasn't any clear reason why I might have given her cause to ignore or bully me. But the end result is that she treated me unkindly and allowed other students in the classroom to imitate her treatment of me, with the result being, similar to her own, that they did not value me as a person.

So, together with the cultural approach framework and my passion to raise the teachers' level of consciousness of human value, I frame lessons, their objectives, and differentiated strategies with the language of the learner in mind so that they understand the principles behind the influences of culture on themselves as well as on their students. This tactic, to teach principles or concepts in the terms appropriate for each age, is what makes the cultural approach framework adaptable to students in grades K-12.

Professor of history Oliver T. Ivey developed a Cultural Approach to History (CAH) framework, following the inspiration of Dr. Caroline Ware's seminal work (1940), organized from papers presented at the annual conference of the American Historical Association in 1939. Her approach involved shifting the focus of historical inquiry from elites and institutions to the common man, with emphasis on the social and economic contexts, while showing the interdependence of social, economic, and cultural influences.

Ivey also drew heavily from contemporaneous sources of history and cultural history, specifically from the textbook, *Civilization: Past and Present, Volume I*, by Wallbank, Taylor, and Bailkey (1965). Some of the concepts integrated into the CAH framework drawn from this textbook endure today. The concept of culture, for instance, is described as men following a pattern of common elements, such as social organization, political institutions, economic activities, law, science, art, religion, and philosophy (Wallbank, Taylor, & Bailkey, 1965). The aforementioned can be distilled in the definition, with its basis taken from cultural anthropology and written precisely by Peoples and Bailey (2010): The culture of a group consists of shared, socially learned knowledge and patterns of behavior (p. 24).

Returning to the metaphor of the invisible backpack, when the contents are made available for study, they will be organized into a taxonomy of cultural factors that are illustrated in a diagrammatic form. The cultural approach model depicts six categories of influences and their interdependencies and is superimposed in time and place. While it is recognized that there may be other choices and rationale to catalog or organize institutions differently, these six categories represent an enduring and applicable framework with respect to student learning and have been promoted by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (Ivey, p. 51).

The only thing worth teaching is principles. (Jacques Barzun)

I plan my lessons and assessments so that students may demonstrate an understanding of principles of culture rather than rote memorization of definitions or theories.

In my classroom, we begin with the premise that the source of values is culture. When that concept is understood, students are then in position to dig a little deeper into what makes them unique while, at the same time, connecting them to others. When applied, we can weigh and then argue about the degree of influence that each category is responsible for shaping a person. We then spend some time arranging cultural universals (Murdock, 1945) into the categories of the CAH framework through small group discussion and debate. The main outcome of these discussions and subsequent organizing efforts is that we see that there is no single or stand-alone influencing factor for any of the universals. These universals may be formed from influences by institutions from multiple categories.

The six categories are remembered by any of three acronyms, *ASPIRE*, *PERSIA*, and *PRAISE*. Specifically, these institutions form the political, religious, aesthetic, intellectual, social and economic categories of influence.

We begin with the "Political Me." This category contains the characteristics of how one maintains order or governs. They include rules, laws, and enforcement of those guidelines. Some examples in a student context include "Walk, don't run", "Cross the street between the lines", "Keep your hands to yourselves", "Only one person may speak at a time", and "If assignment is missed, you have detention."

Next, there is the "Religious Me." These are those characteristics that are related to ethics—that is, what is right and wrong for me and for my community, including property and animals. Some examples include "Taking without asking is stealing", "Lying is bad", and "Hitting a person is bad."

The "Aesthetic Me" contains those characteristics related to feelings, emotions, or the senses. Examples include the relationship between me and nature—i.e., sunsets, mountain or ocean vistas, animals, or vegetation. Essentially, it answers the question, "What is beautiful to me?" Therein, one may find music, dance, crafts, literature, other fine arts, and architecture, among others.

The characteristics of the "Intellectual Me" include those related to formal or structured learning. They also include the answer to the question "What improves life, in general?" This category also includes technology, which doesn't only refer to computers or modern electrical appliances. It can apply to the wheel, a shovel, a fence, or any manner of conveyance beyond one's own two feet.

The "Social Me" is arguably the strongest influence, especially during the developing years of students. It refers to people-related characteristics, beginning with the family. It also includes friends, not just peers, and members of "my community"—one's clan, tribe, race, gender, age-group, team, or organized hobby, such as the Scouts. This category also includes one's roles, responsibilities, and rights in any of the groups of people. The people whom one admires most is also included in this category.

The sixth category is the "Economic Me." These characteristics relate to matters of material, services, and exchanges. It manifests in the family first—e.g., doing chores results in receiving pay or allowances. Money plays an important role, but it is not the only means of exchange for materials or services.

I am I, plus my circumstances. (Jose Ortega y Gassett)

After reviewing the elements of the CAH, one can deduce that the same cultural influences that occur in individuals can also be seen in civilizations, nation states, and other groups of people, historical or fictional. Once students see and understand the presence and dynamics of culture, beginning in their own lives, they can look for and make connections to others through any or all of the categories, whether they exist from the past or present, in both fictional and non-fictional contexts. We recognize that we are not training students to become professional cultural anthropologists, but instead, the goal is for students to accept the notion that elements of culture possess the capability of either uniting or dividing people.

So, after finding some tools by which I might explore the contents of my own backpack, I found that my humanity—that is, who I was or am—was ignored or neglected by many of those who bore some responsibility for helping me to grow up to be a competent, caring, and contributing citizen.

I appreciate that Miss F. and Mr. C. drew me into their community and made the conscious effort to validate my humanity. I am especially thankful for Miss F. intervening and breaking the patterns of negativity that dimmed my hopes of being worth much to any. On the other hand, Miss S. should have been more sensitive to the practice of her inequitable empathy, and I might not have had to wait until I was fully grown to more fully appreciate my value to my community.

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THOMAS DAILEY

5. HE'LL JUST SPEND IT ON ALCOHOL

How Our Experiences Shape the Stigmas of the Homeless

Some time ago, I went on a four-hour drive for a business trip and turned off an interstate exit to refuel my car. While driving, I saw a homeless man standing with a sign asking for help along the exit ramp. I had grown immune to such sights, having seen them daily in downtown cities where I lived and worked, but something particular to this instance made me want to act. I had little cash on me, so I resigned only to get gas and pass the man by, as I had done so many times before.

However, when I got to the gas station, I realized that, though I did not have cash to give the man, I could at least buy him food and drinks and use a debit card to pay for it all. I gathered a small bag of goods, which mainly consisted of Gatorade, crackers, and other sundry snacks that you would find at a convenience store. Afterward, I took it back to the man, slightly ashamed of what I felt was a meager offering, considering what I imagined to be his situation. I apologized for not having any cash to give him, but he quickly dismissed my apology as he looked in the bag. He said, "No, this is good. This is everything." He thanked me several more times as I left.

Driving away, I was proud of what I did until I reflected on my actions a little further. I remember that there was an ATM in the gas station, and it might have been possible that I could have even gotten cash back with my purchase. So I could have given the man money, but I did not even think of that; instead, I had only considered buying products. I had to pause and ponder why I acted in this way; it was only a few moments before I started hearing echoes of multiple voices throughout my life telling me, "He'll just spend it on alcohol."

I realized another influence on my actions was my mother, and I had always thought how kind she was to the homeless. She always kept packs of crackers in her car to give to homeless people she saw while driving, particularly to the men who would wash her windshield and ask for a tip. I questioned why she did not just give them a dollar, and she told me that it was dangerous to pull out money in front of a homeless person. At the time, this seemed perfectly reasonable, but now I realize that it just helped propagate another stigma associated with homelessness. Between my mother and other influences, I had unconsciously picked up that the homeless are dangerous, are prone to criminal action, and spend their money on drugs and alcohol rather than food.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 31–39.

When I had brought the bag to the man, I had held it far out the window, so he did not reach into my car. I realized I did not want him in my car. There were several restaurants on this particular interstate exit, too, and I had played with the idea of taking him to get an actual meal but quickly changed my mind. Why had I not invited him to get real food instead of Gatorade and gas station crackers? I feared him and thought that he would be dirty, perhaps even carrying some contagious disease. The public's view of the homeless is shaped by a multitude of commonly held beliefs, and almost all of these are negative—and I had let them shape my actions as well.

THE STIGMATIZATION OF THE HOMELESS ROLE

The homeless role itself is heavily stigmatized and stereotyped. Erving Goffman's (1963) work on stigmas can help us analyze society's view of homelessness. Goffman believed that, when certain attributes become attached to a social role, the attributes are discredited by society, and as a result, society rejects the individuals who are seen to hold the position. In the case of the homeless, the stigmas associated with them effectively create a social blockage that prevents them from being able to reintegrate back into society. Often, these attributes are seen as more than just undesirable but also as threats to social order and safety.

Negative discourse furthers the stigmas associated with homelessness, but Schneider and Remillard (2013) found that the pervasive nature of the homelessness stigma is so deeply rooted in the discourse that exists around the homeless that even positive dialogue may reinforce stigmas as well. In their study, they applied discourse analysis and found that "even apparently caring and positive language produces and reinforces long-standing negative perceptions of homelessness and homeless people" (Schneider & Remillard, 2013, p. 110). Despite the caring nature of the discourse, focusing on treating the homeless as the "other" of society will centralize the domiciled and marginalize the homeless. As a result, even people who focus on outreach—feeding the homeless, offering medical treatment, or running shelters—may further the stigmatization of the homeless.

Looking at the difference between the stigmas associated with the homeless and that of the poor creates an interesting analysis. Though their circumstances are similar, Jones, Farina, Hastorf, Marksu, Miller, and Scott (1984) explain that the stigma of homelessness tends to be greater. The homeless are more visible to us than the poor, as they live on the streets and in other public spaces while the poor are hidden away in slums and low-class neighborhoods. The homeless are often seen as dirty and unclean—more so than the poor—which increases the stigma attached to homelessness. Homelessness is also seen more as a choice than poverty. Schneider and Remillard (2013) also made this distinction, stating that there is often a division between what people see as deserving and undeserving poor. Those who have chosen to live on the street and beg for money and food rather than work are seen as less deserving; therefore, others are not as willing to give them as much assistance. In some cases, particularly with the help of the media, this viewpoint can be shifted, seeing the homeless person as a victim of circumstance rather than someone who has caused his own misfortune (Platt, 1999). Some also see the homeless as belonging to other stigmatized groups as they are often included as being alcoholics and drug abusers as well as being diseased and dangerous.

HE IS JUST GOING TO SPEND IT ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

When I typed "he is just g" into Google's search engine, the predictive text algorithms suggested, "He is just going to spend it on drugs and alcohol." The resulting searches from the entered string are all relating to the issues of the homeless spending money gained from panhandling on drugs or alcohol. Though, typically, stigmas affect the way in which people think and act, this one is so pervasive that it can even permeate the computerized algorithms that can predict what I may be trying to type from only a few words.

Google's predictive search result demonstrates what I have heard countless times from family, friends, and acquaintances: that you should not give a homeless person money because they will just spend it on alcohol or drugs. This stigma usually comes with the implication (or sometimes direct statement) that perhaps the tendency to spend their money on alcohol or drugs is what led them to be homeless in the first place. However, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's recent reports in 2014 show that only about 20% of the United States' homeless population chronically abuses alcohol or drugs. This number is far from an appropriate amount to characterize an entire population (Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs, Homeless Populations, & Subpopulations, 2014). Numbers from 2000 show that this has not changed much, as data suggested that the number of homeless who abused drugs was around 26% (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013).

The second issue of assumption is that, even though some of the homeless population may officially be characterized by HUD as chronic substance abusers, this does not mean that those within this group will immediately run off and spend the money on drugs or alcohol. A survey conducted in late 2012 by GLS Research under contract with the Union Square Business Improvement District in San Francisco found that, though 32% of the homeless surveyed admitted to being drug abusers, only 6% spent money gained from panhandling on anything other than food (Heather, 2013).

What is interesting is that the homeless themselves are aware of the stigma around alcohol and drugs. Jonathan Kozol (1988) recalls his conversation with a man whom he calls Richard Lazarus in *Rachel and Her Children*. Richard trembled from sickness and lack of sleep. Being aware of his behavior, he almost refused Kozol's offer to get food, saying, "When you asked if I would come outside and get something to eat, my first thought was that you would see me shaking if we sat down for a meal and you'd think I was an alcoholic" (Kozol, 1988, p. 216). It's apparent that the stigma of the homeless role is not just seen from the outside but that the homeless themselves are acutely aware of it as well.

THEY ARE DIRTY AND DISEASED

A common reaction to the homeless is disgust. Harris and Fiske (2006) scanned the brains of volunteers as they viewed pictures of people and objects and developed a stereotype content model (SCM) to categorize the neurological response to various images. Those living in poverty and homelessness were included in those pictures. Though the SCM was useful to see the responses to a variety of stimuli, one of the most striking was the result when people viewed pictures of the homeless; the brain activity associated with pictures of the homeless was the same as when these volunteers were shown pictures of overflowing toilets or vomit.

> The worst kind of prejudice—disgust and contempt—based on perceived moral violations and subsequent negative outcomes that these groups allegedly caused themselves. Disgust is unique among the emotions predicted by the SCM because it can target either humans or nonhumans, making people functionally equivalent to objects. (Harris & Fiske, 2006, p. 848)

Sherman and Haidt (2011) explain that disgust, though an attribute traditionally attached to nonhuman objects, could be applied in cases wherein the human subject was dehumanized in a process known as "animalistic dehumanization." This type of dehumanization occurs when "the target is perceived as crude, savage, and similar to nonhuman animals" (Sherman & Haidt, 2011, p. 3). This perception, added with disgust, "directly shrinks the moral circle, excluding outgroup members from the realm of moral concern" (Sherman & Haidt, 2011, p. 3). Removing the homeless from the "realm of moral concern" essentially frees others from noticing their plight, enabling them to walk by with little interest, much as I have done many times in my own past.

Health professionals themselves are in part responsible for propagating the "dirty and diseased" portion of the homelessness stigma. They have built a disease model of homelessness that "focuses on the grubby, addicted, and depressed poor themselves" (Gowan, 2000, p. 98) and see it as a "symptom of the severe mental illness and substance abusing of the few [that] has little to do with working and house conditions of the many" (p. 99). Those who adopt this model focus on treating the diseases and disorders of the homeless and view it as an individual problem rather than a societal issue. In our minds, this approach associates the homeless and the sick, and those who use the disease model to see the homeless population's relationship with society as a disease.

Even researchers who have spent their lives acting as advocates for the homeless and poor such as Kozol (1988) are not immune to seeing the homeless as diseased and dirty. In his book, he reflects on the fact that he immediately showered after returning to his hotel from interviews with the homeless and how he experienced guilt, as Kozol thought about it, knowing that the dirtiness he felt was more than just physical soiling: "Once we escape that zone, the wish to wash ourselves—to scrub away the filth—may be more than a health precaution" (Kozol, 1988, pp. 212–213).

Even the homeless themselves are acutely aware of the view that they are seen as dirty and diseased and actively try to prevent it. In one of Kozol's interviews, a homeless man told him, "I would try to bathe each day in public toilets. I'd wash my clothes and lay them outside in the sun to dry. I didn't want to feel like a pariah that nobody would get near. I used to talk with people like yourself so that I would not begin to feel cut off" (Kozol, 1988, p. 215). From this, we can assume that many of the homeless are aware of conditions that perpetuate this perception that they are dirty and that they may take steps to avoid as much as the stigma as possible.

HE COULD BE DANGEROUS

The homeless are often seen as being dangerous and criminal. Snow, Baker, and Anderson (1989) conducted a study to find links between crime and homelessness. In the study, they interviewed members of a local population that stormed a city council meeting when they discovered that the Salvation Army would be relocating nearby. They believed that it would bring a large homeless population with it, and therefore, "opponents repeatedly voiced the fear that 'thousands of womanless, homeless men' would inundate their neighborhoods, 'rob their homes' and 'rape the women'" (Snow, Baker, & Anderson, 1989, p. 532).

However, the actual data collected by Snow et al. found that the perception of the homeless as dangerous criminals was very different from reality. They found that, while homeless men have a higher arrest rate when compared to the general male population (per 1,000 of the respected population), they have a significantly lower arrest rate for violent crimes than domiciled males. In other words, with a population of 1,000 domiciled males and 1,000 homeless males, you have a greater chance of being a victim of a violent crime perpetrated by a domiciled male than one committed by a homeless man. The discrepancy between total arrests and arrests for violent crimes is comprised of primarily minor offenses such as petty theft, violations of vagrancy ordinances, and public intoxication. To account for the rather disproportionate number of arrests for minor crimes, "homeless males are a stigmatized category in the eyes of the police" (Snow, Baker, & Anderson, 1989, p. 544), and because of the higher level of scrutiny, the possibility of arrest is increased.

Robert, Crawford, and Burns (2013) examined the relationship between law enforcement and the homeless. They interviewed both officers and members of the homeless population. One officer who often patrolled in areas with a homeless population said,

> I would like to believe that I act with some compassion, but quite frankly we are busy dealing with many other issues and we don't have much time to babysit an adult and try to find someone to help him. It's easier for us to place someone in jail than it is to get a facility to take them. Sad but true. (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013, p. 367)

The homeless were also perceived to have an adversarial relationship with the police, often looking at the police as an agent of the society that had marginalized them rather than as a public servant sworn to serve and protect all. One homeless man reflected on his interactions with police, stating,

> I had one police officer follow me all the way from the park to the shelter to make sure I came back here. I didn't do nothing, just sitting in the park. I wasn't drinking, I wasn't dirty; I had clean clothes. I wasn't shaved but he followed me all the way here. I couldn't believe that. I think we should have the right to enjoy the city just like everyone else. Then they tell me I'm in the wrong place, you have to go away. (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013, p. 368)

Not only are the homeless not the dangerous criminals whom they are perceived to be, but they are the victims of a disproportionately large number of crimes. Studies have shown that 38% of the homeless have been victims of robberies (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013) and that 49% have been subjected to a violent attack. These statistics compare to only about 2% of the overall population. Among the homeless, nearly 81% had at least witnessed a violent attack, even if they had not been the victims themselves (Meinbresse et al., 2014).

HE HAS CHOSEN TO LIVE THIS WAY

One of the most damaging views of the homeless (and one that often puts them at odds with government officials and law enforcement) considers being homeless as a choice. Society has the tendency to blame the homeless for their situation as if they could choose to do something different other than live on the street and beg for money and food. In *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault (1965) writes about the "Great Confinement" of the 17th century when thousands of homeless people were forced off the streets and into institutions that held them until economic conditions were more favorable for employment. At this time, homelessness and begging were seen as a poor moral choice and something that could perhaps be corrected with the right set of rehabilitative programs. Hundreds of years later, this view of poor moral choice still appears to be the case, as Pimpare (2008) reports that "the condescension that has governed American efforts at relief [is] rooted consciously or not in the belief that it must be moral failings that explain why people find themselves in need" (Pimpare, 2008, p. 9).

Parsell and Parsell (2012) looked at the issue of choice to debate what level of decision is made or if the homeless are merely powerless agents within the system. Public perception is often aligned more toward the former side of the debate, and worse, public policy is sometimes made with that assumption in mind as well. For many, "homelessness is seen as the result of the choices of a problematic and deviant individual. They are portrayed as unwilling to do what is expected of them and these immoral choices lead to homelessness" (Parsell & Parsell, 2012, p. 424).

In 1931, George Orwell wrote an essay titled "The Spike" detailing his experiences "tramping" near London. He recalls how bad the food that was given out to the homeless at the workhouse where he stayed was and how any "good" food was deliberately thrown out and wasted. He saw that "great dishes of beef, and bucketfuls of bread and vegetables, were pitched away like rubbish, and then defiled with tea-leaves" (Orwell, 2010, p. 6). When questioning the waste, he was told that "they have to do it" because "if they made these places too pleasant you'd have all the scum of the country flocking into them. It's only the bad food that keeps all that scum away. These tramps are too lazy to work, that's all that's wrong with them. You don't want to go encouraging them" (Orwell, 2010, p. 7).

Just as it was in Orwell's work in 1931, this view of "homelessness as a choice," in combination with other elements of the homeless stigma, has led to many current public policies that intend to make the homeless question their decision to be homeless (as absurd as that sounds). Kozol (1988) describes how degraded the welfare hotels were in New York, but even if funding were present to repair and upgrade the hotels, it would never be done. To explain, he repeats the concerns of the New York City Council: "If homelessness is made 'too comfortable,' the homeless 'will want to remain homeless'" (Kozol, 1988, p. 120).

Many officials are creating laws and ordinances aimed at discouraging homelessness. These officials claim the anti-homeless legislation is not intended as an attack on homelessness but instead as an attack on the lawless. However, according to laws in many major cities, the lawless are those who sit on sidewalks or streets, sleep in any public place, wash car windows on the streets, solicit outside of "official" city begging hours, or panhandle at any one of the many predefined inappropriate places in the city (Amster, 2003; Mitchell, 1997). Clearly, the legislators see being homeless as a criminal act and a choice, as outlawing sleeping in public and sitting on the streets would imply that the homeless could (and should) sleep and sit elsewhere. Cities have even taken to criminalizing the actions of those who help the homeless, implementing laws that prohibit or impede feeding them. These "anti-feeding" ordinances are aimed at reducing homelessness in cities and keeping the homeless from congregating in undesirable areas (Philips, 2006). Even as I write this chapter, I have seen a news article about a 90-year-old man who has been arrested twice for feeding the homeless after a law was passed in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (Spargo, 2014).

Punishing the homeless for being homeless is not something that has just gone on in the major cities far away, but some that also happened in Columbus, Georgia, while I lived there. In downtown Columbus, a large bridge stretches across old streets and abandoned railways. A large population of homeless used it as shelter, moving from it during the day to panhandle in the downtown business district. However, in 2012, local business complaints pushed the city to redirect the homeless population away from the bridge area. The local news station, WTVM, reported on the new policy, stating, "Many of the homeless went to shelters, some just found another outdoor spot, and others were given bus tickets to reconnect with their families" ("No More Homeless

Under 2nd Ave Bridge", 2012). In other words, the problem of homelessness was not addressed, but they would no longer be visible to the local businesses in the area. Any homeless who choose to remain in the sheltered areas around the bridge will be arrested; being homeless under the bridge has now become illegal.

WHY AM I ANY DIFFERENT?

My encounter is more than just a single event within the continuum of my lifespan. Much of the reflection on this single experience is expanded from a greater part of my life. The shame or guilt that I felt after I reflected on the fact that I let my perception become clouded by stigmas was perhaps magnified by the realization that only a few chance occurrences throughout our life may make a difference in what our current situation becomes; had things gone differently in my life, I could have been the man standing on that exit ramp instead.

We lived in a small trailer by a set of railroad tracks. I lived there for the first few years of my life, so I only have a few snapshots of memory where I spent my beginning years. I remember the tall weeds around the tracks, the dirt of the driveway, and a fuzzy image of the trailer. My mother had no education beyond high school, and my father did what he could to get us by. I was the second child to be born into the family but the first to survive; my older sister died in infancy before I came into the world.

I do not remember many events from my life during that time except for a few images from the day my mother gathered my new baby sister and me and left my father and our little home by the railroad tracks. She took us, now homeless, to her parents' house. We shared the space with her mother, her father, and her unmarried brother, who still lived with them. My great-grandparents were our neighbors, and other family members lived around us.

In my memories, we were content with life in our crowded home and with life in general. I knew nothing of being poor or that others had more than my and I family did. I do not recall the financial struggle, arguments over money, or the discomfort of living in a house that was not my own. I was always surrounded by family, cared for by many, and my needs were met. I do not remember wanting for much more. I have happy memories playing outside, climbing trees, and catching frogs by a river.

Though I do not recall the exact sequence of events that again changed my world, I do know that my mother worked through nursing school, no doubt pushed to support her two children through some means. She met a medical intern while working at the hospital, and the two married after a short courtship. The man, now my stepfather, went through his residency and then started his own successful practice. Within just a few years, our lives had transformed dramatically. No longer in a trailer or homeless and living with family, we had bought our house and filled it with the things that we could then afford.

The events that lifted my family out of poverty took place beyond my control, and the details elude my memory or are distorted by child-like perception. This reflection has made me think of the paths that my family was able to take and how a number of chance events separated me from those living in poverty now. I feel as though I have been given a gift by fate or chance: many things have been enabled by my life of privilege, yet so little truly separates my starting path from a man who can find "everything" in a bag of food from a stranger.

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SAOUSSAN MAAROUF

6. CAN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS HAVE AN IMPACT ON COMBATING ISLAMOPHOBIA IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

As a Muslim educator and a mother of three children, I was always fearful of the day when my kids would come home hurt from Islamophobic bigotry at school. Unfortunately, this happened last month to my 10-year-old son when one of his classmates refused to play with him in the school playground after my son informed him that he is a Muslim. My son was also told by his friend that he should not be in this country because he is not "American." Despite the fear that one day my children could experience bigotry at school, I certainly was not ready for it. It took me a while to process what my son was telling me and to come up with a comforting response and explanation to him. Before this incident, I was aware of the rise of Islamophobia in public schools in the US, but honestly I did not pay much attention to it. Perhaps I was living in denial that this type of bigotry would not happen to my family although I was fearful of it. I then decided to search the topic of Islamophobia in public schools, and I was stunned to discover that my fear was justified. During the last two decades, there has been an appalling spate of violent assaults and bulling against Muslim students, especially after the terrorist attacks on September 11 (Ramarajan & Runell, 2007; Bishop, 2015). Moreover, in recent months, "hate crimes" have devastated several Muslim communities in the US due to anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic rhetoric used against Muslims in local and national politics (Al-Sharif, 2016). Three Muslim students were killed in cold-blood at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. A sixth-grade Muslim girl in the New York City public schools was recently beaten by other students while shouting, "ISIS," at her. A 14-year old Muslim student in Texas, who was creative in designing a clock for a science project, was arrested by the police and denied access to his parents after his teacher claimed that he had made a bomb (Winegar, 2016). A 13-year old student in Vandalia, Ohio, threatened to gun down a Muslim student on a school bus, calling him a "towel head", a "terrorist", and "the son of ISIS" (Rizga, 2016). These are just examples that show the immense stress that young Muslim Americans might encounter at schools due to the backlash over terror acts committed by a few Muslims (while over 1.5 billion Muslims do not). So what can teacher preparation programs at colleges of education do to help future classroom teachers confront Islamophobia in public schools?

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 41–50.

WHAT IS ISLAMOPHOBIA?

According to the Center for Race and Gender at the University of California – Berkeley, the term *Islamophobia* appeared first in a 1991 Runnymede Trust Report as a concept of hatred, prejudice, and bigotry against Muslims (Conway, 1997). It has been argued by anti-Muslim groups and individuals that Islam is a religion of violence that does not share American values and is inferior to the West (McQueeney, 2014).

There has been a vast research in the literature about discrimination against racial background (Nadal, 2011; Sue et al., 2007), discrimination against women (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Nadal, 2010), discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community (Nadal et al., 2011; Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010; Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2011), and discrimination against people with disabilities (Keller & Galgay, 2010). However, discrimination based on religion and its impact on religious minorities is the least form of discrimination studied by researchers (Nadal et al., 2011).

A Pew survey that was conducted in 2014 showed that, on a "feeling thermometer" with 0 (coldest) and 100 (warmest), Muslims scored the lowest of all other religious groups. Republicans' sentiment towards Muslim was 35 while Democrats' was 47 (CAIR, 2016). A 2016 report on Islamophobia in the US that was issued by the UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender (CRG) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) listed the following key findings: (a) that 74 groups were identified as promoters of Islamophobia in the US with a revenue of more than $206M, (b) that anti-Islam bills are now law in 10 states with no legal proceedings yet, (c) that anti-Islam campaigns in at least two states were successful in passing laws on approval of school textbooks revisions, armed by a claim that schools are indoctrinating students to become Muslims, (d) that 78 recorded incidents against mosques were reported in 2015, a 300% increase over previous years, and (e) that boycotting Muslim businesses and armed demonstrations in front of Mosques are two disturbing phenomena that are in the rise (CAIR, 2016).

Dalia Mogahed, a former Gallop pollster, argued that the public opinion on Islam is highly linked to election cycles and to leaders' rhetoric when building domestic consent and less depend on international conflict or terrorism. She cited a Pew research that showed that Americans' sentiment of Muslims was more favorable weeks after the terrorist attack of 9/11. She attributed this to President Bush's having visited Islamic centers and stating in a message to the Congress and to the American public that the terrorists who committed the attack were traitors to their own religion (Mogahed, 2013).

WHAT TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS NEED NOW: A STRATEGY AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

Teacher preparation programs and policy makers at higher education institutions need to take a fresh look at diversity reform in our educational systems away from conservative and liberal agenda. They need to encourage cooperation between school systems and other ethnic and religious institutions in society to promote diverse points of view and perspectives. In order to succeed, diversity reform in education should promote multi-cultural curriculum that empowers teacher preparation programs to educate their students on how to confront and eradicate all forms of discrimination including Islamophobia. We have to elevate the topic of Islamophobia as a core subject at colleges of education so that future classroom teachers are trained to deal with bigotry against Muslim students and are empowered to move from crises management toward crisis resolution. Furthermore, higher education institutions must offer specific courses to enhance multi-cultural education. For example, Michigan State University offers a course that is aimed to provide students a better knowledge about Islam and its core beliefs, information about contemporary radical Islam and how the majority of Muslims are fighting it, and a dialogue about the current anti-Muslim sentiments in the West. With the fast-changing demographics in classrooms, pre-service teachers must learn more about diversity in order to meet the needs of the ever-increasing multicultural students in public schools. Teacher preparation programs must come up with strategies to address diversity issues such as racism, cultural differences, and gender biases. Curriculum must be adjusted to keep up with diversity in classrooms.

One strategy that teacher preparation programs can use in the fight against Islamophobia is to train their students to exhibit professional observation skills and developmentally appropriate strategies to deal with racism and diversity in classrooms. Such strategies should encourage future classroom teachers to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners, including Muslim students. Cultural diversity is a significant factor in understanding the learning process for multicultural students (Cole, 1995; Milner, 2013). There are several conceptions about multicultural education; the most important one is that it is not American. Understanding demographics is critical to any society. The American population is mostly made up of immigrants and descendants of immigrants, yet minority teachers still constitute a small percentage of the teaching workforce (Cohen et al., 2016; Ferguson, 2002). Reaching out to Muslim communities to recruit and encourage Muslim students to enroll in teacher preparation programs will go long way in fighting Islamophobia in public schools.

Unfortunately, many news reports indicate an alarming number of incidents at schools nationwide wherein Muslim students experience discrimination by teachers and administrators (Rizga, 2016). In California, 20% of Muslim students in public schools reported episodes of such discrimination, and 58% of these students believed that reporting the incidents to an adult did not make a difference (Rizga, 2016). Teacher preparation programs must educate their students to be advocates against Islamophobia in schools rather than offenders or promoters of intolerance and discriminatory conduct against Muslim students. Colleges of education can play a major role combating Islamophobia in public school by adopting a zero-tolerance policy against bigotry by their students and enforcing positive social norms that support social differences.

Higher education institutions, and in particular colleges of education, need to address the culture of fear about Islam that is feeding on ignorance and racial intolerance by offering a "safe space" that encourages their future classroom teachers to fight against this culture of fear through education, inquisition, and self-reflection. Our country has dealt with similar problems in the past and higher education institutions were at the forefront of decimating social injustices in our society by fighting against a "culture of silence" and standing up for those who were oppressed. Recently, there has been a movement by student activists at colleges nationwide demanding their leaders to create programs that address diversity on campuses and to fight racial bias, including end to Islamophobia (Schaidle, 2016). For example, many institutions (including the University of Wisconsin, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oklahoma) have provided their students and faculty a platform (courses and seminars) where they can discuss topics related to diversity, discrimination, social justice, and racism, including Islamophobia. In another tangible example, Lake Forest College arranged a forum where students, faculty, and college leaders engaged in a dialogue to discuss hate crimes against Muslims and ways to confront Islamophobia (Al-Sharif, 2016; Schaidle, 2016). The above are just few examples on how higher education institutions can address anti-Muslim sentiments by aggressively establishing "safe spaces" and encouraging their students to participate.

There is no doubt that more can be done by colleges of education in the fight against Islamophobia. Teacher preparation programs can offer curricular and co-curricular syllabi and have students study courses about Muslims and their faith in response to the curiosity that might have been piqued by the current rhetoric against Muslims in public life. If using certain words or phrases is offensive to Whites, Blacks, or Hispanic groups, then anti-Muslim blares on television screens on campuses must offend Muslim students and create a climate of prejudice among non-Muslim students. If multicultural and multiracial requirements are needed to correct the injustice that has been done to Native Americans, African Americans, and other racial groups throughout the history of our nation, then it is imperative for colleges of education to offer religious diversity classes that include contribution of Muslims to human civilization. These classes can overcome the lack of knowledge about Islam amongst college students and hopefully put the brakes on Islamophobia and other religious prejudices.

Fighting bias is a core value for most colleges because history has proven that bias is the enemy of knowledge and social equality. In the interest of pursuing truth and justice and in preparing future classroom teachers for their invaluable contribution to our society as generation builders, teacher preparation programs must counter the highly skewed information about Muslims that currently exist in the public space. For example, curriculum in many schools is set so that, when students hear the word *Black*, they recall the names of Black scientists, artists, and so on. Regrettably, this is not the case for Muslims. Many people, including students, nowadays associate the word *Islam* with "terrorists" who are in this country "to follow Sharia law," not the

Constitution (McQueeney, 2014). There is no doubt that people are susceptible of making conjectural mistakes about a racial group or a religion, but it is our civic duty as educators to become more intentional on religious issues if we want to continue to carry the burden of being a beacon of knowledge and truth to all individuals and groups.

Teacher preparation programs can be the catalyst to offset the bias in public arena against Muslims and other cultures. The four-year program that brings young students from diverse backgrounds who are eager to learn how to teach and prepare them to be ambassadors of knowledge and justice can take concrete initiatives in the fight against bigotry and discrimination in public schools. Such programs can inspire future classroom teachers to accept diversity as a core value for a healthy community across multicultural identities. Students in these programs can take these initiatives and put them into action when they teach young children in public schools.

THE BENEFITS OF TEACHING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT ISLAMOPHOBIA

In a classroom, a teacher has the opportunity to meet students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers will be challenged by the diverse family structures and cultures of their students. Therefore, learning about different cultures will aid teachers in dealing with these challenges. For example, students from minority or low-income families are at great disadvantage of getting adequate educational services and classroom support at public schools (Boykin et al., 2005; Howard, 2010). Despite the fact that schools have changed from white majority to multicultural institutions, minority teachers still account for small percentage of the educational workforce (Cohen et al., 2016; Ferguson, 2002). This has created a disconnect between teachers and minority students. Teacher preparation programs should boost their effort to recruit students from multicultural background in order to account for the new reality of multicultural classrooms in the US.

Teacher preparation programs need also to teach students to use multiple viewpoints from varying sources, and they should train them how to evaluate these sources. By doing this, we move from mainstream and marginalized cultural literacy to critical literacy. What student teachers learn in college will have an impact on their future professional life. Understanding the different family types and structures will help teachers to communicate better with their students. Specifically, teacher preparation programs can be indispensable partner in countering intolerance and discrimination against Muslim students in public schools. They can provide knowledge and resources to better equip their students in addressing sensitive cultural issues concerning communal respect of diversity. For example, these programs can direct their students to search beyond local resources and to contact international organizations and websites such as the UNESCO (United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization) Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), and Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System (TANDIS) to find class material that can be used to counter Islamophobia. Teacher preparation programs are the first line of defense in creating a culture that confronts bias against Muslim students in public schools since they play a fundamental role in shaping the behaviors and beliefs of their students.

The bigotry against Muslim students is dynamic and relentlessly shifting due to political events, terrorism, and economic changes. Classroom teacher should be empowered by the knowledge that they receive in college to deal with stereotyping and racial profiling against Muslim students. These young Muslim students might grow up and contribute to their community in multitude of ways. They could be the future doctors who take care and treat their childhood teachers or the architects who build future schools in their communities. Teacher preparation programs are the nourishing grounds for future classroom teachers to combat bias against Muslims in the school environment, where teachers can act as catalysts for peaceful and just societies. A holistic approach that includes teacher preparation programs, public schools, and the broader community will go long way in defeating all kind of discriminations in schools such as race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

STRATEGIES TO CONFRONT ISLAMPHOBIA IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The subject of Islamophobia has finally appeared on the radar of the Department of Justice. US Attorney General Loretta Lynch recently expressed her concerns about the increase in anti-Muslim incidents in public schools (Rizga, 2015). Lynch issued a directive to the Department of Education to investigate this phenomenon and to advise schools to come up with anti-bulling measures to protect Muslim students.

Unfortunately, there is no "one size fits all" strategy. Each school district must implement a strategy that takes into consideration socioeconomic context and resources. For example, school districts can provide a special training to their teachers and staff to address anti-Muslim bullying at schools. This can be part of the sensitivity training for staff and teachers. The curriculum about Islam should be un-biased, and Muslim students inside classrooms should not be in a position where they need to defend their religion. In addition, schools can encourage teachers to do their own research about Islam and present their findings to their students in a sensitive and insightful approach. Teachers should feel comfortable contacting Muslim parents as a source of information without being accused that they are indoctrinating their students into Islam.

In addition, any new diversity reform in education has to deal with the changing social characteristics of our society. Fewer and fewer children are living with "traditional" families made of two parents. The number of unmarried couples living together has increased. Minority population continues to increase at a fast rate due to immigration and a higher fertility rate (Cole, 2005; Howard, 2010). Educators have to deal with demographic change in classrooms. Sadly, to some extent, racism in many ways is still in existence in the US Stereotyping, racial profiling, and Islamophobia are some forms of racism that we still see presently.

Research has shown that there has been no evidence to show that school systems are ready or prepared to deal with Muslim students who are at risk of becoming victims of racism (Ramarajan & Runell, 2007). Despite the DOJ sounding the alarm-bell of increased incidents of bullying against Muslim students, there has not been a state or school district directive to address this problem. The current school practice is to follow the general guidelines of anti-bullying measures, which might not be effective against anti-Muslim bullying. Regardless, these programs have not been successful anyway. Using an "ecological" approach in which education is considered to be a system used "at and outside" the school will have a better chance to succeed. A more comprehensive program based on collaboration between educators, policyholders, and community leaders should be implemented.

Furthermore, the "melting pot" concept enforced by schools in the past is insufficient and needs to be revamped. Advances in transportation and communication help new immigrants to keep close ties with their native countries. Researchers have found a direct relation between the success of multicultural students and the extent in applying educational techniques that promote diversity by their teachers (Cole, 1995; Milner, 2013). In special education programs, the need of minority students has not been met. On the contrary, minority children—especially English Language Learners (ELL)—are not receiving the services and counseling hours that they need (Cole, 2005; Fergus, 2009; Howard, 2010). Black students in wealthier districts are frequently stereotyped as special needs students while Muslim students are under extreme pressure of bigotry and often labeled as terrorists (Aronson, 2004; Ferguson, 2002).

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Teaching diversity and implementing programs that promote tolerance and acceptance of each other must be the top priority for all societies to achieve peace and equality. In 1969, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination requested all countries to develop extensive programs in the field of education to fight against racial discrimination and to support tolerance among nations and the different cultures in the world (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2011). The 2010 Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education urged its member states to implement educational strategies that are designed to combat all forms of discrimination and hostility against minority groups (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2011). Teacher preparation programs must today, more than ever, play a fundamental role in countering all forms of intolerance and bias, including Islamophobia. The campus atmosphere acts as a social laboratory or a model for intercultural interaction. Recently, there has been sporadic demonstrations and campaigns on college campuses to support Muslims students whenever there is an episode of intolerance against them (Schaidle, 2016). However, the contemporary challenge of Islamophobia is not viewed as a center or urgent issue to students, faculty, or college leaders.

The current rhetoric against Muslims in the media, especially the rhetoric coming from the most recent presidential campaign and administration, will have damaging effects on Muslim students. These students will feel oppressed and voiceless to speak up against their fear and safety within their school environment and local communities. Even before the attacks in Orlando and California, Muslim students across the nation were targets for hatred and violence by certain individuals and groups. Anti-Muslim graffiti and banners were posted at the American University in Washington, DC, and a threat of "I will kill a Muslim" at Virginia Tech caused unprecedented measures by the campus police to protect students. Muslim students avoided visiting the Boston bombing site due to verbal insult and threats that they were receiving, most noticeably toward female students who were wearing hijab (Bishop, 2015).

Higher education institutions should step forward and provide programs to deal with the increased insult and bias against Muslim students on college campuses. Certainly, there is no magic wand that can fix discrimination against Muslim students; however, universities should stand with Muslim students during these difficult times. Putting together programs that highlight greater cultural awareness and training faculty and staff to appreciate Muslim students' identities and culture will go long way in resolving inter-communal conflicts and rooting out stereotyping against Muslim students. Conversely, alienating Muslim students by using political rhetoric and making them feel that they need to defend their religion will have devastating consequences in our culture and on what we stand for as a nation.

Luckily, leaders of higher education institutions can use their influence to engage their students and faculty with the surrounding communities to address deliberate discrimination and anti-Islamic rhetoric against Muslim students. Furthermore, there have been more welcoming signs of Muslim support by the general public in response to the raging insult and bigotry by few individual and groups. The Texas Muslim student who designed a clock and got arrested was invited to the White House under President Obama's administration and to MIT, his future dream school. In solidarity of Muslim girls who wear hijab, non-Muslim high school girls are coming to school wearing hijab also (Winegar, 2016). If this trend continues, especially in our schools, then Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of being a unified nation has been fulfilled indeed.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of race, gender, and equality is still a sensitive issue to many. In order to address the new alarming bigotry against Muslims, we need to recognize and accept the fact that Islamophobia is a form of racism and utilize the tools that have been put in place at schools to fight other forms of racism. The success of fighting Islamophobia at schools depends on the level of involvement of teachers and school administrators in finding solutions such as adding multi-cultural dimension to the curriculum. Many teachers across the country have reported that teacher preparation programs or school districts training did not prepare them to advance a multi-cultural curriculum (Rizga, 2016).

Teacher preparation programs should provide a platform where students have an opportunity to learn the diverse history and culture of Muslims. Such a platform can be part of a curriculum that teaches about religions and not necessarily a religious education, which some may consider indoctrination of religious beliefs. The specific need to counter Islamophobia in public schools must be recognized at all levels of education since human rights and dignity for all is one of our most important legacies as a free nation.

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CARIME BERSH

7. A VOICE WITH AN ECHO THAT NOBODY HEARD… BUT…

“Aaahhhhhhhh!” I yelled as I fell into this abyss of darkness, completely out of control… “Aaahhhhhh!” I heard my own echo, but nobody else did. Nobody cared.

It all began in June 2012. I had been a university professor for eight years—somewhat respected, with a PhD in education, up the ladder toward promotion and tenure just around the corner. Then, the recession hit the doors of our institution. When money is scarce, higher education (especially post-graduate education) becomes a luxury. Enrollment dropped, programs were closed, and 66 tenure-track faculty members were reduced-in-force. I was one of them.

Never, never, never had I thought that I would be unemployed! It was a shock. However, at first, I thought that I would get another job right away, but weeks turned into months, and months into years—four years, to be precise! Ten job applications turned into 100, 100 into 200, and 200 into 287!

Anxiety and uncertainty gradually turned into anguish, despair, and agony. I could confidently say that my curriculum vitae was relatively impressive. Then why didn’t I get any job offers? Perhaps it was my name? *Luz Carime Bersh*… It doesn’t sound particularly “American,” does it? Why would it? It is Spanish, Arabic, and Jewish—in that order. Could my name have anything to do with the lack of opportunity to get back on track? I sometimes wondered.

The agony transformed into deep disappointment and unbearable pain as many of my former colleagues with whom I had shared so many personal and professional experiences gave me the cold shoulder. “I would love to meet you at Starbucks for coffee like we often did. My treat,” I offered a close former colleague who also happened to live just 15 minutes away from where I was staying temporarily. No answer. Three emails later, I got a response: “Yes, coffee… but it will have to be next year, in June, because I’m going to be very busy until then.” I gave her the benefit of the doubt. I *had* to; facing exclusion was too painful to admit. Nine months passed by, and June came… silence. I had disappeared from her world. We never had coffee again. Stab.

Those who had been somewhat sympathetic at the beginning of my “downfall” were too busy to keep in touch and gradually also faded away from my life. So did friends. I was losing “value”; I did not belong practically anywhere… I was becoming invisible. Sure, there are far worse things than becoming invisible and being deserted by the people closest to you, people who once enjoyed your company and appreciated you… but let me tell you; invisibility hurts deep, deep, deep.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 51–55.

Embarrassingly, I admit that, at that time, I couldn't empathize with anybody who would share a similar experience. I was so overwhelmed with pain and the feeling of being abandoned and shunned like trash, invisible trash, that I could hardly even think! Now, having been in that situation and then being fortunate enough to have stepped out of that seemingly endless world of non-belonging, invisibility, and pain, I can really get into other people's shoes.

"Loudness" is a tool to fight against invisibility. Some marginalized groups, especially within minority cultures, are "loud" in the way that they speak and express themselves—"loud" in the way they dress, accessorize, and do their hair—"loud" in the way they act… because being invisible hurts, hurts deep, as I've said before, so you feel the urge to yell, "LOOK AT ME! Hear my voice! And if you can't hear my voice, hear *our* voices so that *We* are not the only ones who hear our own echo. *We* matter; *We* also have a right to belong to this classroom, to this community, to this society. *We* have a right to belong!"… And we do.

Back to my story: prolonged uncertainty, heightened anxiety, dwindling opportunities, increased poverty and debt, and the constant fear of inevitable homelessness took away the one powerful tool that I had to keep striving; I could no longer think clearly. My thoughts became scattered and often aimless. My increasingly reduced concentration span focused on the basic instincts of survival. What would I eat, and where would I live once I ran out of my retirement funds?

I still can't fathom how some people manage to live permanently on welfare as many accusatory voices proclaim, because I only got three months of unemployment benefits: $1,100 a month. One day, I got a letter stating that I was no longer receiving unemployment benefits. No explanation, cold turkey. No income, yet I continued to pay taxes. Surprise? It was for me!

I moved 12 times in four years, living in small efficiencies, friends' couches or basements, on loaned mattresses, with my basic belongings in a suitcase, while my "home" was stored in boxes in a 10x10 storage unit two hours away. Panic often struck when I saw homeless people pushing all their belongings in their stolen Walmart carts. We dare not look at them… out of fear, out of guilt, out of shame. It is better to look the other way, right? It is better to pretend that they are invisible… hmmm… So this is how it feels? I was becoming one of them. Images of myself roaming endlessly in the streets and sleeping under bridges woke me up in the middle of the night. What would I do when my retirement funds were all gone? There was no Prince Charming coming to the rescue, and family was too far away, in a different country in South America, themselves struggling to make ends meet.

My once rich creativity vanished as well. My highly evolved humanistic beliefs and paradigms were brutally shaken, cracked, and even mutilated. That sacred place where my highest truths used to abide—where my human experience fully expanded—where my spiritual self became more aware of itself and continuously evolved—was no longer aligned with the reality that I was experiencing.

My once noble academic goals were placed in the backseat, and I grieved that I would never get them back. Once at the top of my priorities, they became worthless.

I frantically clung onto the idea that I would, again, someday recover my career to which I had dedicated a third of my life and which had thus become an essential part of my identity. There were many days of hopelessness, and the reality that it was all over was almost impossible to deny with each passing year of unemployment. Once a "sophisticated professor," I had been demoted into an invisible *loser*. Nobody wanted me; nobody cared. I was aware, though, that I was undergoing an inconvenient and unwanted metamorphosis. I finally understood Kafka! Only I wasn't becoming an insect; I was becoming nobody.

Along with struggling with debt and fighting tooth and nail against poverty, I was also tangled up between struggling for my own emotional survival, looking frantically for a job (*any* job), and maintaining at least a basic level of mental sanity. I was unable to care for anybody else. Did it ever cross my mind how so many children and youth who experience *real* homelessness, *real* hunger, *total* abandonment, invisibility, who also struggled to survive emotionally while bravely still dragging themselves to school? No. I'm sorry. I couldn't because I just *couldn't*. My ability to reflect on these issues and empathize with others was completely out of the scope of my awareness.

Now, getting back on track, rebuilding myself again, I can. I can *think* again. Getting back into a position of safety and belonging allows me to reflect on my experience and how it relates to others. My higher levels of humanistic values are returning to where they once belonged, and now I *can* empathize. As an educator, I especially think about what the many children and youth stricken by poverty are experiencing. Living at the edge of defeat with a label of *loser* etched on your chest like a scarlet letter is incapacitating cognitively, emotionally, socially, and even physically. How can you *think* under those circumstances? How can you *learn*? How can you *imagine* possibilities? How can you *care*? There is no hope for self-actualization because, when you are stuck at the bottom of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, you *are* stuck.

"Well, pull yourself together, and get out of that rut! This is the land of opportunity, and everyone has an opportunity to succeed if you *work hard* enough!" How many times have we heard that condemnation? Try getting an opportunity when you are an unwanted, shunned, invisible "nobody"… because you are poor… and nobody cares. Opportunity eludes you and only gets further and further out of reach, even if you have the courage to persist, even if you pick yourself up endless times, even if you knock on 287 doors that never open, even if you pray and pray and pray.

True, although I was born in Colombia, I have become an American citizen, and I am extremely grateful to have been given many opportunities. I was fortunate. I have always been legally in this country, I have spoken English fluently since I was a little girl, I have had the privilege of an excellent education, I come from a middle-class nuclear family, I could afford to pay a lawyer a considerable amount to get my citizenship… and I'm White. It is also true that it hasn't been easy working through an unknown system in a privilege-tiered society and suffering the pains innate to experiencing assimilation and finding a comfortable balance of cultural syncretism.

It wasn’t easy *at all* jumping through the hundreds of hoops to become a US citizen, an experience that many do not understand either. However, I am not and do not want to speak from the position of the self-made marginalized Latina immigrant. That is a story that has been told many times, and my story is not about being a marginalized minority *because* I am a Latina immigrant.

My common intersection with other marginalized groups has been being stricken by poverty—not because we chose to but because that is the way it happens to different people for different reasons. My common ground with other marginalized groups came from being shunned from society—becoming an outcast because of being unemployed, homeless, not belonging, being invisible, feeling hopeless.

If you do your homework, yet nothing happens—if you persist on knocking on doors and no one answers—if you yell in despair and the only thing you hear back is your own echo—if nobody cares—anger begins to build up. It is *not* fair! Injustice breeds anger, and anger… could potentially breed violence? I started getting glimpses of insights about school violence and violence in general.

Anger cannot be underestimated; it has the power of overshadowing deeply engrained moral values and altruistic pursuits. When anger takes over, somebody has to pay, right? I know; yes… this is not a very Christian or Jewish or Catholic or Buddhist, or even just a plain morally and ethically acceptable thought… but remember: when you are tossed around in the whirlpool of causes and effects of poverty, you can’t think clearly. You are unable to care about anything or anybody but meeting your basic needs. So, the innocent bystander in the Walmart’s waiting line ready to cash out a cartful of healthy groceries becomes the *victim* of your angry look, while you are literally counting pennies to pay for bread, eggs and tuna.

I cannot justify violence under any circumstances (that I can think of… right now). It is a value that sits at the core of my beliefs. However, as I mentioned earlier, I got an insight here and there about the origins of anger: Injustice and being marginalized by a tacit caste system, where those at the bottom are practically the untouchables, breeds anger… and yes, “Ahhhhhh!” we yell. We are reduced to a voice with an echo that nobody hears and nobody cares about.

Later, these insights became reflections about plausible explanations for the root of some of the heinous and senseless massacres that have happened in schools and in the streets, in movies and in malls. What did the perpetrators have in common? Anger, lack of mental clarity, being outcasts, not belonging, being invisible. Poverty?—Just a random thought, but one which is worth assessing. We need to further explore this phenomenon more in depth because, if it is our own indifference that is generating these savage injustices, we are contributing to a society that generates anger, which can potentially manifest in acts of violence against itself, triggering *anyone* who represents “It.”

It is important to be critical, but being critical and not doing anything about it makes me cynical. Life has given me the opportunity to rise again and to rebuild my life. I am recovering my identity as an educator, and as I am getting back in my career track. I am also recovering my voice. Ironically, I am somewhat grateful for the horrible experience that I went through during my four years of unemployment because living through it allowed me to deeply understand how it feels to lose almost everything, even my own voice. Now, as my new voice emerges, it envelopes the voices of many others who don't have a venue to get theirs heard.

As an educator, I am now standing in a position in which I can and need to raise awareness about how homelessness, invisibility, fear, and all of the other factors that are associated with poverty hinder a person's ability to think, to learn, to create, and to empathize. However, raising awareness is not enough. I believe that taking action not just for the sake of the children and youth who are suffering but also for the sake of the health of society at large is not just a must. I happen to believe, like Nel Noddings, that caring is a moral imperative! Kids spend a good deal of their time in school. This creates the opportunity for teachers to perpetuate or disrupt injustice in their own classrooms.

When we hear a child yell, we have the moral imperative to listen. When he is covered with the cloak of invisibility, we have the moral imperative to look at him. When he is being shunned like trash, we have the moral imperative to speak up on his behalf and teach about caring and belonging. As educators, we also have the moral imperative to awaken our students' sensitivity to understanding each others' experiences and where we are coming from. This is a critical step toward developing culturally responsive classrooms with humanist values at the core of the curriculum, around which everything else revolves.

Creating caring culturally responsive classroom communities opens the space for children and youth coming from marginalized positions to have a place where they can feel they belong—where they are heard and they are visible. These classrooms may be the only space where these kids are valued. As I mentioned before, anger is powerful and cannot be underestimated. However, *caring* is more powerful than anger, and it can transform potential violence into hope. Educators: We may not be able change what happens in our students' lives outside of school, but we do have the power to transform realities within our own classrooms. We can give hope by opening windows to imagine possibility.

This is what happened to me when I got a job offer. Thank you. It didn't change my external reality right away, but it gave me hope and opened that window to imagine possibility… the possibility of self-actualization. So here I am, rebuilding myself and recreating a new life. I don't yell anymore. I don't need to. I have reclaimed my voice, and its echo is expanding… Can you hear it?

JOSEPH R. JONES

8. GROWING UP GAY IN GEORGIA

What Can We Learn from Luke's Story?

Growing up can be problematic for a number of students. Many adolescents struggle with peer pressure, popularity, and academics, among numerous other typical challenges that make adolescence difficult. Being non-heterosexual adds more problems to a number of adolescents growing up. According to GLSEN (2015), 57.6% of LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 43.3% because of their gender expression. Moreover, 31.8% of LGBTQ+ students missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and 10% missed four or more days in the past month. The data gets more troubling. Over a third avoided gender-segregated spaces in school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (bathrooms: 39.4%; locker rooms: 37.9%).

In terms of language, the organization reports that 98.1% of LGBTQ+ students heard the word *gay* used in a negative way (e.g., "that's so gay") at school; 67.4% heard these remarks frequently or often, and 93.4% reported that they felt distressed because of this language. Also, 95.8% of LGBTQ+ students heard other types of homophobic remarks (e.g., the *F* word), and 58.8% heard this type of language frequently or often. The most troubling data states that many students also regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (31%). Growing up identifying as non-heterosexual can be a difficult time for many students.

Recently, I met a young man whom I will call Luke. At age 20, he was enjoying his college years as a gay man, which are antithetical to his middle and high school years. Luke is a Georgia resident who grew up in a rural part of the state. His adolescent years are inundated with being harassed because of his sexual orientation. He was repeatedly shoved into lockers, spat on, and ridiculed. He hated going to school and often skipped because he was too afraid of what others were going to do.

However, the hatred only came from a few individual males. But those individuals were in all of his classes, and it was difficult to avoid them. One particular bully was extremely masculine, according to traditional standards. He played on several athletic teams for the school and seemed to meet all of the stereotypical jock attributes. Luke was his regular target. He would shove Luke, trip him in hallway, and hold Luke down and "pretend to perform sexual acts" against Luke. These behaviors are not atypical of what a student who identifies as non-heterosexual may encounter on a daily basis.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 57–59.

Luke refused to go to the bathroom between classes. He always had a teacher who would allow him to go during her class because she would recognize the bullying behavior; thus, she became a way to help Luke navigate the difficulties of being harassed.

Not only was school hard, but growing up gay in the South can also be problematic from a religious place. A number of gay students experience the separation of being gay and being a Christian. Non-heterosexual identities are not welcome in a number of Southern churches. As such, many gay Christians must leave their congregations and practice their faith without the support of a mutually believing congregation. Moreover, many gay Christians struggle with their sexuality and attempt to “pray away the gay,” which is a common saying in Christian circles. In attempting to “pray away the gay,” these individuals continue to struggle with having to connect both identities, being Christian and being gay.

In Luke’s case, he did attempt to “pray away the gay” because his belief in God was an extremely important aspect of his identity and worldview. According to him, he spent most nights crying himself to sleep as a middle school kid because he was told that gay people couldn’t be devout followers and gay at the same time. Later, Luke was able to reconcile these two identities, and he is actively involved in a Baptist church. “It was not easy,” Luke said, “but eventually, I recognized the true love of God for me, his created being.”

Luke’s journey provides us an insight into how we should prepare our students to create safe educational spaces for non-heterosexual identities. First, I posit that most multicultural pedagogical practices used in classrooms do not provide the space for multiple identities. Luke identifies as gay and as a Christian, two important aspects of his identity. Thus, we must consider how multiple identities combine to create a student’s worldview. I postulate that current practices only focus on one identity marker per student. In this manner, we send a message that multiple identities are not possible or are not accepted. Second, we should prepare spaces to question social norms. For example, are there activities that can guide discussions that question the idea of being a gay Christian or other identities that are traditionally viewed as antithetical? I postulate that we must use our pedagogy as dialogic spaces for students to grapple with social norms and accepted belief systems. Change can only occur when individuals are allowed to engage in those difficult conversations. Third, Luke’s journey teaches us that communities matter. Luke’s childhood was surrounded by a strong Southern culture. Therefore, rural Southern culture and belief systems dictated how Luke was treated. Moreover, a strong Protestant faith, which is embedded in Southern culture, also impacted his childhood. Thus, we must comprehend how communities influence how individuals view difference. We must teach our students how to navigate community belief systems when attempting to create a fully inclusive educational setting.

K-12 schools and college campuses are inundated with homophobic language. The other day, I noticed these words written on a student advertisement board on a college campus in Alabama: “(A student’s full name) is a (a derogatory word for gay men), but his girlfriend doesn't know." On the same campus, I noted 24 times that I heard homophobic language. I also heard language directed toward Muslim students, students with special needs, and women. As with most college campuses, this campus had a Chief Diversity Officer, an Office of Diversity, and advertised future diversity programs. Also similar to other college campuses, there is a great need to create a more inclusive setting for all students, regardless of difference.

In creating an inclusive space, we must consider how multiple identities influences our policies and pedagogy. We must refuse to view diversity practices from a single-identity model. We should also create spaces that engender difficult conversations about social norms and the power of social norms on our identities. Finally, communities matter. It is important to recognize how a community influences the belief systems about difference.

CHAMAREE DE SILVA

9. ACROSS THE OCEANS

A Personal Reflection of an Academic Journey

CAN YOU GIVE US ADVICE ON HOW TO FIND HUSBANDS THAT WILL SUPPORT OUR CAREERS?

This one stumped me. All of the female friends in my close circle have husbands who would go above and beyond supporting their wives' careers. The same goes for my close circle of male friends; one who earns a six-figure salary mentioned how he would like to be a "house husband," if needed to be, when his wife starts her career.

There were 11 undergraduate students in that small classroom, 10 female and one male. "The panel" consisted of three female faculty members from chemistry, mathematics, and physics. I had just conveyed to them how my spouse has followed me through my career moves. Here, my colleagues and I had been invited to talk to the Women In Mathematics and Science (WIMS) organization at the university where I teach—a liberal arts college in the South. Our discussion was based upon life in graduate school and beyond. The female student who raised this question was one of the best and the brightest that our university offers. *This* was her question.

It is not in my nature to be often reflective on everyday matters pertaining to being a female or being a minority based on the color of my skin. Perhaps it is because I come from a different background compared to most of my students and colleagues in the US I attended a public, all-female school throughout my primary and secondary education in Sri Lanka. There were 3000+ students in my school, K-12. All of my teachers were female. All of the teachers who taught chemistry, mathematics, and physics had earned bachelor's degrees in their disciplines—no small feat, considering that they had scored in roughly the top 15% in the country during university admissions exams. This is because, every year, high schoolers are admitted to universities in Sri Lanka based on their university admissions exam scores and nothing else. And being in a small country with few universities, a student has to obtain top grades in the country to enter one.

I was never told that I could not excel in science and mathematics because I am female. I did not have the mindset that *anyone* would think so. This is the reflection that I brought to the US when I was 20 years old to attend a large, public research university.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 61–64.

DO YOU WATCH THE BIG BANG THEORY?

I felt a touch on my shoulder and a whisper in my ear. The father of a prospective freshman was smiling just six inches away from my face, uttering this question. I felt uncomfortable, considering the proximity of this stranger from me. It was the day that hundreds of university-admitted high schoolers visit the university where I teach in order to make a decision on which university they would ultimately attend. Each department had laid out tables with information about their majors, requirements, and research opportunities, and I was standing next to the table with information about our physics program. During these events, I am often mistaken as an undergraduate student by parents and students alike. Although I take it as a compliment that I look 15 years younger than I am, it can get old pretty quickly in a professional setting. This parent was surprised to learn afterwards that I was a faculty member, but his behavior was inappropriate nonetheless. I casually mentioned this incident at a department meeting where all my colleagues are male. "They don't think a small-made, dark-skinned woman can be a professor," a colleague mumbled in disapproval.

I barely spoke any English when I first started college, but that did not deter one of my physics professors from inviting me to join his laboratory, where rooms in his lab had hundreds of neatly arranged nails, washers, and tools. One of my projects was to determine how dew forms in spider webs. I was asked to make my own artificial web, including a metal holder to contain it. To that end, my professor taught me how to use the lathe and the mill. "Back in my day…" he told me numerous stories on the importance of learning machinery skills. Although many might not expect a nearly retired male professor to teach a female freshman how to use machinery, the fact that I had a darker skin, or that I was female, did not matter to him. He was my mentor in physics and in life, and I can still picture him riding a bicycle to work in a full suit, in the hot Arizona sun. His interactions with me were my introduction to the science culture in the US, and it did not deviate from what I had already perceived during childhood.

YOU ARE THE KIND OF PEOPLE WE WANT IN THIS COUNTRY

A young Caucasian student sat before me. He was a "regular" during office hours. In addition to physics content, we discussed current events and shared personal stories. During his second semester taking physics with me, I casually discussed with him the process that I went through to obtain my permanent residency status in the US He listened intently, occasionally shaking his head in disbelief. I know him to be very conservative when it comes to social policies in the country. Yet, he was sympathetic and annoyed that I had to "go through all this trouble" to become a Green Card holder. He was quite surprised and wished that there was a clearer and easier path for me to obtain the status. He genuinely wanted me to be in the US permanently, and the fact that I was born elsewhere or that I look different from him did not matter when he uttered this comment. Although my peers from undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral years often think how being a female, dark-skinned, foreign physics professor in the South might be difficult, so far, my experience has been quite the opposite.

Up until I joined the faculty of a private university in the South, my time in the US was spent in large, public research universities in the Southwest and the Midwest as a student or a researcher. My research area is in biophysics, and everyone I meet who is not in my field is usually impressed that I study the subject. Somehow, "biophysics" sounds scary to many folks I meet, including friends and acquaintances who are not in academia. It is a similar reaction that I receive when I mention my current profession as a physics professor. However, I have yet to hear any negative remarks. The reactions so far have been along the lines of "You must be really smart," "I couldn't do what you do," "I hated physics in high school," or "Let me shake your hand again." Given that I'm in the Deep South, my colleagues elsewhere have mentioned how "common folk" must be intimidated by me. However, I have received nothing but praise and warmth so far.

Some years ago, many of my colleagues, along with myself, considered one male colleague in a supervisory position to be misogynistic. This person's attitude towards women's ability in science was questionable in that he often dismissed ideas from female team members and showed a clear difference between how he accepted ideas from men and women. A few years into the project that we were working on, a new male colleague joined the collaboration, and we noticed that the supervisor was treating him the same way he would treat female team members. Now, he didn't treat *all* women this way. What was interesting for me to realize—and this was quite eye-opening—is that the supervisor had questionable attitude toward those who lacked authority and who were timid and submissive. In other words, he was reacting to stereotypical male and female personalities of his team members. It didn't matter whether the colleagues were male or female for him to be condescending toward them, but it was their personalities.

When I started interviewing for faculty jobs for the first time, I spoke to a female friend who was going through the same process. Not only did she warn me to avoid colleges and departments that are predominantly male, but she also noted how most physics departments would fall into that category. Again, it's not in my nature to notice such facts, and it was well into day two of the three-day interview at my current institution when I realized that all six members in my search committee were male. However, everyone I met and spoke with at the interview was incredibly supportive and pleasant, and I promptly forgot my friend's warning. I'm glad that I did.

My family encouraged me to go into sciences from a very young age. My mother recalled recently that, when I was very young, I had asked my father what he wanted me to be when I grow up. He had said, "I would like you to be a physics professor." Neither my father nor I remember this conversation, but I grew up with this mindset. This may have been the reason that I don't look through a lens of a preconceived notion that I am being marginalized because of my gender. It certainly doesn't mean that the issue is not valid but simply that I don't see the world of academia in the way that some of my peers and colleagues who grew up in US do. Although I cannot speak for all women in Sri Lanka, my experience in early life has shaped the way I perceive academia and life.

As I was growing up, everyone I knew was dark-skinned. Sri Lanka, unlike the US, is quite homogenous when it comes to skin color. When I started my undergraduate career, I entered a world with different ethnic backgrounds from me. Looking back, I never felt that I could be discriminated against in academia or in life. I didn't know it was even an issue. My first friends group in college was composed of three Caucasian American males and a Japanese female international student. It didn't even occur to me that the five of us look different (apart from the clear height difference!) or that maybe we could be treated differently for that reason. This has served me well so far in life in that I have friends from all walks of life—from different nationalities, ethnicities, faiths (or the lack thereof), genders and sexual orientations (across the spectrum), and ages—and in that I am able to approach everyone I meet without feeling marginalized. Perhaps for that reason, they approach me the same way and not see me any differently—i.e., see me as “one of them,” whoever they may be.

The world of academia may include racists, misogynists, and bigots, but I don't look through a lens of hypersensitivity. Academics with various hatreds toward me or others may cross my path now and then, but my world is filled with wonderful colleagues and students who support my career, believe in my professional path, and value me as a colleague and a teacher. And for that, I am grateful.

KERRY HARDING AND JULIE JONES

10. GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM

The Making of a Mindset

I remember the first time that I heard it. I was 15, and we had just moved from a working class city in the Northeast to a small town in the Southeast. “Is it true?” a classmate asked me. “Are Yankees really rude?” It wasn’t the worst stereotype that someone could level. No one was afraid of me, and I was not in danger. And as a White student, I was not yet aware of the unfair societal privilege that my appearance would inadvertently confer. But the question still stung. “Why would you think that?” I asked with confusion, causing the now visibly embarrassed classmate to mutter an apology and walk away. How could anyone think that about my people?

This was in the late 1980s, before the Internet, when the world was more insulated. In this small traditional Southern town, where families had spent generations, I was a slightly exotic and possibly bewildering addition to the local high school. I looked different, my accent was different and hard to follow, and even my mannerisms were different. In addition to what seemed to be outward eccentricities, the beliefs and opinions that I espoused in class discussions were sometimes at odds with my classmates, resulting in startled or unsettled reactions. For example, in that year’s presidential election between George H. Bush and Michael Dukakis, what were mainstream political beliefs in my hometown were apparently fringe beliefs among most White voters in my new town.

This is not a judgment on Southern culture or small towns. As a child with a father from South Carolina, I had spent my formative years on the other side of this issue, serving as a cultural translator on behalf of Southerners. My mixed cultural background often left me with one foot on each side, without really feeling a true sense of belonging in either. I bristled at generalizations levied at the South, regardless of intention. It was untrue, for example, that the South was a quaint and rural land full of simple folk, isolated from mainstream technology. And while the Civil Rights Movement, which was only 20 years old at the time, was born from long-term systematic racism and persecution, it seemed unfair to hear blanket statements about Southerners’ presumed beliefs while simultaneously overlooking racism in the North. I felt that it was my job to set the record straight, lest they misunderstand an entire group of people whom they had never met. They could not know and love them like I did. It pains me to say that the people whom I corrected were not always children even though I was a child. The stereotype of the rude Yankee, when it was brought to my attention, took various forms. Most of the time,

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 65–84.

it came from an honest lack of experience and understanding. On occasion, it took the form of a deliberately offensive assertion. Most people, I think, were genuinely curious, and they were trying to find a way to understand the disconnect between their belief versus my quiet, soft-spoken presence in front of them. It was meant as a compliment that I was often considered to be "one of the good ones," the exception to the rule.

I spent some time trying to figure out what the rude Yankee stereotype was based on because I never had the nerve to ask what it meant. I concluded that two forces were driving this cultural belief: a social script and a historical narrative. The concept of polite behavior is subjective and culturally specific; not only is this script the guide for our own behavior within our group, but it also serves as an interpretative lens for the behavior of others. Take, for example, the usage of the honorifics *ma'am* and *sir*. These were terms that were not in use in my culture unless a child was actually trying to show disrespect, almost in the vein of *your highness*. My sister inadvertently discovered this social script mismatch in class one day. After replying, "Yes," to a question, her teacher raised an eyebrow and firmly asked, "Yes, what?" Confused, my sister paused before submitting, "Yes… that's correct?" "Yes, ma'am!" came the sharp correction. I imagine that a Southern child replying, "Yes, sir," to a teacher in parts of the Northeast could similarly receive a verbal rebuke for impolite language, based on a conflict of social scripts.

In terms of the historical narrative, it quickly came to my attention in history class that the Civil War was a topic of intense passion to some of my classmates. In an American history class that was all white, strong opinions were expressed at times by a few who called it "The War of Northern Aggression." Within that particular shared narrative—one that presumably bridged generations, as cultural transmissions tend to do—Yankees were the takers, people who had invaded to burn and pillage and then impose systemic changes. For those who held to that narrative, it occurred to me that my identity would stay trapped within it, hence the "rude" label.

Perhaps there was more to the stereotype of the rude Yankee, but, regardless of its origins, it reflected limited firsthand experience with the humans who wore the label "Yankee", and it also reflected a lack of self-cognizance of the subjectivity of one's own social script. One negative outcome of this, which arose from my feelings of vulnerability, is that I started to form a stereotype of my own as a kneejerk reaction. I began to believe, at 15, that Southerners, as a monolithic entity, didn't like Yankees. The critical element in this development is that, when I look back on it, only a handful of people actually made these remarks, along with a few other jokes and names that I can't print. But the striking element in this was the quantity of people who didn't engage in these behaviors because those people didn't say anything at all. We've all probably found ourselves in the position of being bystanders because we're busy, distracted, or uncomfortable or because we simply assume that our own inner disgust is a palatable one to the crowd. But all I heard was silence, which can easily turn into a false belief of complicity—a sense of "they."

Lest you assume that I'm wallowing in feelings of persecution based on a regional stereotype—probably one of the mildest that a person could be confronted with—I quickly became aware that, unlike many ethnic minorities, I could simply change the clues of my identity so that I could camouflage. I think that the first thing that I did was to change the major features of my accent and slow down my rate of speech although that change was necessary for communication purposes anyway. Remember, this was before the Internet made the world a smaller place—when we were all far less savvy to how other people look and sound. But I also tried to camouflage to avoid drawing negative attention to myself, based on what I had surmised about the value of my identity. This overall experience has shaped how I view groups of people. Because I understood what it felt like to be on the outside of a cultural mainstream, I became drawn to other people who appeared to be in similar situations, and I felt empathy for them.

Years have passed, and my reflections as both an adult and a parent have led me to a search for why generalizations and stereotypes develop. Carlos E. Cortes, Professor Emeritus in history and diversity workshop presenter, makes a distinction between generalizations and stereotypes. While generalizations are natural human constructs that strive to distinguish between groups of people, stereotypes are persistent beliefs about entire groups of people (Cortes, 2001). Whereas generalizations are found in statements such as "Many people" or "Some people" and are prone to change as new evidence counters them, stereotypes are found in statements that imply "all of these people." It is true that some Yankees are loud and that many speak in a direct manner, but the group is so diverse that one cannot say that Yankees are uniformly loud or direct—and certainly not rude. I surmised that a lack of personal experience with a variety of people from specific groups must be the supporting force underneath stereotypes, in addition to the unchallenged belief that one's cultural script is morally superior.

UNDERSTANDING GENERALIZATIONS AND STEREOTYPES

As an educator, I can't help but see this situation through the lens of cognitive psychology, namely the ideas of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. At the heart of Piaget's cognitive theory of learning is the existence of schemes—i.e., categorized mental folders of acquired knowledge. Schemes allow us to make sense of the world so that we can identify patterns rather than becoming overwhelmed by a barrage of details; schemes enable us to feel safe in our navigation through life by helping us see the forest instead of just the trees. When new information is encountered that challenges the assumption of a scheme and cannot be assimilated into the patterns that we've already identified, the learner experiences a state of mental disequilibrium. Sometimes, the response is to reject the new information as an unlikely exception to our beliefs. But when a person is able to rewrite and broaden their mental scheme to accommodate this new information, then learning has occurred.

When my husband moved to the United States from England, he had many positive experiences with people who were curious about his cultural identity, but some had faulty assumptions. Having a scheme to define our understanding of "English people" is necessary so that we can distinguish them from, say, Namibian people. The scheme may contain acquired facts relating to categories such as language, cultural practices, historical knowledge, and government. The sources of these facts are likely to vary, and sometimes our facts turn out to be false after all.

The top three topics of interest that my husband experienced when speaking to Americans related to the Queen, tea, and rainy weather. Sometimes, people were surprised to learn that he didn't like tea or that it wasn't particularly rainy where he was from. On one occasion, someone commented to him that an acquaintance lived in Wales, England, which gave my husband the chance to explain that Wales was not part of England and that, rather, they were two separate parts of the United Kingdom. In these situations, the new information that he presented in these interactions caused temporary disequilibrium, which then led to accommodation of the new information, broadening the mental scheme for "things I know about England."

Drawing on the sociocultural ideas of psychologist Lev Vygotsky, it is clear that, while much of the scheme's information likely came from media, books, or information obtained from others, it was the direct social interaction between my husband and other people that facilitated this new learning. Educators often use the word *scaffolding* to describe interactions between a potential learner and another person who possesses more information, whereby the latter helps the former learn. It's essential to note that this is not a passive acceptance of knowledge but rather an active and dynamic process. The learner is seeking to make meaning—work on scheme maintenance and expansion, if you will—and the social interactions provide a type of facilitation that allows active learning to take place in a meaningful and accessible manner.

When I was in college, I worked at the guest services desk in a dormitory. I developed a friendship with one of the security guards, also a student, and as I knew that he was from India, I often asked him questions about his culture. One day in conversation, I made reference, albeit a very polite one, to his Muslim faith. There was a moment of surprise on his face before he said, "Kerry, I'm not Muslim. I'm a Sikh." My mental scheme for religions based on my limited life experience did not include an entry for Sikhism, so when I encountered his style of dress, in the context of his country of origin, I assimilated that into what I knew about Islam, which was also very limited. The conversation could have gone badly. I suppose the way in which I made the remark revealed no ill will but clearly showed a fundamental lack of understanding along with an open mind. "Do you understand the difference? Would you like me to explain it to you?" he asked. What followed was an enlightening and kind explanation of the history of Sikhism and its relationship with other religions, including explanations of why he had long hair enclosed in a turban (a *dastaar*). Not only did my friend Singh provide the scaffolding that I needed to broaden my understanding of religion, but it then allowed me to share it with other people who had never met a Sikh and who might otherwise feel uncertain in one's presence. It's strange how people can often feel nervous or even fearful in the presence of cultures that are wholly unfamiliar. My learning was instigated by a clumsy but well-intentioned error on my part, and it was scaffolded, or helped along, with the kind patience of my friend in a safe learning space. The result, aside from my reorganization of schemes, was that I now understood something about a group of people who were very different to me yet very much the same in many ways. I concluded that, if Singh was a Sikh, then Sikhs must be good people. Having a positive experience like this should lead to an overhaul of our assumptions, but it's not always the case. Consider these statements. Have you ever heard someone say,

- "He's black but wellspoken."
- "She has a thick Southern accent, but she's very smart."
- "He's gay, but he's not in your face."
- "He's incredibly smart, but he has good social skills."
- "She's rich, but she's not snobby."
- In my case, it was simply, "She's a Yankee, but she's nice."

In these cases, personal experiences that challenge preexisting assumptions about groups of people (e.g., that rich people are snobby) are simply being treated as an exception to a rule. The new information is simply assimilated into old schemes, so meaningful learning hasn't really taken place.

In more recent years, I taught adult English language learners as a volunteer with a literacy nonprofit. My students came from a wide variety of countries and walks of life. Some had lived in the United States for a long time, and others were new to the country. As their educational levels, background knowledge about US history, and life experiences varied so widely, the class was often infused with conversations about current events, historic events, ordinary topics of cultural currency, and colloquialisms. Some of our most meaningful conversations related to their experiences as outsiders. In this forum, we all had the experience of providing a learning scaffold and being the beneficiary of a learning scaffold. In this cooperative fashion, a great deal of assimilation and accommodation of new information occurred, and people had the emotional validation that comes from feeling heard.

While I began this teaching experience as a person who was very interested in other cultures and other people's stories, my eagerness and sincerity were not enough to create the environment of sharing that I have described. It took a certain amount of time to build relationships with my students and to establish an atmosphere and culture of trust. I found that it was important to keep putting myself out there in terms of asking respectful cultural questions, showing an interest in their backgrounds, and encouraging them to share personal connections to lesson topics. I think that, in many cases, it required me to step out of the role of the teacher who dispenses knowledge to the role of a listener who does not judge against my own social script. It's how my class found ourselves, one night, listening to a student describe smearing Vick's VapoRub on his legs in the Southwestern desert to deter snakes and scorpions from biting him as he slept on the exposed ground. In that moment, it didn't matter what anyone's moral script or historical narrative was regarding undocumented immigration. That moment was about a vulnerable experience shared freely in trust by someone whom we all liked. I remember feeling unsettled by it afterwards because of the thought that I could easily be that student in another life; our shared experiences as a class had underlined our common humanity, which was no small thing.

Accommodating new information or rewriting our previous understanding does not necessarily equate to throwing all of one's beliefs or understanding out the window. In many cases, it simply means that, if our understanding of an issue fits into a box within the vast storage of our brains, maybe we need a bigger box. We live in a time when many unilateral statements are made—for example, about sending "illegal aliens" back. Continuing with this example, I'm asserting that a person can be opposed to this immigration practice without being opposed to the existence and humanity of the person. This is accommodation, building a bigger box to house one's prior understanding, the instance in which we are willing and able to imagine what it might be like to be that person. It requires the critical thinking skills that enable us to identify what we have in common, skills that allow us to try on another perspective for at least a moment. This is what diversity tolerance is built on. But how can this work with children?

HOW DO CHILDREN FORM SCHEMES ABOUT OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

Anyone who knows children or works with children is aware that parental influences can be significant in terms of how children view other people. Developmentally, young children tend to treat information from trusted adults as absolute truth. One of my adult ESL (English as a second language) students, an immigrant from Guatemala, once relayed the story about a child telling his American-born daughter that she needed to go back to where she came from. There was an additional layer of complexity in the fact that the child who said this statement also belonged to a minority group. But there was no shared connection based on the awareness that both children had some common experiences outside of the cultural mainstream. As these children were only eight or nine years of age, this was a statement that she had heard from her trusted adults, and she had unquestioningly absorbed it as truth. In addition to the values and perceived truths imbued by trusted adults, children have limited life experience to draw on when confronted with people who seem very different. In homogenous communities with a shared history, this disparity can feel more profound. Children also have the trait of being absolutely honest in situations when an adult might use complex social reasoning before speaking. I still cringe when I recall my four-year-old son pointing to an employee at Target, a man with a stature of about four feet, and very loudly booming, "Look at that short man! Why is he so small?" This was outside of his very young and limited life experience, and he wasn't developmentally ready to independently balance his thought processes with a consistent awareness of the feelings of others. Consequently, gentle and instructive guidance must be given by adult family members, caregivers, and educators.

As humans are innately driven to make meaning of an otherwise confusing world, it's understandable that we organize experiences into patterns and categories that create meaning. I have heard declarations of being "colorblind" from truly wonderful people, presumably based on a desire to treat all people well regardless of society's assumptions. But I find striving for colorblindness to be misguided because many people do find meaningful identity through the experiences of their ethnicity and they often include different behavioral scripts. While it's wrong to treat people inequitably due to their appearance, it's not wrong to acknowledge the existence of those wonderful differences. Erasing bigotry toward race and ethnicity should not require erasing identity. Furthermore, while white people like me can choose to recognize or ignore color, people of color do not have the choice to step outside of their own experiences as minorities. Colorblindness also runs the risk of judging other people by our own subjective script.

So, when reflecting on diversity and stereotypes, there is more than one perspective that needs to be considered. Certainly, we need factual and positive experiences to broaden our schemes of what other groups of people are like, in the interest of promoting learning and the value of respect. But on the other side of this issue is the person who is on the receiving end of the stereotype; that person needs to know that their cultural identity is equally valid and worthy of consideration. When I recall how I felt that some of my classmates needed to learn that Yankees are not rude people, I realize that I also needed to hear that my identity was just as valid as anyone else's. It wasn't just about a cessation of negative remarks about my own people, but it was a desire for someone to recognize my group of people, too. And when I met other people like me, it felt like a comforting reminder that I still had an identity. So, if people look for a sense of identity as defined by some sort of cultural or group membership, and differential treatment can be given based on identity, what is the role of educators in this?

UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

Understanding diversity requires understanding identity. Two major types of identity can be considered: self-identification and identity assigned by another group. Self-identification can comprise any number of groups to which an individual relates; these may include race, ethnicity, religion, gender, political affiliation, physical impairment, and sexual orientation, among others. My Yankee experience is an example of regional identity, which was both self-identification and identity assigned by others. Adolescents often develop self-identity relating to social organization; examples include "athletes" and "band kids." A person's identity typically includes more than one category or influence although some facets of identity may be more important and self-defining to that person.

Some labels can be both positive and negative; I always self-identified as a "nerd" in school, but that label can also be used by others in a pejorative manner to assign lower social ranking and value. While identity labels are inherently descriptive in that they organize different types of people into patterns, there is an important distinction between self-identity and identity assigned by others. For example, *deaf* is a word to describe people with impaired hearing, including those who were born that way and elderly people who have only recently experienced hearing loss. But *Deaf* is a self-identity cultural label for many who have the shared experience of hearing impairment throughout most or all of life, in addition to a shared value of sign language usage (Padden & Humphries, 2005).

While people have ethnic roots due to shared genetic influences, race identity is a social construct rather than a biological feature. For example, a person with brown skin may be African American, Lakota, Pakistani, or Guatemalan; there is no Brown race. *Black* and *Yellow* are not monolithic groups of people, nor are they terms accurate in describing the color of skin. Similarly, *White* describes so many disparate European origins that have no shared basis. And then there's the question of people who are not easily labeled with a color. It's important to identify race as a social creation—not to negate anyone's self-identity but to understand that race distinctions can overgeneralize a person's self-identity and that they are implicated in disparate treatment, both historic and present-day, based on appearance. This is a conversation that often proves uncomfortable for many White people, in my anecdotal experience.

BUT WHAT ABOUT WHITE HERITAGE?

After moving to South Carolina and experiencing a degree of culture shock, there was a time when I didn't accept *White* as a self-identity. While that likely sounds outrageous, I want to explain it in terms of shedding light on how race is indeed a social construct and how my own race label allowed me the unusual choice of accepting or rejecting it. Growing up near Boston, in a working class area largely populated by the immigration waves of the early 1900s, many people like me had strong and distinct ethnic identities. Playing at friends' houses after school, I heard Italian and Greek in their homes. I heard distinct Irish accents on occasion. I also heard Vietnamese, Armenian, and Mandarin, but I want to make the distinction that my concept of what it meant to be White was divided by the distinct ethnic identities that many of my peers had. To give a sense of this context, my hometown high school in that area now has 50 foreign languages represented in its current student body.

For me, both of my parents were native English speakers. But my mother's parents were not, and I grew up hearing many stories about my family's cultural identity and experiences, including stories of ethnic discrimination. My grandmother, who was born in the United States, was from an Acadian family. She lived in the French section of town, and she learned English in a neighborhood bilingual school for Acadian children. My grandfather was an undocumented, or "illegal", immigrant from the Russian Empire, but he was a baby when his family immigrated. He lived in the Polish section of the same town and attended the neighborhood school for Polish children, where he struggled to learn English.

Upon marrying my grandmother, my grandfather declared that only English would be spoken in their home due to his difficult experience in mastering English. This would not dissuade my grandmother from speaking in her native language because it was an important tie to her family and community. Consequently, my mother was unable to speak either language, but she fluently understood Acadian French. There was also an Italian section of town and a Jewish section. With its proximity to Boston, there were a great number of other ethnic communities, but—regardless of being White—animosity and competition existed between many of these communities, remnants of which existed even into my own childhood.

My mother had the experience of being called an ethnic slur as a child, and she had also been turned away from a work-related letter of recommendation from a clergyman on the basis of her ethnic last name. I did not experience these things, and I had not lived in ethnic communities like hers because the boundaries started to blur and blend over time. But I felt connected to those two cultures through the stories of my family, certain ethnic foods, the nontraditional size of my family (16 children!), the occasional foreign language expression, and the sense of belonging to a larger group. My White classmates in South Carolina also had diverse European ancestors, but their individual cultural distinctions had been forgotten over time, turning the German, Scot, English, and French settlers who once dominated European settlement in this area into a melting pot of "White Southerners." They had an ethnic heritage(s), but the unique cultural heritage of each had been lost in time in favor of a new, unifying one. Whereas some with similar backgrounds have asked why there's no acceptable "White heritage" movement, I easily saw and experienced this heritage in Italian feast day celebrations, expressions of "Erin go Braugh" and Greek festivals, all reflecting White communities who still had ties to their ethnic heritage.

Comparing myself to my White Southern classmates while simultaneously struggling with my Yankee paranoia, I was quick to see that we had little in common in terms of cultural and shared experiences, so the idea that we would all fit under a generic label of *White* was absurd to me. In my mind, we had nothing in common so why would we be lumped into the impersonal box of "just White"? This very fact, in showing that White and other colors are social constructs rather than biological ones, is the very reason why race labels do matter. And the reason that they matter, which I failed to see at the time, is that a stranger had no idea of my family's origins and my cultural influences. When they saw me, they saw someone who was "White," which automatically granted me membership to that group.

In a recent conversation with my 12-year-old son about diversity, I recall saying to him, "You know that there's nothing wrong with being White, or being a guy, right? I don't want you to think that there's something bad about being White or that you are responsible for bad things that other White people have done." I suppose this wasn't our first conversation about in-groups and out-groups on any number of levels. Still, he surprised me when he replied, "Oh, I know. It just means that, if I see someone discriminating against someone else, I have to speak up. Because some people will pay more attention when I'm the one who points out that it's mean. It's not right, but that's how it is sometimes. So I have to use that to speak up." In that moment, I realized that he understood the difference between White privilege and White guilt.

There is obviously nothing wrong with being White, nor should all White people bear guilt for things that other White people have done. But we must be willing to recognize that racial discrimination does not happen in a vacuum as a series of unrelated wrongdoings committed by unbalanced individuals. And we should not allow White defensiveness, when it exists, to overshadow the value of other cultures and historical narratives. Racial discrimination arises from a long history of systemic White authority in Western Civilization in direct relationship to the marginalization and mistreatment of people of color. For me, I don't feel personal guilt in that, but I see it for what it is, which actually empowers me to make positive changes. In glancing at a simple elementary school history textbook, I can see a profitable industry of human ownership over hundreds of years, and systematic purging of a plethora of Native American groups from their own homes. I can see in my own Constitution, the documented exclusion of nonWhite people and women. And I'm not responsible for this, but I'm unwillingly pulled into it without even wanting to. So it compels me to speak up when I can and to continually check my own assumptions.

When I moved to South Carolina, my cultural differences were immediately evident, and some people were unkind to me because of this. And when my husband moved here from England, he was once turned down for a job, according to a private confidence shared with a friend, because they thought it wasn't fair to high a foreigner for a job that an American might need. But over time, those differences were not immediately visible in our appearance. I will never have to counsel my sons on how to dress, speak, and use body language that does not appear threatening to others based on the color of their skin. Accepting the existence of White privilege was initially hard to me because I kept tying it to individual guilt rather than seeing it as a systemic status that comes from a long history.

While the existence of systemic racism is sometimes hotly disputed by other White people, the only authentic way to settle it is to ask a person of color what they have experienced. I have the privilege of speculating on whether or not systemic racism is real, or to what extent racial privilege might exist, because I don't have to live within it. Alternatively, I can choose to not think about it or to adopt colorblindness as a philosophy. I have those choices, which are purely elective academic pursuits, because the color of my skin grants it, whether I want it to or not. That is the reason why I must choose to acknowledge it and educate myself on what other people experience due to their identity.

After asking—and assuming, I suppose—students in one of my ESL classes if they had ever felt unwelcome due to being non-English speakers, all of them confirmed that they did, except for one student. He was German, with fair skin and light hair. As he described the warm and friendly reception that he had received by everyone he had met in this wonderful country, his face conveyed transparent incredulity at being the only one in class to report this. The other students, all of whom had brown skin, smiled knowingly at each other. They also refrained from openly sharing their negative experiences after this point.

Because my students with brown skin, regardless of their greatly diverse and unrelated ethnic backgrounds, had common experiences based on the construct of race, they began to form a new identity based on our society's race labels. All had reported instances of being treated unkindly, which put me in the powerless position of simply listening, occasionally expressing sorrow or anger that other people like me had mistreated them and, most importantly, believing them. It is critical that, when people share experiences of discrimination based on any type of identity, we take them seriously. When hearing about inequitable treatment that's so outrageously shocking, I think that our own best intentions and moral compass yield the potential to process it as inconceivable and perhaps a misinterpretation of the person relating their experience. This promotes no positive change and only contributes to further divisions.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

Educators find themselves in an influential position to promote positive diversity learning that helps the next generation. It's not enough to be inwardly open-minded and kind or to harbor no biases because these feelings must be outwardly conveyed in action that promotes growth. In order to facilitate this change, we must expand the construct of diversity awareness beyond specific themes to consider it as both a mindset and a set of critical thinking skills. It is through this framework that we can evaluate existing measures and consider new strategies. But first, educators must prepare themselves, as they do in many areas, with deliberate reflection.

Professional Reflection

Now that we've explored the basic concept of distinct identities in terms of the meaning they impart to individuals against the backdrop of subjective interpretation by others, we must broaden our own mental schemes of these identities in addition to our own self-cognizance. After I gave a brief presentation on my experiences as an ESL volunteer, a pre-service teacher asked with concern, "But how do we teach English-language learners if we don't speak all those languages?" I explained that I only speak one other language with any degree of confidence but that I did what any other teacher did: I endeavored to get to know my students and families so that I could do personalized research on my own time to individualize the instruction that I gave them. It's not realistic for educators to study every possible minority group that might exist in the desire to do all the right things, but instead, we must reflect on our fundamental approach in partnering with them. With over 80% of public school teachers being White and minority student enrollment comprising slightly more than half of all public school enrollment, the urgency for professional reflection on our beliefs and historical narratives is even more clear.

Educators must first discern their own social and behavioral scripts to understand where bias may show, biases that every person in the world has. I suggest a journaling approach be taken to uncover subconscious assumptions that dictate what we perceive as rude behavior and signs of student engagement, for example. For example, what do I consider to be model student behavior, how should students express disagreement, or what is my vision of ideal parental involvement in my class? When we can tease out our natural subjectivity on how people "should" act, then we are better able to interpret the behavior of others through a fair lens so that a sensitive and appropriate response can be given.

Cornel Pewewardy (2005), professor and Director of Indigenous Nations Studies at Portland State University, describes such a scenario with White teaching candidates that may prove instructive. Even though I have a fair amount of personal experience with Spanish-speaking Latin American people, both in the context of personal friendships and professional experience, I still found myself ensnared by my own subconscious behavioral script not that long ago. The ESL class that I was teaching was in its infancy in course design, so I was eager to get feedback from students in terms of what was effective and how I might tailor the class to meet their needs. I was surprised when my Latin American students gave no feedback. No matter how I phrased it or how I asked, the answer was always essential—if they even spoke—was, "It's fine." Finally, one of them said, "Miss, but you are the *maestra*, the teacher. So you know, and we do it." Their lack of engagement in giving feedback was not a sign of disinterest; rather, it was a sign of very deep interest and respect due to their cultural script.

In addition to reflecting on our personal scripts, we should also educate ourselves on the major types of diversity in our area in terms of cultural values and best teaching practices, with the objective of avoiding notions of cultural deficit theories. In other words, when our cultural script is embedded in the mainstream, then our interpretation of behaviors can be very subjective, focusing more on fixing other people instead of nurturing their differing values, skills and gifts. In his article "The Miseducation of a Beginning Teacher: One Educator's Critical Reflections on the Functions and Power of Deficit Narratives," Terry Pollack describes how these deficit beliefs can be spread through informal teacher talk. Additionally, educators will find it helpful to evaluate some of their historic narratives and interpretations. Using the example of the Civil War, while cultural beliefs and textbooks reflect bias, primary sources do not. I have personally found support in this area through the Library of Congress's free online repository of historic newspapers: "Chronicling America" (http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/).

Resources for Professional Reflection

Several professional associations and diversity resource sites exist. Teaching Tolerance (http://www.tolerance.org/), a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, has many a section for professional development as well as a repository of multicultural lesson plans. The National Association for Multicultural Education (http://www.nameorg.org/) features chapter groups and many excellent print resources for educators. Edchange, an association of educators, (http://www.edchange.org/) has a tremendous breadth of resources, most notably in its highly acclaimed Multicultural Pavilion project (http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/index.html). Finally, the work of Geneva Gay—notably, her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*—should be considered seminal for teachers.

Current Strategies

When teachers continually seek professional growth in diversity awareness, current pedagogical practices can be evaluated with a different perspective. This requires a consideration of diversity awareness as both a mindset and a set of critical thinking skills. Multicultural celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo are a popular way of featuring multiculturalism. But does a holiday celebration promote awareness of other cultures or hinder it? I recall a student from Mexico and his friend from Guatemala asking me to check their understanding of what Cinco de Mayo was because they had spent some time trying to figure this strange mystery out. They had eventually discerned that it was the day of the Battle of Puebla, when French forces were defeated by the Mexican Army in the context of a larger military campaign. As they explained, this was not a holiday in Mexico, and it was only observed, perhaps, by the people who lived in the state of Puebla. One student, Nicolas, joked, “Go to a Mexican restaurant here on this day, and it’s full of White people!” They couldn’t understand why this had become such a popular American holiday and what it meant to us. I, honestly, couldn’t answer.

To me, a critical question in this example is whether Cinco de Mayo activities in school promote a meaningful understanding of Mexican history or culture. Does it promote discourse on any level? Or does it contribute to overgeneralizations and stereotyping of Hispanic cultures through use of culturally recognizable objects such as maracas and sombreros? While this may seem oversensitive to many of us, it is a great point of contention to the Spanish speakers whom I have taught and who are frequently referred to as Mexicans, or even undocumented Mexicans, when in fact they are Colombian, Panamanian, or Dominican. I even had an Egyptian student once who said he had never faced discrimination due to his ethnicity or Muslim faith because he was consistently assumed to be Mexican! With respect to celebrating multicultural holidays, we must reflect on our own assumptions and not use these celebrations as the answer to multicultural awareness. We must also use this as a professional development opportunity to broaden our own schemes and generalizations on the differences between certain cultures and the variance within cultures.

Even when such holidays are sensitively and accurately observed and a respectful mindset is established with students, what happens when a new, unfamiliar group arrives? Should we assume that children will naturally see patterns and make profound social generalizations that facilitate embracing the newcomer with no reservations? If children understand and value Mexican history, does it naturally follow that they will immediately embrace the child of my Egyptian student? This is where we turn from the diversity mindset approach to include the critical thinking approach.

With the critical thinking approach, we are striving to enable students to process differences in other people in a manner that is respectful. If my life experience is not expansive and my community is fairly homogenous, then I probably don't have much data to file in the schemes that I've assigned to different types of people. So when I encounter an unfamiliar person with characteristics that don't synch up with my mental schema, I experience disequilibrium. Additionally, when my schema for a certain group of people contains no firsthand experience but only scary things that I've seen on the news or unpleasant things that I've heard secondhand, then it might be more difficult to overwrite this skewed information. If we are to help children with this mental accommodation process, especially in situations when entire patterns of inaccurate data have been stored, then we want to move away from a situation where we continually put out small fires as they appear. We want to enable them to help themselves with their own metacognition and critical thinking skills.

Character education—specifically, anti-bullying programming—is a popular method to promote such critical thinking that leads to tolerance and empathy.

My own children were very moved by this in early years but less so in middle school. As my eighth grader explained, even when people participate in the group activities, "Some kids were already nice, but some kids are still mean." When I pressed him for an example, he told me about how his friend had been bullied by some other boys due to his ethnicity… while waiting for the anti-bullying program to commence. While this is only one anecdotal example, I wondered if one 40-minute period a week was sufficient to teach critical perspective-taking skills. Furthermore, separating it as a specific subject possibly makes it harder for some students to see how it naturally fits into everyday life or fails to give enough integrated opportunities for reinforcement.

Possible Strategies

In order not only to change mindsets but also to teach the critical thinking skills for ongoing student reflection, we should review some possible strategies. The objective is to improve current use of tools and incorporate new resources. The main strategies, which are by no means an exhaustive list, will look familiar at first glance. They are facilitating open dialogue, choosing quality literature, and integrating perspective-taking scenarios.

Facilitating honest and respectful dialogue. I would like to look at the "mindset versus the skills" dichotomy regarding dialogue in two situations that my son experienced in school. Both situations involved a student making an intolerant statement about a minority group, but two different teacher approaches were used.

In the “mindset” approach, a classmate made a bigoted and fearful remark about Muslims because her schema was only based on what other people had told her. The teacher’s response was quick and passionate; he quickly pointed out that the comment was unfounded and ridiculous and that there were several Muslim students at that school who certainly did not fit such an offensive stereotype. While his anger was understandable, it shut the door on any meaningful conversation that would challenge and scaffold the student to change her way of thinking. He simply countered her mindset with his mindset. It is unlikely that she learned anything from the situation.

In the second situation, a classmate made a bigoted and angry remark about undocumented immigrations, commonly referred to as “illegal aliens.” In this particular situation, however, another classmate raised her hand and explained that her father had been an illegal alien. The teacher in this case encouraged the second classmate to share more information that helped humanize the situation and contextualize it for the first child. The teacher then gently but directly stated, “She is your friend, and you didn’t even know that about her. Should we kick her out now?” The teacher challenged the first student’s mindset, but she kept the conversation open so that learning could take place in a safe space.

It can be personally uncomfortable to facilitate or even encourage dialogue regarding contentious issues such as race, religion, or immigration status. But by avoiding the contention, as in the first example, not only are mindsets not changed, but there can be meaning conveyed in what is unsaid. Students quickly learn that some questions are inappropriate or, worse, that there’s silent support of a hurtful remark. In my Yankee experience, I suppose that my teacher worried that acknowledging the remarks of the few people who espoused angry rhetoric would somehow add fuel to the fire. But, as I’ve described, the silence was louder than what was said and suggestive of unclear interpretation. I began to simply tune out in defeat because it clearly wasn’t worth it to say anything, in my mind. And to other students who didn’t contribute to this phenomenon, it’s possible that the teacher’s ignoring behavior also sent an unclear message about what was ethically and factually correct. By refraining from teaching to this situation, teaching still took place.

Towards the end of our Civil War unit in my first year in South Carolina, a quiet student finally spoke up one day. She said, “There’s something I don’t understand. Why don’t Yankees seem to care about the Civil War? I mean, why don’t they seem to feel stuff about it the way that we do?” She cast a furtive glance in my direction before shifting in her seat and looking away. This was something that I could answer because it was simply an honest question with no judgment implied. “Well,” I tentatively responded, “I can’t answer for everyone, but for a lot of people where I’m from, our ancestors didn’t live here during the Civil War. That stuff about the immigration in the 1900s is very personally meaningful to me, because my family was part of it. But my feelings about the Civil War are like my feelings about the War of 1812. It’s a story that happened to other people and so it’s history.” I wonder how our class would have been different if our teacher had facilitated such a question by reframing some of the angry remarks into questions.

As I've mentioned that this history class was all White, several relevant things regarding educator preparation and honest dialogue come to mind. At the time, it didn't escape my notice that, in the only two sessions of Advanced Placement US History that year, only two African American students were enrolled. As an adult and an educator, I see this as problematic. A great deal of research has been conducted on the issue of achievement gaps by race, more than can be addressed here. But it's important to note that open dialogue should not only be facilitated for issues that personally give meaning to students or issues that make people feel comfortable. In my class, I believe that we would have all benefitted from a more in-depth analysis of slavery instead of focusing the conversation to Yankees versus Confederates. In such a homogenous class, not only was this issue easy to push aside after reading the minimum, but the likelihood that such a conversation would come again was also rather small. As many students seemed to come to this issue in particular with preformed opinions, the need for honest analysis through guided dialogue was even higher so that schemes could be extended and learning could take place.

With all of the work that must take place in the classroom and the busy schedules across the year, it's hard to make extra time for these conversations. But the dividends are increased understanding, connections to self, and student engagement. It's essential that we give students that time and space to process some of these bigger issues with each other, with the prepared guidance of facilitation. Instead of telling children to be respectful, we often need to give scaffolding on what that looks like. Many teachers use anchor charts with question frames, sometimes known as "accountable talk," including the following:

- I agree with… because…
- I'm not sure I understand your point. Can you explain?
- I disagree with… because… but I do agree that…
- What is your evidence for that?
- I respect your opinion, but I don't agree with…
- Why do you think that?

Fostering this type of respectful dialogue not only improves critical thinking skills, but it also supports an inclusive classroom culture where students feel safe and valued.

Choosing quality literature. Quality literature in the context of diversity helps children make meaningful connections to others and to self. The classroom and media center should be stocked with developmentally appropriate diverse perspectives and authentic cultural representation. Since Nancy Larrick shared her groundbreaking findings in 1965 regarding "The AllWhite World of Children's Books," the extent of diversity in children's books hasn't significantly improved. For example, in the 3400 children's books received by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, a group who tracks diversity in books, fewer than 300 included an African American character with significant importance to the narrative. Authenticity must also be considered, meaning that multiculturalism is portrayed with accuracy. Authenticity is more likely when the author or illustrator belong to the group being represented or has an in-group connection informing their perspective. In those 3,400 books from 2015, only 58 were written or illustrated by Latinos, and some of those included multiple entries by the same authors/illustrators.

Quality literature featuring multiple perspectives and cultures, written and illustrated with authenticity, benefits all children. For children outside of those groups, this is an opportunity to broaden their perspectives and appreciation of other people. For children inside those groups, it is validating to see their identity included, which helps them feel connected and engaged to instructional activities. Multicultural depictions in books need not be limited to historic perspectives but should also include incidental diversity or diversity "just because." Some excellent resources listing authentic depictions of multiculturalism include the following:

- Américas Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature
- AntiDefamation League's "The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice"
- ArabAmerican Book Award
- Asian/Pacific American Award For Literature
- Coretta Scott King Award
- Jane Addams Children's Book Awards
- Native American Youth Services Literature Award
- Pura Belpré Award
- Schneider Family Book Awards
- Sydney Taylor Book Award
- Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award

During a reading clinical in a first grade classroom, I decided to start collecting some multicultural books to give as a parting gift. The most difficult part of my search was finding a simple picture book featuring African American characters. It seemed as though nearly every book that I found had a historical connotation to slavery or the Civil Rights Movement. And while these narratives are very important, it's also important to feature books with incidental diversity, to show how the world is full of many different kinds of people. I challenge anyone to browse the children's section of a bookstore and see how many people of color are prominently featured, particularly in ordinary, non-historic circumstances. As a White person, it simply never came to my attention until it was pointed out to me.

For incidental diversity featuring African American characters, I settled on a book by Trish Cook, *Full, Full, Full of Love*, which describes a family meal at Grandma's house. I also found incidental diversity in a picture book called *Big Red Lollipop* by Rukhsana Khan. In a narrative about sibling rivalry between sisters, the family's Pakistani heritage and Muslim faith are only portrayed in illustrations, helping normalize another culture to an audience who may not have firsthand experience. And while incidental diversity is very valuable, there is still an importance in teaching other perspectives specific to a culture. For example, *One Green Apple* by

Eve Bunting helps children understand the feelings and worries of a Middle Eastern child who has recently moved to the United States.

Authentic portrayals of multiculturalism also provide nuances and distinctions within and between cultures. In *My Dadima Wears a Sari* by Kashmira Sheth, readers not only sees the beauty of the sari but also learn the cultural differences between an Indian American child and her Indian-born grandmother. Geneva Gay (2000) notes that history textbooks often give little attention to the interactions between different minority groups. In *Crossing Bok Chitto* by Tim Tingle, readers read a child's narrative about runaway slaves finding refuge with the Choctaw Nation, a book that manages to be authentic to its featured American Indian culture, historically accurate, and connected to another minority group.

Even when students have access to a wide variety of multicultural books featuring authentic experiences, interpretative risks must be managed. Open dialogue within carefully planned guided reading experiences will help students draw connections and distinctions. In teaching diversity within literature to pre-service teachers, AnnMarie Dunbar (2013) notes that there is a sometimes a tendency for white students to universalize minority experiences in books in the process of empathizing with characters. Similar to colorblindness, students may so value our common humanity that they subconsciously gloss over cultural distinctions and experiences. At the other end of this extreme, Dunbar says, is othering, or viewing book characters as being so completely foreign that they struggle with connecting. Educators should guide their students of all ages in guided reading and discussions so that they can compare and contrast differences with meaning.

Integrated perspective-taking. With reflective educator preparation, guided dialogue in the classroom, and the use of quality children's literature, we can now focus on how to combine these tools to promote perspective-taking. As educators, we don't want to wait for crisis situations regarding diversity to arise before we teach the critical thinking skills that challenge mindsets. Instead, we can proactively incorporate these skills into regular academic areas in ways that may not immediately seem to correlate with these issues. I'd like to suggest promoting perspective-taking as much as possible in academic instruction rather than relegating it to anti-bullying programs.

When we moved to the South, one class ended up being my refuge in the midst of my cultural shock. It was a speech and debate class. I can still hear Mrs. Robertson repeating, "Nothing is absolute," as we were assigned stances to defend that didn't necessarily agree with our personal beliefs. In this academic exploration, we had to create positions based on logic and primary sources, which sometimes caused personal unease. What I took away from this class and this amazing teacher is that there is always another side of an issue along with a person who is just as convinced as me. This skill set, which is essentially perspective-taking, is not only attainable to older students.

For example, consider teaching the American Revolution with a project in which students must create a defense of King George's point of view. It defies our beliefs and patriotic passion, which means that taking this perspective is challenging enough to stimulate growth. Student groups representing loyalist and rebelling colonists might even be asked to refute the other side's statements. The teacher would use this opportunity to guide students in stating opinions in ways that are respectful and specific rather than personal and dismissive. In the end, no one's patriotism likely changes, and students can maintain their beliefs, but they leave with an awareness and understanding that their mental schema is not necessarily universal truth.

Students are also guided in perspective-taking skills when they are asked to write diary entries from the viewpoint of a person in history. Typically, these assignments specify that the identity to be assumed must be a child because that makes the task more meaningful and personal to children. We must continue to seek out opportunities for students to hone perspective-taking skills because these tasks appropriately challenge students by asking them to reflect on viewpoints very different than their own. For me, it would have been far easier to write a fictional diary entry based on someone whose identity is not too far from mine. It would have been easier to write as though I were Laura Ingalls than it would be to write as though I were a Native American, a slave, or a spy for the British in the War of 1812. While we must be mindful of developmental levels and task appropriateness, we want to gently help them move beyond the borders of their assumptions because that's where learning takes place.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our ultimate goal is to support children in discovering that people are far more alike than they are different and that our differences don't eclipse our humanity. But we also strive to recognize our differences for the purpose of understanding and honoring other people. In this way, children recognize that they interpret life through a cultural lens that is only one of many. And while we should consciously infuse our curriculum with multiculturalism and continue to explicitly teach the social skills found in many character education programs, we should incorporate perspective-taking scenarios throughout the curriculum. If we continually challenge students to consider and explain other viewpoints, and if we give the time for meaningful discussion, then we are well on our way to supporting positive critical thinking that supports diversity. When I look back on my experience as the Yankee, I think that most of the people who confronted me were really trying to say, "Help me understand you." Let's give students the tools to do that.

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JUSTIN MAKI

11. MY EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS THROUGH INVOLVEMENT

The student diversity committee advisor started our first meeting with “Why does it seem like only diverse students attend events for diversity and join student diversity committees?” Faces filled the room with shock and the realization that after discussions of feeling isolated, and finally being given a space to share concerns, we were once again isolated. The difference this time was that we were together and asked to discuss “our” issues while ultimately creating a plan of action to support students of diversity within the college.

The goal of the new student diversity committee was developed to provide a safe place for students to express themselves and to share ideas to create a more supportive and accepting environment for all students. While the intent of creating such a committee seemed well spirited, it was discouraging for us to notice there was no representation from allies or faculty offering support to this initiative.

After spending a few minutes discussing the first prompt given to us by our advisor, we were instructed to go around the room and introduce ourselves and our goals for being part of this newly developed student diversity committee. I was surprised to hear that the directions for our introduction didn’t include sharing the diverse population that we were there to represent. I was expecting to have to introduce myself and say something along the lines of “I’m here because I’m gay.” I was then prepared to follow up that statement by saying something defensive like “But that doesn’t mean I feel comfortable representing all gay people or being the gay voice of the student body, for that matter.” I was prepared for it. I had rehearsed my introduction several times in my head, and I felt ready. However, to my amazement, I was not asked to share my reason for joining the student diversity committee. Part of me was relieved that I didn’t have to share my reason for being on the committee while another part of me felt as though it had been left out.

After attending several meetings, I couldn’t help but think the committee was feeling skeptical of my intentions for being part of the committee. I started feeling nervous that I was the only white male on the committee and that the group probably didn’t think that I belonged. Finally, I acknowledged the anxiety of not feeling as though I belonged, and I decided to express my concern to the group at the end of a meeting. I was nervous and anxious but determined to hear that my participation was no longer required. Instead, I was met by complete surprise that my contributions—not as a gay male but as a caring and supportive person—were valuable and necessary.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 85–87.

Before being part of the committee, I had written what seemed like countless reflections for diverse populations courses, my teaching philosophy, and the multicultural competency component of my written doctoral comprehensive exams on diversity. In those writings, I acknowledged that multiculturalism extends far beyond racial differences to include many different aspects of a person's identity. However, here I was, a gay, White, educated male, feeling as though I had no place in attending or being part of a student diversity committee.

I decided to take some time and reflect on my perceptions for why I believed that I had been asked to be part of this committee in the first place. I had been so caught up in the excitement of feeling as though I had privilege in being asked to participate because I'm a member of a minority population that I had lost insight of the committee's purpose and goals. The committee had not been developed solely to be a gathering place for minority students but to be a committee that develops and implements strategies for supporting all students. After all, we had just discussed as a group how discouraging it was during our first meeting that only students of diversity had attended. My purpose for being part of the committee was not to just be a voice for LGBTQ+ students but to participate in a committee that welcomed equality, support, and acceptance for all students.

While I was initially surprised that I had felt the need to recuse myself from the committee because I was not of a minority race, it made me think about the students that don't feel as though they identify or can relate to diverse students. This also made me think back to the question the committee faculty advisor asked in our first meeting. She had asked why only diverse students seem to attend and participate in events and committees related to diversity. If I was having this discomfort as a person that identifies with a minority group, what does that say about those who don't feel as though they're a minority of any demographic?

My role as a future counselor educator will be to prepare students to become insightful, ethical, and multiculturally competent counselors. While these responsibilities seem specific to the counseling profession, they are transferrable concepts that can be applied to educators of all disciplines in education. It's known that educators are responsible for teaching curriculum and course content, but we are also responsible for enhancing the critical thinking skills and helping challenge our students to become self-aware of their unique individuality. Each student is unique in their own way, and helping them not to feel shame for their individual differences can increase their own tolerance and understanding of others.

When I reflect on this more systematically, it appears that our society often implies that there are different hierarchies or levels of diversity. My reasons for thinking this stem from a knowledge that oppression still exists as well as the existence of discriminatory laws against minority populations. While it's important for us to acknowledge that these barriers toward equality exist, we need to help our students understand that celebrating and supporting individual differences is needed.

I supervised a counselor-in-training who, at the end of the semester, told me that she hadn't gotten a chance to work with a multicultural client all semester.

I challenged her to think of what the term *multicultural* meant to her and how she defined the term. The only two criteria that she could provide me with were being of a minority race or sexual orientation. Instead of correcting her and giving her a large list of things that could make someone multiculturally different, I asked her to tell me about herself and where she was grew up. We began talking about everything from the kind of food she grew up eating to the political climate in her city, the ways in which the elderly were treated back home, and the customs of marriage in her family. I asked her to then reflect on how that worldview was different from her clients.' If we spend too much time thinking of multiculturalism categorically, we will never capture the beauty in the differences that make us unique from one another and truly define multiculturalism.

Strategies that educators in K-12 and higher education can use to promote self-awareness and individual uniqueness involve celebrating and acknowledging our differences. In the student diversity committee, we discuss what it means to "sell out." We talk about the concept of "whitewashing" and how detrimental it can be to those that feel different from the majority. When students share concerns of feeling isolated or not being supported, we need to make sure that we don't respond by saying, "Well, what is it that you need?" This could imply that a quick solution could fix the situation but doesn't necessarily create systematic change. A more appropriate response to a discouraged student is to acknowledge their story as their truth. We need to take time to gather more information and provide the student with assurance that we not only care but will also follow through with a plan of action.

Whether student diversity committees are created, events celebrating multicultural awareness are held, or faculty and teachers engage in discussions in the classroom, everything we do to model acceptance and respect of everyone is helpful and appreciated. Encouraging students to become aware of their values, interests, skills, and beliefs helps increase their insight and ability to acknowledge and accept the individual differences of others. I end by promoting active responses to opportunities that demonstrate advocacy and social justice. Whether contribution is made as an ally or as a member of a minority population, the presence of support and participation is always appreciated and recognized.

VINCE YOUNGBAUER AND MICHAEL RIDGEMAN

12. TEACHERS' INKED

Tattooed Narratives of High School Teachers

Getting a tattoo has become more and more popular over time. According to Pew, 38% of Millennials (born after 1980) and 32% of Gen Xers (born between 1965 & 1980) have at least one tattoo (Pew Research Center, 2010, p. 57). Furthermore, half of those Millennials *with* tattoos have more than one (two to five). People who have attended college are slightly less likely to have tattoos than those who do not attend college (30% and 47%, respectively). Women with tattoos are perceived more negatively than men. Among adults, men are more likely to have visible tattoos than women; however, 72% of tattooed people state that their tattoos are not usually visible. To this point, it is worth noting that, regardless of popularity, there is indeed still stigma attached to tattoos—or, at least, a *perceived* stigma. As tattooed public educators, we sought to examine our own histories with tattoos and the narratives that they create and to consider those experiences from the point of view of the students whom we taught, other colleagues, and administrators. Van Manen (1990) states, "Pedagogy requires a hermeneutic ability to make interpretive sense of the phenomena of the lifeworld in order to see the pedagogic significance of situations" (p. 2). Furthermore, "Human science studies persons or beings that have consciousness and that act purposefully in and on the world by creating objects of meaning that are expressions of how human beings exist in the world" (Van Manen, 1990, pp. 3–4). Because we ultimately seek to understand how tattoos might inform our teaching practice, we can think of no better way than to conduct research on our own lived experience—an experience that includes social interaction with young people, some of whom are tattooed themselves. We include our own stories because "story represents a way of knowing and thinking that is particularly suited to explicating the issues with which we deal" (Carter, 1993, p. 6).

Much has been written on tattoos and the act of tattooing in a variety of different disciplines such as history and art (Gilbert, 2000), sociology (Kosut, 2008), psychology (Copes & Forsyth, 1998), health care (Brown, Perlmutter, & McDermott, 2000), and even forensic pathology (Cains & Byard, 2008). Considering the length and breadth of this corpus on tattoos and tattooing, the authors chose to explore two concepts by way of their own personal experiences.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 89–100.

CASTE/OUTCASTE: THE SPECTRUM OF IDENTITY AND TATTOOING

Goffman (1963) defines stigma as "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance" (p. i). Several years into his first teaching job, after he had earned tenure in the district, one of the authors describes his tattooed experience in regards to stigma:

> *The alternative school I was working at closed as a result of public and political pressure. The students were, more or less, deemed undesirable in a highly visible part of town that relied heavily on tourism. I was offered a position teaching on the main campus in the traditional high school, but I passed and took the opportunity to leave education for a while and pursue a graduate degree.*
>
> *After it was revealed that I would not accept the position created for me at the traditional high school, I was surprised to learn of other teachers' feelings toward me as the alternative school teacher. The reaction from students and teachers at the main high school campus down the road was unexpected, to say the least. My impression of their reaction was something along the lines of "It's a good thing he teaches at that school with those kids; that's clearly where he belongs." It was as if I were one of them, one of the "alternative kids," stigmatized. In this band of outcasts and misfits, kids who didn't fit into the mold of a traditional public school, I also bore the mark of an outcast. I was tattooed. After my tattoos were sighted, it was almost celebrated among the students. In fact, I can unequivocally say that I had fewer management issues from that point of the year on, and I also felt like I had more support from the parents of these children.*
>
> *Rather than being upset that some of my fellow professional educators didn't think that I was worthy of teaching at the main campus, I took pride in it. I felt comfortable with myself, my surroundings, and my kids who were marked "alternative." It was a badge of honor for me to work in a school that nobody else wanted or was willing to. My mark, my tattoos, were my prize and my admission to something else. Although I was perhaps disqualified from social acceptance into one group, the educators down the road, it was my ticket in to somewhere else. I would have felt like a sellout to those kids and their parents if I had gone to the high school. It might not have been the best thing for my career, but it made sense to me, and it allowed me to make a decision that I could live with—one that allowed me to be true to myself.*

Some people who get tattoos know that they may have to cover them in some situations, and therefore, they choose to have them where they can be covered for that reason. According to Mary Kosut (2008),

> Part of the social dimension of the tattoo as a form of non-verbal communication is contingent upon whether it is visible or non-visible to others. Choosing either a

> public or private location for a tattoo is a significant decision in the tattoo process. Invisibility or limited visibility allows control over who the audience will be. For some, only a select number of others will be privy to the communication. Having visible tattoos significantly alters the tattoo experience, as people may respond negatively or affirmatively to their presence. In turn, these responses may influence how someone experiences their tattoos. (p. 85)

In this way, covering or not covering the tattoos is much like a choice one makes in the morning as to how the day's events will dictate clothing choices—e.g., casual dress versus shirt and tie. As one author relates,

> *I remember sitting in my first "professional" job interview for my first teaching position. I would later be offered the position, and accept—but during the interview, I obviously did not know this. While answering interviewer questions about my perceptions of the role of social studies in education, classroom management techniques, the use of behavioral objectives in lesson planning, et al., I was also aware of... an itch. It wasn't actually an itch—it was more of an awareness. It was like Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" without the murderous implications. I swear that I could actually feel the tattoos on my arms under my dress shirt and suit jacket. I thought, "Should I tell them that I have tattoos? Am I obligated to tell them? What will happen if/when they find out later?"*
>
> *Years have gone by, and there are numerous similar stories of meeting people for the first time in various situations and—depending on the situation—whether I tried to hide my tattoos or not. Oddly, as people get to know me, the tattoos are less relevant. Some will ask, "Is that a new one?" I'll answer, "No," after which, they respond something like, "I never noticed that one." As time has moved on, I have become less and less worried about what people might think about them. Furthermore, as I have gotten older, I have bouts and flare-ups of psoriasis, which often gets more looks than the tattoos. I have actually taken to having trouble spots covered with more tattoos—kind of like an expensive wall repair covered by a painting. My dermatologist warned me that tattooing can actually cause psoriasis—any abrasion can—but that doesn't happen in my case. My tattoos are a part of who I am.*

The other author had a similar experience:

> *My first teaching job at the alternative school was in a rural mountain town. I had students with substance abuse issues, students on probation or parole, students who were pregnant, and students who worked 40 hours a week and couldn't make a traditional school schedule work for them. It was a great bunch of kids, many of whom already had tattoos of their own. As it was my first job, I was very careful to maintain a high degree of professionalism, and in my mind, that meant that I kept all of my tattoos covered. Inevitably, the day arrived, and one slipped in to plain view. I was wearing a short-sleeved button-down*

> *shirt. I leaned over a table where a student was working, and as the sleeve rode up my arm, the tattoo was revealed. I was unsure of how this small group of students would react. I was more than surprised—I might even say a little bit relieved—when their response was one of underwhelming disinterest. While it did spark a certain kindred spirit between me and the students, it became more about the stories and the moments that inspired each of the tattoos rather than some sort of over-hyped fiasco that could have incited classroom chaos.*

Ironically, the very action of getting a tattoo to feel part of a group can isolate one from other groups. An individual's physical characteristics—race, gender, appearance, and (in this case) tattoos—act as "sign vehicles" that are read through the interactions with others (Goffman, 1959). While sign vehicles can be temporary, such as hairstyle, makeup, and clothing trends, tattoos occupy a permanent position similar to one's gender. People choose to get tattoos for numerous reasons, including for the real or perceived involvement of belonging to a group, as a personal narrative or life-history (discussed later), or simply as a symbol of rebellion against the establishment (Brallier, Maguire, Smith, & Palm, 2011). While some get tattoos to belong to a group (e.g., military, fraternity, and sorority), others do not. Personally, one of the authors feels that, while tattoos are part of his specific identity, he did not get tattoos to belong to any one group. However, he does recognize that, regardless of intention, he is still perceived as part of a group. We have seen signs on the walls of numerous tattoo parlors that state (paraphrased), "The only difference between someone with tattoos and someone without is that those with tattoos don't care if you have one or not." Regardless of group membership, the tattoo serves, and is marketed as, a signifier of individualism.

James Gee (2000) deconstructs identity into four domains (Table 1). Gee (2000) views a nature identity as "a state I am in, not anything I have done or accomplished." Thus, tattoos are not nature identities. Neither author was born with tattoos. They are markings that we actively sought to attain. First, Gee describes a nature identity as a state developed from (the process) forces (power) in nature (the source of the power).

Table 1. Four ways to view identity

	Process	*Power*	*Source of power*
Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
Institution-identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with "rational" individuals
Affinity-identity: experiences	shared in	the practice	of "affinity groups"

Second, an institution identity is a position authorized by (process) authorities (power) within institutions (source of power). An institution identity is an interesting one. The institution identity is a completely different animal. Here, authorities within an institution are the source of power. With tattoos, there is no true governing institution that grants admittance. There is no test of competence, no diploma from a university. There is nobody who bestows the honorific title of "Inked" upon those who are tattooed. That said, those who are without tattoos might generalize and instinctively stereotype people with tattoos as bikers, musicians, or smokers, but there is no authoritative institution identity. If one were to consider a branch of the military or a gang as an institution, then yes, a tattoo could be a marker of an institution identity. As an example, one might have the "Ranger" tab tattooed on their shoulder. Third, discourse identities are individual traits that are recognized in (process) the discourse or dialogue (power) of or with "rational" individuals. The discourse identity, as it relates to tattoos, is tricky. If tattoos remain covered, there is no associated discourse, and thereby an individual is not "marked", for better or worse, with this identity. However, if the tattoos are visible and dialogue occurs among individuals, there is a question as to the outcome of the identity. It could be positive or negative, and so blends into the affinity identity. The affinity identity grows from experiences that are shared in (process) the practice (power) of affinity groups (source of power). Discursive identities are those that are determined by "the discourse of dialogue of other people." As Gee (2000) describes his charismatic friend, he says, "it is only because other people treat, talk about, and interact with my friend as a charismatic person that she is one." This aspect of identity falls squarely on the individual. By making tattoos visible, it gives other people license to discuss those who are inked. It is those discussions that create the identity. This can go one of two ways. If the discourse occurs among individuals who are also tattooed, who practice the same affinity, the perception of the discourse identity might be more positive. If the affinity for tattoos is not shared among those engaged in dialogue, the nature of the discourse identity becomes negative, and the affinity identity ceases to exist.

THE TATTOOED NARRATIVE: FROM FASHION CHOICE TO PERSONAL STORY

> *I dreamt that I was moderating a panel discussion, Olympic athletes and artists (visual, performing, vocal, etc.). A friend of mine from art classes long ago was in the dream as the artist. She was talking about pouring your heart and soul into a piece of work, artistic or athletic, and having the outcome yield a result not planned. This could mean a piece of art that fails to achieve the desired effect or a race that nets a poor result. How do you overcome those setbacks and carry on?*
>
> *I remember seeing a cityscape that she had painted from a distance, and the city lights were arranged in such a way that it created the outline of a tiger—or, at least, the face, as the spine and body were lost in the rest of the image. But*

> *close up, the back body of the tiger was clear, sharp, and it was so obvious how much work went into creating it. From a distance, however, the shape was lost. The work was there, it was put in, but it was not and will not be noticed. Then what? What if the point of Gustav Klimt's* Kiss *is not actually the kiss, but that the woman is kneeling in a subservient way yet tilts her head away from the kiss in an act of defiance? In the same way, on Olympic athlete toils away, putting in miles upon miles in solitude, and what if it's just not there come race day? What if they trip or are tripped by another runner? Was all the work worth it? Were the pain, hunger, constant fatigue and soreness worth anything? Is that at all like tattoos? What if the tattoo fades? Does the associated memory or event also fade? From a fashion point of view, what if a tattoo goes out of fashion? Blingy '90s style tattoos, tribal, new school cartoony?*

To think of tattooing in terms of fashion, there are certain "brands" of clothing that might be deemed as desirable if one is to prove one's worth and be viewed as valid by a group. Tattoos are not all that different. In the way that some collectors of fine art might have signed prints of Rockwell, Pollack, Fairey, Nara, or Hirst—or perhaps even an original masterpiece—some people collect tattoos from artists as well. Someone might reveal a Japanese style tattoo done by Chris Nunez or a screaming eagle done by American traditional tattoo artist Oliver Peck. Ultimately, we are talking about fashion. I can remember being in school and longing for the day when I could afford a pair of jeans with the highly visible *?* logo on the rear pocket. I believed that those pants would come with new friends and new status as opposed to the unrecognizable and unmarked jeans that I usually wore. Thus, when one buys a tattoo "off the rack," does it carry the same gravitas as a tattoo that might have been drawn by the individual or by a relatively famous tattoo artist? With clothing, it's perfectly acceptable for several people to have the same pants or shoes, but what if someone else has the identical tattoo because they bought off the rack? Tattoos may hold a special place on the status spectrum that clothing does not.

To further explore this point, consider the following: that cable television has given rise to a whole new understanding and awareness of tattoos. Like other fields and subject matter that came before it—such as cooking (almost any show on the Food Network or The Cooking Channel, Bravo's *Top Chef*), fashion (Lifetime's *Project Runway*), special effects make-up (SyFy's *Face Off*), and antiquing (History Channel's *American Pickers* and *Pawn Stars*). Being featured or promoted on shows such as *Top Chef* has made stars out of many chefs (coincidentally, many of whom are tattooed, such as Los Angeles chef Michael Voltaggio or Food Network host and restaurateur Guy Fieri) as such promotion leads people to seek out their restaurants, and the same can be said for many fashion designers featured in *Project Runway*'s competitions. Numerous shows highlight the world of tattooing either through reality-type narratives (TLC's *Miami Ink*) or through competition (Spike Channel's *Ink Masters*). Like the chefs or fashion designers before them, these tattoo artists enjoy celebrity status as new customers pilgrimage to their salons. Kat Von D, a tattoo artist featured on the first four seasons of *Miami Ink*, used this popularity to start her own successful makeup line. These shows raise the awareness of tattooing in general while raising the status of the featured artists. This popularity can elevate the status of tattooing from the act of simply being tattooed (and its associated status) to a higher level associated with having a tattoo created by an artist how holds a varying level of celebrity.

Cover-up tattoos—those used to change or update an existing tattoo—may likely be the most often occasion that requires artistic input from the artist. That is, cover-up tattoos are less likely to be "off-the-rack." As one of the authors relates,

> *I got my first tattoo as soon as I could. Once I turned 18, I went into the tattoo parlor, found something on the wall that I thought looked tough, and said, "I want that." At the time, I was a collegiate hockey player, and I wanted that tattoo to be a permanent marker of my toughness—a message to my teammates that they could count on me. Yet, in a rare moment of teenage wisdom, I also realized that, someday down the road, I was going to be a professional, and not a professional athlete. I intentionally placed that first tattoo on my shoulder. The shoulder is a part of the body readily covered in most professional milieus. That tattoo is now gone. It has been covered up by a tattoo that I designed myself.*

Regardless of the reasons why a person gets a tattoo, the tattoo at the very least serves as a chronological marker in one's life. That is, for some people, a specific tattoo design can reflect with great specificity an event in time such as the birth or death of a loved one: "Like every photograph, every tattoo has a story behind it. In what context are tattoo narratives constructed, to whom are tattoos being communicated, and what is being said?" (Kosut, 2008, p. 82). One of the authors has a tattoo of a three of hearts playing card wherein each heart represents one of his daughters. The same author has other tattoos that, while they do not hold the same deep personal meaning, still serve as a diary entry of sorts in regards to the tattoo act—i.e., the events of the specific day (incredibly hot that day); who, if anyone was in attendance (my wife); geographic location of the tattoo parlor (my wife and I on a getaway trip to Baltimore, MD), the specifics of the artist (he had a Doberman Pincher in the studio); etc. Giddens (1991) states that self-identity is understood by an individual within the context of his or her own biography. Furthermore, that biography, and therefore identity, are sustained by the ability to perpetuate the narrative. Because the self is embodied, "the reflexivity of the self extends to the body" (Giddens, 1991, p. 77).

The other author remembers,

> *I had a German Shepherd named Atlas. He was highly trained in obedience, protection and search and rescue. He was my partner for all things in my early and independent adult life. He died in his sleep suddenly, unexpectedly, and inexplicably. He was one month shy of his 10th birthday. I knew immediately that I wanted to get a tattoo as a memorial to Atlas, but I wasn't about to*

> *get a portrait of a dog inked on me. I have always been a fan of mythology, as his names suggests, and while looking at some old pictures of my dog, I thought about the classic sculptures inspired by the story of Atlas. I designed a new tattoo in the style of classic Greek sculpture, and it depicts a robed Atlas, kneeling, and carrying the world on his shoulders. The world and its continents are what covers the half-dollar sized tattoo that I chose off the wall when I was 18. The old tattoo is no longer visible.*
>
> *What's interesting is that one tattoo now has two stories. I have the original story from when I was 18 and trying to prove myself, and I have the new tattoo that serves as a memorial and a reminder of how great that dog was. But why cover it up? Why not put the new tattoo on new skin and leave everything visible? I wonder if the first tattoo subconsciously represented failure, both academically and athletically, as I transferred from my first school. I wonder if I am ashamed of some of the decisions that I made as an undergraduate. I wonder if I just didn't like that old tattoo anymore. Whichever way, one tattoo was covered by another. Ink begat more ink, as it were. The old tattoo was not removed; it was masked. Since the first tattoo, my approach to what I mark my body with has changed.*

In short, all tattoos occur as a snapshot within time, are held frozen in time, and are retold many times over, as a specific narrative. Narratives also occur through the social interactions between the subject and others who do or do not have tattoos themselves, as people discuss meanings and share the stories associated with those meanings or of the tattoo event itself. Kosut (2008) notes, "Tattoo narratives unveil a complicated web of micro and macro relationships. Woven within these stories, we find individuals negotiating their selves and bodies, as society simultaneously pushes and pulls in divergent directions" (p. 98).

Tattoos—like every other part of a person's appearance—can generate judgment and impression on the observer. Building on the work of Gibbons (2003) and Swanger (2006), who found that employers were less likely to hire applicants with tattoos, Brallier et al. (2011) interviewed 192 restaurant managers and determined that they were less likely to hire applicants as servers if they had visible tattoos. The study supported similar findings from retail sales, the health care industry, and other occupations that require face-to-face interaction with the public. Ironically, many famous chefs (as discussed earlier) have tattoos.

> *Since receiving my first tattoo as an 18-year-old, more tattoos arrived, I earned an undergraduate degree, and I became a public school teacher. To this point, all of my tattoos were either above the elbows on my arm, on my back, on my legs, and, later, on my wrist. To this day, when I visit a school, nothing is visible. The wrist tattoo is covered by either a long sleeved shirt or a wristwatch.*
>
> *My second teaching job may as well have been at the opposite pole when viewed in comparison to the alternative school. After finishing my master's*

degree, I was teaching at a high-achieving public charter in a well-to-do suburban area. The average household income and level of education among parents were high. With new learning and new education under my belt, I was excited to begin the next phase of my career. I can vividly recall my first faculty meeting before the beginning of the school year, and the subject of dress code was broached by the principal. This, however, was not a discussion of dress code as it applied to the student body but rather to the faculty and staff. We were reminded of the children and families whom we served, and we were expected to look the part. We were reminded that we were an academically rigorous college preparatory charter high school. Tattoos were not to be seen. Ever. I found this interesting. Never once did this come up during my interview.

As I recall, I spent most of my first paycheck on new clothes, and a majority of it went to long-sleeved shirt and tie combinations. When I taught at the alternative school, I learned quickly not to wear anything around my neck while working with potentially volatile young men. Now, a tie was the most natural thing that a male teacher could possible wear. I have never felt more uncomfortable in my life.

While the teaching was enjoyable, it was considerably more academic and certainly functioned at a higher level of thinking. This time was some of the worst years of my career. For those years, I felt like I was someone else. I felt like I was the sellout that I was afraid of becoming a few years earlier. I felt like I was conforming to something that I didn't believe in and wouldn't otherwise condone.

There was another English teacher at this school who came in the same year I did, only she was fresh out of college. She had never taught professionally before. She also had tattoos, and one was a stunningly beautiful tree that spanned the width of her back from shoulder to shoulder and ran halfway down her spine. I can remember one day during the spring semester when she wore a sheer top that allowed her tattoo to show through. Throughout the entirety of the school day, nothing happened. After school, she was paged to the principal's office. I left for home before their meeting was over, and when I saw her the next morning, I had to ask. The meeting was about her tattoo being visible and in direct opposition to the dress code expectations for faculty. The remainder of the school year carried on as normal. The following year, that English teacher did not return. I can't say with any conviction that she was released because of the tattoo.

In my third teaching job, I didn't care anymore, and it was some of the most fun that I've ever had as an educator. I do believe that part of the experience stems from the fact that the school was a run-of-the-mill neighborhood public middle school. There were some affluent parents; there were some on food stamps. There were extremely bright students; there were students who *struggled mightily. Everyone was all over the place. I can remember eighth-grade girls taller than me, and there were boys of the same age with voices higher than the girls.' It seemed to me that, because everyone was so mixed up (economically, hormonally, ability-wise, etc.), it was OK to be oneself. As the cast sings in* Shrek the Musical*, middle school seemed the one place where it was acceptable to "let your freak flag fly."*

This is not to say that I wore sleeveless shirts to work every day, but there was one day each year where I did roll up my sleeves. Part of the seventh grade curriculum was the novel The Outsiders *by S. E. Hinton. When we started that novel, I would wear my black combat boots from basic training, a pair of jeans rolled up at the bottom, a white t-shirt with a deck of cards rolled up in the sleeve, and my leather jacket, and I would slick my hair back. It became the stuff of legend. There were students whom I had never seen before trying to get into my room to catch a glimpse of me. Eighth graders would always tell the incoming seventh graders to get ready for* The Outsiders*, but they would never ever say why.*

At this school, tattoos didn't even register with the faculty and administration. And with the students, if anything, it broke down barriers. It took a stereotype, and sometimes a scary one, and blew it out of the water. There were, in fact, professionals in this world who had tattoos. There were people in this world who didn't always fit the mold. I showed some of those students an exception to what they had previously perceived as a rule.

I was the same person, with the same tattoos, doing roughly the same job, yet in some districts I was a hero whereas I was a pariah in others. In thinking about fashion, or identity, it all made sense. For the most part, of all three schools that I have taught in, an individual could make a general assumption about which high school the student attended based on appearance. The clothing, the fashion trends, were worlds apart at the three schools. At the alternative school, it was flannels shirts, ripped jeans, T-shirts with musical artists, baseball caps, and skate shoes. At the traditional high school, it was name brand clothing that one would have to shop for in a mall. Clothing was neat and well cared for. Hair was carefully groomed, and hats were a rarity. At the middle school, audacity and bravado were champions. While it tears at some people's inside to hide tattoos, to keep the external out of plain sight, I enjoy it. To me, it's a game. Because I do think about the stigmatization, because I do think about prejudice, I find myself saying in my head, "I know something you don't know," to the interviewer. Rather literally, it's like having a bit of an ace up the sleeve, a card to play in certain contexts. I can't think of what those contexts might be, but to me, it offers an opportunity down the road to challenge people's paradigms… not all who are tattooed have been jailed.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, our tattoos and the narratives that they represent are woven into the fabric of our identities. The same can be said about the students that we have had through the years. Many of our students have had tattoos that represent events in their lives. One had a large work of art that covered part of her back and down one of her legs, representing the death of her parents. One had a tattoo that represented the memory of his older brother who died in combat in Afghanistan. I had a student with a tattoo symbolizing the loss of her child via miscarriage. For students such as these, there was no concern for stigma or affinity for group membership. Tattooing, while still with its detractors, has become more prevalent—more mainstream. The act of getting tattooed may be the ultimate example in regard to fashion identity. That is, if young people use what they wear as a symbol of their personal identity, or as a marker for rite of passage into adulthood, etc., there may be no better example of such a statement than the tattoo if for no other reason than the permanent nature of tattoos. Tattoos, with some exception, cannot be altered to reflect change in fashion, and in most cases, serve as a temporal marker for the individual. In others, they serve as part of the personal narrative—regardless of temporality—in which the body is the ultimate physical space for such discourses.

But what happens to these students down the road? Have they considered the long-term outcomes of their actions at such a relatively young age. Will they try to, or have to, hide their tattoos as adults? Many will, ultimately, interview for professional positions in the same way that the authors did, and their decisions regarding interview fashion will be interesting. As they enter colleges and universities, they may find that their tattoos place them in certain social circles before they even have a chance to choose for themselves. These scenarios, and how they influence a student's educative experience, warrant further examination.

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JOSEPH R. JONES

13. BROJOBS, BRO CULTURE, AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

A Call to Reconceptualize How Educators Address Homophobia

Recently, I was working on a research study involving the intersections of bullying and Yik Yak, an anonymous social media app primarily situated on college campuses. The site allows individuals to post anonymous comments, many of which are innocent comments such as “I need to sell my biology book.” While my study examined bullying practices and Yik Yak, I discovered numerous other comments unrelated to my study. One such discovery revolved around heterosexual male to heterosexual male oral sex, which has been termed a *brojob*, a play on the word fellatio term *blowjob*. On Yik Yak, a number of anonymous postings read, “My girlfriend is out of town, and I need head. Anyone want to give a brojob?” or, “Frat boy needs brojob, who can help out.” An entry on *Urban Dictionary*, a site that defines how popular culture defines terms, states that a brojob is “Oral sex between two allegedly heterosexual male friends, particularly when said friends are wasted” (“Brojob”, 2009). The second listed definition reads, “When a guy gives a good friend a blowjob while maintaining non-gayness” (“Brojob”, 2009). Another definition reads, “The act of one bro giving another bro oral sex in a strictly friends way” (“Brojob”, 2009).

After contemplating this recent discovery, I began wondering how prominent brojobs were outside of the collegiate campus. While searching for the term *brojob* on *Craigslist*’s casual encounters and men seeking men pages around the country, I discovered numerous personal ads that offered or solicited brojobs. Some ads read, “gf not around Need a brojob,” “I need a brojob. Looking for a straight guy like myself,” “DL brojob,” “Brojob fun,” “Are you needing a brojob?” and “let me give you a brojob.”

Twitter is also inundated with brojob language. I searched Twitter using *#brojob* and located thousands of entries. For example, one tweet was, “it’s not gay if your hat is turned backwards #brojob.” Another read, “men usually won’t acknowledge it but it happens #brojob.” The culture phenomenon of a brojob reinforces society’s belief systems against non-heterosexual identities and how masculinity and “bro culture” continue to define non-heterosexuality. Through these definitional aspects, the hegemony that surrounds sexuality continues to strengthen, which encourages homophobic bullying.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 101–103.

In this manner, bro culture plays a tremendous role in how society views sexuality. Bro culture is apparent in every aspect of American society. Educational settings have become the commencement point for bro culture constructions. Indeed, athletic teams, fraternities, and other groups create experiences where males develop supportive bonds with each other. After "bros" leave their educational experiences, bro culture continues in adulthood in places of employment, places of recreation, and places of entertainment. Country clubs and civic organizations, among others, are places where bro culture continues to thrive. Bro culture is also prevalent in the military and other male-dominated professions.

Bro culture is a subculture that exists within educational and corporate settings. The most explicit example of bro culture is a White college fraternity. The fraternity is a collection of typically similar males who allow others to enter an exclusive group wherein individuals will be supported emotionally, academically, and socially. In many ways, bro culture has become the conduit to continue the values of hegemonic masculinity, thereby continuing how sexuality is conceptualized in society and educational settings.

Society's conceptualizations concerning sexuality are socially constructed. Thus, institutions in power control the broader narrative of sexuality discourse that exists within our culture (Foucault, 1978). Institutions in power still perpetuate homophobic bullying. Indeed, little progress has been made in educational settings to decrease the amount of homophobic bullying in schools (GLSEN, 2016). I posit that this lack of progress in schools is the result of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity proposes a culturally accepted male behavior that males must attain and implies the dominant position of men within society. It suggests "that men must reach the ideal level of masculinity to be accepted within the community, in turn, continuing the patriarchal dominance that exists within society" (Jones, 2014a, p. 160).

Society rejects male non-heterosexual affection because it threatens the perpetuation of an accepted ideal masculinity. The ideal level of masculinity involves the display of antithetical effeminate behavior and is used to control others, especially weaker males. In society, males must display appropriate dominant attributes to be accepted within their communities. Because of this, hegemonic masculinity plays a tremendous role in the ways that men exert their own power over others who are perceived to be weaker.

Hegemonic masculinity is a powerful force that controls the ways in which society views sexuality—in this case, oral sex between men. Specifically, hegemonic masculinity deems brojobs acceptable because the act is surrounded and supported by bro culture, which epitomizes the attributes of masculine behavior. The reclamation of a sexual act by two men and the renaming of that act remove the femininity and subordinate nature of the act. As a result, the act is no longer an unacceptable behavior. Bro culture impacts the way that society views sexuality by allowing men to embrace masculine identities while engaging in practices that traditionally would be labeled non-heterosexual and deviant by patriarchal standards.

The brojob phenomenon on the college campus (and, by extension, the broader society) illuminates to us the power of hegemonic masculinity in our schools and our society. As educators in K-12 and higher education settings, we must begin addressing how hegemonic masculinity functions within our schools and continues to construct our definitions and views of non-heterosexual behaviors and relationships. Hegemonic masculinity demands a rigid form of masculinity and rejects and marginalizes any non-adherent individuals who do not maintain the rigid attributes. Indeed, it controls the way that our faculty, our staff, and our students view sexual difference. Because of its detrimental influence, we must begin exploring how we can dismantle its power.

As an educator, I realize the dire need to begin addressing how all educational settings must search for ways to disrupt hegemonic masculinity, which will impact the broader society's view of sexuality. I postulate that we must begin finding a space in our curriculum, in our student affairs programs, and in other spaces of our educational experience where we can address hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity begins at birth and is a vicious process of exclusion. When a high school student hates attending school and does not want to attend college because he believes that it will be filled with the same homophobic bullying (Jones, 2014b), it should be a catalyst for K-12 and higher education personnel to begin addressing the current school climates. How many students must commit suicide before we reconceptualize how we address homophobic bullying across our campuses? Many of our current attempts to create safe schools for non-heterosexual individuals are making little to no progress. Students still feel unsafe, unloved, and unwelcomed within the schools (GLSEN, 2016).

Hegemonic masculinity has created educational settings that devalue and dehumanize non-heterosexual identities, and many anti-homophobic bullying programs across campuses do not consider the role that hegemonic masculinity plays in the construction of school climates. Therefore, as educators, we must begin reconceptualizing how we address homophobia in our educational spaces; in doing so, we must construct methods to dismantle the power of hegemonic masculinity.

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MICHELLE HERRING

14. YOU HAVE TO GO TO THEM

Like any new teacher fresh out of college, I was eager to teach children all of the wonderful things that I had learned in my undergraduate years. I felt well prepared to teach, having had training from some of the best professors in the country. I wanted all students to have the opportunity to learn everything that I had learned about music.

My undergraduate music studies focused on Western European classical music, delving into music of the masters such Claudio Monteverdi, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig Van Beethoven, and Igor Stravinsky. Analysis of each era of music and the social and political ramifications opened my vistas to classical music in ways that were new and exciting. In music theory classes, we analyzed form and structure, which provided further insights into my own expressive interpretation. Private voice lessons consisted of singing classical vocal repertoire. In vocal ensembles, we sang music by composers considered to be in the Western canon.

Before college, I had very little exposure to the inner workings of classical music. I did not prefer art music because I did not understand it, but through my training, I began to appreciate it and even enjoyed performing as a soloist and in ensemble settings. I was eager to open new pathways for my own future students.

Little did I know the challenges that I would experience when applying the pedagogical techniques that I had learned to the middle school choir. Teaching was more complicated than just disseminating content and expecting musical excellence. I had to motivate by building strong relationships and by creating curriculum that was relevant to students' lives.

In this chapter, I will describe the journey of my middle school girls' choir as we struggled with connection and understanding during my first year teaching. Through trial and error, I found the instructional strategies and pedagogical techniques of culturally relevant pedagogy most helpful in understanding student backgrounds and connecting their cultures to the curriculum. Culturally relevant pedagogy will then be defined as a pedagogical method for connecting with students from all backgrounds. Practical applications of the tenants of culturally relevant pedagogy will then be discussed within the context of the middle school choir. Finally, I will present pragmatic uses of culturally relevant pedagogy in training future music educators at the college level.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 105–123.

I'M NOT LIKE YOU. YOU'RE NOT LIKE ME

I am presently the assistant professor of choral/general music education at a small university in the Southeastern United States. I teach undergraduates how to become choral music educators in public schools. Along with basic pedagogical elements such as classroom management, instructional strategies, and curriculum development, I also teach methods for connecting with students and strategies for addressing sociopolitical issues in the music classroom. Culturally relevant pedagogy is an underlying theme in every course that I teach, and I instruct future music educators on ways to implement it in their own classrooms.

My interest in culturally relevant pedagogy stems from my experience as a choir director in an urban middle school in Texas. My students were demographically, economically, and culturally diverse. In utilizing the elements of culturally relevant pedagogy, my students and I forged stronger understandings of our backgrounds and, thus, stronger teacher and student relationships.

When I began teaching, I wanted my students to have the same *Aha!* moment that I had experienced in college with regard to understanding classical music. My first teaching job was unique in that I had been a student, and this was where my own musical journey began—in sixth grade choir. In addition, my mother, brother, and uncle had also attended this school. Some of my former middle school teachers were now my colleagues, and the assistant principal was now my boss. Teaching at this school was like "coming back home."

But can you ever really go back home? I found that the student population had changed. Many of my students came from backgrounds unlike my own. I grew up as a middle-class Jewish White girl. As a teacher, the demographic of my school was now over half Latino, with fewer White and even fewer African American students. In addition, there was a small population of international students who were not native English speakers. From a socioeconomic perspective, some students were incredibly rich, living in the most expensive homes in town, while others were homeless, moving from hotel to hotel in the worst parts of the city.

At the district level, the No Child Left Behind Act allowed students in low-performing schools, those who consistently earned failing scores on the annual standardized exam, the choice to leave their campuses and attend a high-performing school. The district provided free transportation to students for the school of their choice, and the host schools were required to accept them. Some principals used school choice to rid their campuses of discipline problems, causing a negative impact on the host schools. Also, the majority of low-performing schools in our district were in predominantly minority, low-socioeconomic neighborhoods whereas our school was in a predominantly White, middle-class suburb. The transition was difficult for new students and current students because both were adjusting to children with whom they may have never interacted. Similarly, teachers found it challenging to teach the new students who were academically mediocre, compared to the current student body.

Although I was excited to teach choral music, many of my students were not excited to learn. In fact, they were not enthusiastic about singing in general. While several students chose choir as their music elective, others were placed in choir for various reasons. The choir class had become a dumping ground for students with discipline problems, students who could not afford band or orchestra instruments, and students who thought that choir would be an easy class.

Not only was there an age gap between my students and me, but there was also a socioeconomic, racial, and religious gap. Similar differences between the students themselves frequently created division and conflict in the school. In addition to the typical cliques found in any middle school, disputes centered around socioeconomic and racial differences. There was often an air of “us versus them,” or indifference toward others who did not directly affect a student’s day-to-day life. The division was clear when I observed the cafeteria during lunchtime, on my morning bus duty, and in my classroom. I would hear students gossiping about each other in the hall, see students avoid sitting together in the cafeteria, and witness physical fights in the courtyard. Getting students to work together was a high priority for me if the choir were to be successful.

Choral music is a group activity. In fact, Merriam-Webster (2016) defines *choir* as an “organized company of singers.” Unlike math, or art, or even physical education, choral music requires a group of people working together to exist. Teamwork is not a pleasantry but a necessity. If my students would not work together, the quality of the choir would suffer. Some of the dislike for other students was innate and had been reinforced in previous school years by peers, teachers, and parents. It seemed an impossible task to create unity within the group in order to reach musical excellence.

I began the school year with team-building activities to develop familiarity between the students. For a teacher, these team-building activities were an interesting phenomenon to observe. The students did activities wherein they had to communicate with each other to achieve a specific goal. For example, in one activity, students had to take off their shoes and put them in a pile in the middle of a circle. One person closed their eyes while the others instructed the student to the whereabouts of their shoes. With their eyes remaining closed, the student then had to put on their shoes and fully tie them. The students also did a “human knot” activity in which they would stand in a circle and grab two different hands of another in the circle. Then, they had to untangle the knot without releasing their hands. This exercise required many different leaders because everyone had a different view of the knot. The students had to work together to solve a problem. It was fascinating to see which students would take leadership roles and those who chose to be silent and watch.

As the teacher, I had the opportunity to conduct the team-building exercises and observe student behavior. I was able to surmise the perceived leaders and followers in each group and note who was confident or shy. I also observed body language; some students would seem restless while others would sit or stand still. Some students would begin activities with a shy demeanor but would relax once they started having fun. Other students were completely willing and outgoing from the onset and would do anything that I asked.

While these team-building exercises brought most of my choirs together, the varsity girls' choir was still divisive. There were 13 girls in that class, all from different backgrounds. Most of them were eighth graders and had been in choir for three years. During that time, some had been fueling conflict and disagreement among each other in the choral program. It also seemed that they believed that being the varsity treble choir meant that they were the best choir in the school and that hard work was not necessary.

The girls were accustomed to singing difficult music, which for our middle school was in three or four voice parts. Based on their previous accolades, I chose three-part music for their first concert. The girls could read the notes, but musically, they sounded mediocre. The chords never sounded in tune because everyone was trying to sing over each other, and most of the girls would sing as loud as they could so that they could be a "superstar." They would not listen to each other to match their pitch, vowels, or timbre, and although I would ask, only a few would try to comply. Eventually, students would get frustrated and revert back to their solo voices. We had to get back to basics.

I had the girls turn in their music and gave them one song: "Pie Jesu" by Gabriel Faure. Despite being a unison piece, it is difficult. "Pie Jesu" cannot be performed to its musical potential unless everyone is singing in perfect unison; the choir had to sound like one voice. The students received the music, glared, and groaned. Some reminded me that they had been singing four-part music last year and that unison music was for beginners. I explained that singing unison music was difficult because it takes great skill to have many singers match their pitch, timbre, and vowels simultaneously. They were still skeptical.

As we worked on "Pie Jesu," they were still unable to sing as one. They remained as divisive as they ever were, bickering with or ignoring each other in class. The eighth graders were derisive of the two seventh grade students in the choir, one of whom was a native of South Africa. I was literally preaching to the choir, and nothing was happening. Clearly, the traditional instructional strategies that I had learned were not effective. I had to think outside of the box.

One day, the girls walked into class, and all of the chairs were stacked up on the risers. The girls asked, "Where do we sit?" I told them, "You won't be sitting today. You will be standing in a circle in the middle of the room." Confused but obedient, they obliged. We started our normal vocal warm-ups, and I asked the girls to close their eyes while singing. There was an immediate focus in the room. I then asked them to hold the hand of the person next to them while keeping their eyes closed. As we sang our unison warm ups, they started to sing together. I told them to listen and see if they could sound like the person next to them. Their singing sounded like glass: smooth and clear. It was beautiful, and the girls were excited. They started talking to each other about how good they sounded. This was the first step of many in creating a sense of unity in the varsity treble choir.

To this day, I am befuddled as to why the singing in a circle activity succeeded. I have often wondered if it was the girls hearing their potential and deciding it was worth the work. Other times, I have thought that they had an *Aha!* moment when they heard their sound. The greater goal of a beautiful sound may have overshadowed the dislike that they had for one another. A third theory is that the girls were just tired. It may have been exhausting to put in the effort of not liking someone every day or finding ways to make fun of her. Perhaps it was far less exhausting to release that tension and work together toward a common goal.

For the purposes of this chapter, I contacted some of the girls from that choir and ask them their thoughts. I was able to reach two of the girls, the two seventh graders in this story. One student, Jane (pseudonym), is currently a first-year middle school choir director. I reminded her of the story and asked her what changed that day when they held hands in the circle. She said,

> It put us all on an even playing field because I know I was timid, because I was a seventh grader trying to fight eighth graders… I think it just made us all… it was just a humbling thing. Singing in a circle and really listening and then holding hands was something that connected us and made us feel a part of something bigger… a bigger family. It forced us to be better listeners and to sing out into the circle and really connect with the music and each other… We were immediately connected. I don't know if it was that physical holding hands or singing in unison, I'm not exactly sure what caused that. I remember being able to let my guard down a little bit more. (personal correspondence, September 23, 2016)

Caroline (pseudonym) had similar thoughts about that day. She revealed that, unlike the previous director, I arrived demanding excellence and standards from the beginning. She said, "Part of it was that you just set a high bar for us" (personal correspondence, September 23, 2016). Similarly, Caroline mentioned the physical and mental connection that happened that day: "Obviously there was that physical connection, but also the sensory and visual aspect too. When we saw each other, we knew we had to work together" (personal correspondence, September 23, 2016). Additionally, she remarked that, when standing in a circle, "the tools were more tangible when you could see the faces you work with" (Personal correspondence, September 23, 2016). Caroline said that the circle formation shifted focus from the teacher to the ensemble. I became the facilitator of learning rather than the disseminator of information.

We continued singing in our circle every day. The girls would stand next to different singers each rehearsal and begin laughing together and supporting each other. I started incorporating music in multiple parts, and the girls worked hard together to sing each piece beautifully. Choir class became a family. If a girl was having a bad day, we would support them by discussing their problem or making them laugh. We often would do group hugs, which would make everyone laugh, including the girl facing a problem. They knew that choir was a safe place where everyone supported each other. It is a special bond that many of them still share today.

Once a year, middle school choirs from our region performed a concert for adjudicators, who would evaluate and score our performance. After the concert, choirs would read a song at sight for a different set of judges for evaluation. The scores earned from the concert and the sight-reading portions were often used to evaluate teacher competence, which was stressful to many. When we arrived to our performance venue, the girls and parent chaperones got off the bus and went into the lobby. I asked the girls to form a circle and hold hands, and I reminded them of our journey and how proud I was to be their teacher.

I asked the girls to say what being in choir meant to them that year. After each response, we gave each other a hand squeeze in the circle. Some of the responses resembled, "Choir for me has meant having a family," "Making friends I never thought I would have," "Singing better than I have ever sung in my life," "A safe place," and "Choir is what I look forward to every day." This choir became more than just music class to these girls. They had forged friendships as they worked toward a common goal. I told them, "When you sing today, bring that joy to your judges. You never know what kind of day they have had or what's going on in their lives. They don't want to hear robots. They want to hear music. I believe in you, and I'm beyond proud of the young women you have become this year." Then we performed.

The stage was huge, and there were many larger choirs from other schools that could fill the stage. We were not one of those choirs. Instead of the traditional choral riser formation, the girls made a semicircle in front of the stage. Just before we were to sing, one of the girls asked, "Can we hold hands?" Proudly, I said, "Of course you can." Before they performed, I said, "Give them your gift." They sang beautifully and felt every note, many with tears in their eyes by the end. Pride beamed from the girls and from me. Our performance scores were negligible at that point because we had accomplished a bigger goal: unity through music. When we finished, the judges applauded, which is unusual and certainly discouraged. The girls earned sweepstakes—the highest scores possible at this contest.

For the remainder of my teaching tenure, the varsity girls' choir held hands in their performances. Every year, a new member would ask me why they hold hands, and I would tell the story all over again. Henceforth, in the varsity treble choir, girls knew that they were expected to work together and to work hard. I continued maintaining high expectations for my students in all of my choirs. I made an effort to get to know them personally and work through issues that were troubling them. Without knowing it, I had started the path of implementing culturally relevant pedagogy into my classroom.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

After five years in the classroom, I returned to school for a master's degree in music education. My work as an educator led me to research cultural relevance while in graduate school. I was specifically drawn to culturally relevant pedagogy, a method of teaching built on the cultural identities of students.

Culturally relevant pedagogy, or CRP, supports curriculum that is sensitive to and non-judgmental toward the cultural backgrounds of students (Brown & Cooper, 2011). Irvine (2010) further characterizes CRP as enhancing students' success by acquiring knowledge of their cultural backgrounds and translating this knowledge into instructional practice (p. 58). Gay (2000) describes a culturally relevant pedagogue as one who "teaches to and through the strengths of ethnically diverse students" (p. 29).

Researchers also have described CRP using terms such as *culturally appropriate*, *culturally congruent*, *culturally responsive*, and *culturally compatible* (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Ladson-Billings (1995) coined the term *culturally relevant pedagogy* and defined three criteria for CRP: academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness.

Academic Success

The first criterion, academic success, refers to student learning in the classroom. Culturally relevant pedagogues ensure academic success by setting rigorous learning objectives, engaging students in critical thinking, holding high expectations and long term goals for students, and utilizing real-life examples to help students understand difficult concepts (Young, 2010). Meeting students' classroom needs, such as adapting to student learning styles or ensuring that students have classroom materials, may be important for all teachers to consider, especially when trying to reach students whose backgrounds differ from the teacher. Culturally relevant pedagogues can meet student needs by incorporating a multicultural curriculum and bridging cultural gaps (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). According to Mason (2010), "within music education, multiculturalism is often used when referring to world music or music that is not American or Western art origin" (p. 29). Depending on a variety of factors, ethnic differences might also reflect socioeconomic issues that may affect the classroom.

For example, Irvine (2010) describes an incident in which a teacher modified a teaching method to the students' cultural backgrounds. The topic of the day was classification, and students were to sort items that were alike and unalike. When the students were shown a photograph of kale, they could not identify it. Some students identified kale as collard greens. A similar response occurred when the students were shown a photograph of broccoli. The teacher then recalled the students discussing different kinds of cars they had seen in the school parking lot that morning. The students were more knowledgeable about the different makes and models of cars, so the teacher applied the topic of the day to cars instead. Students classified cars based on make, model, model year, color, and cost. The teacher taught classification by adjusting instruction and making the content culturally relevant.

It is important that teachers have high academic standards for all students regardless their background. According to Lind and McCoy (2016), music educators face unique challenges regarding academic rigor and meaning in lessons. The authors posit not only that our students come from diverse backgrounds with different learning styles but that many of our students also have very different experiences in music. Students with several years of private instruction may be working alongside peers with little or no background in music study (p. 69). Lind and McCoy (2016) caution teachers who provide enrichment activities solely to advanced students who study music privately because teachers may inadvertently be reinforcing the differences among their students. Rather, teachers may consider having students collaborate in classroom learning communities where the teacher and the students alternate the facilitator of learning role. Such an instructional strategy may promote democratic principles, benefit a variety of learning styles, and encourage student use of their previous knowledge.

Academic success is achieved by having a rigorous music education curriculum and believing that all students, regardless of background, can meet expectations. In my classroom, I assign projects with enough structure to be understood but with enough lenience for students to be creative and to develop a product of which they can be proud. Below are some practical examples of academic success in both the middle school choral classroom and at the higher education level.

Show me what you know! The final concert of the year was called “Disney Darlings.” The performance consisted of large ensemble performances as well as solo performances by students. The students performed in the cafetorium (cafeteria transformed into an auditorium) where parents enjoyed a banquet hosted by businesses in the local community. The cafetorium was beautifully decorated each year by parent volunteers and students. The transformation of the cafeteria was truly majestic.

Disney Darlings was a completely student-run performance in that students oversaw the lighting, sound, and stage management. While I helped with music preparation, the students created choreography and decided the costuming for large numbers. The soloists practiced with me, and we collaboratively discussed stage blocking, props, and costuming. Most times when the soloist would ask for suggestions regarding their performance, I would ask them, “Well, what do you think? What would be most effective?” I believe that this discourse allowed them to think critically about their project, as they were autonomous in the decision making process.

The best part about this experience, from a teacher perspective, was watching the students excel on their own. My job during the show was to sit in the front row and to cheer for them. I also made welcoming remarks and handed out choir awards at the end of our final performance. Every year, I felt proud seeing my students become independent and apply their knowledge. It was when I was no longer needed that I knew that I had done my job.

Because Disney Darlings was a fundraising event that hosted 300 people each night, there was pressure for the show to be successful. There was always an expectation that every student would do their best and continue the tradition of excellence with the show. Each year, the students tried to top the show from the previous year. While some students were able to showcase their solo singing, other students were able to help with costumes, makeup, and choreography. It was a rigorous task every year but one that students accomplished with pride. Students were a vital part in the success of Disney Darlings. Each of them brought their experience and strengths to the project.

Academic success at the college level involves implementing a concentrated program of study wherein undergraduates develop instructional strategies that formulate their personal teaching style. For example, undergraduates learn how to teach a choral rehearsal frame in methods courses. One assignment is to prepare three songs with a local middle school choir to be performed in a choral festival at the end of the semester. They have the autonomy to decide which songs will be performed (with the help of the school's choir director), the order in which the songs will be prepared, and whether they will include choreography. It is the undergraduate's responsibility to find a piano accompanist for their portion of the concert. They must also decide what their singers will wear and collaborate with the school's choir director on transportation to the event. While students utilize class time to ask questions such as "What should I do about ______," I try to allow the class the opportunity to provide answers to the question in addition to mine. It is my hope that the student has many possibilities from which to choose when formulating their decisions.

A choral festival serves as the class final exam where middle school choirs from the county travel to our university performance hall. One by one, the university students conduct their middle school choirs in front of a live audience and their peers. The undergraduates are often amazed at what they accomplish, and because they had autonomy with many aspects of the project, they are even more proud.

Cultural Competence

The second criterion of CRP, cultural competence, is defined as providing opportunities for students to recognize personal cultural values and beliefs while acquiring access to the wider culture. Gay (2002) posits that teachers acquire factual information about the cultural characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups by learning about students as individuals. Young (2010) conducted a study surveying urban elementary teachers and administrators on their use of culturally relevant pedagogy in relation to Ladson-Billings' definition. Within the criterion of cultural competence, Young (2010) found that three themes could foster cultural competence among teachers: "know your students, build relationships with your students, and affirm students' cultural identities" (p. 252). She states, "to know the students well required the teachers to know them beyond the walls of the school; it meant taking a personal interest in them as individuals, not simply as pupils behind desks" (p. 252). The second theme that Young discovered was that positive student relationships were accomplished by instruction that was relevant to the students' lives. The third emergent theme in Young's study, affirmation of students' cultural identities, best demonstrated the connection of students' origins to multicultural literature in the classroom.

According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), it is important for teachers to acknowledge, not ignore, the diversity in the classroom. In order for activities to have the maximum effect, they must occur on a daily or weekly basis. A one-time superficial activity such as an ethnic food day will not have the same effect as frequently dancing and singing songs or reading folktales to teach cultural competence. Culture should be interwoven in the curriculum throughout the year and used as a springboard for equality (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

An important aspect of cultural competence is taking a personal interest in students' lives. In the following example, I discuss the importance of building positive, personal relationships with my middle school students. I tried to find ways to better understand who my students were outside the classroom in order to build curriculum that would meet their academic needs.

Getting to know you. As stated earlier, many of my students were not like me. There were generational, socioeconomic, racial, and religious gaps between us. I had much to learn about my students and their backgrounds, so I often found myself hosting lunch in the choir room or going to lunch with students in the cafeteria. This was a great way to see my kids in a different light—around their friends. We would talk about music that they were listening to, who was dating whom, and what was happening at school. We would also talk about high school, college, and future plans.

Inevitably, someone would ask me if I was coming to (insert random sporting event, dance recital, play here) that evening. I would always try to rearrange my schedule to go to a game, gymnastics meet, play, or talent show. Again, attending these events allowed me to see my students in a different environment. Also, I was usually the only teacher at such events. The students and parents could see that I cared about them and their lives outside of the choir classroom. Did it consume some of my personal time? Yes! But I believed that attending such events was a short-term investment for a long-term goal. While I was sacrificing an evening to attend a middle school football game (short-term investment), I was strengthening the teacher/student relationship (long-term goal). My students believed that I was invested in them personally and, thus, may have felt a stronger connection to the choir.

Unlike many teachers, I would have my students for all three years of middle school. Building relationships took place in and out of the classroom environment. For example, I used early morning or after-school bus duty to get to know my students as well as others in the school. Students would often walk up with their headphones on, and I would ask them about their music. Many times I would get, “Sorry, miss. I’ll put it away.” I would usually say, “No, come over here. Let me hear it.” I would inquire about the artist and the name of the album. Sometimes, I would request a recording of the song so that I could listen to it, too. In addition to learning about students’ music preferences, inquiring about the latest music trends kept my own music listening current. I use similar strategies discussed above in building relationships with my undergraduate music education majors.

Getting to know my undergraduates is an important part of my job. I sing with my students in our university-sponsored community chorus. Singing together is a great way for us to bond as we work through difficult repertoire. There are also community members in the choir from a variety of backgrounds and age ranges. During the day, the community members and students lead lives with various tasks and responsibilities, but for two hours each week, we are all the same; we are all there to make music.

Singing in the choir helps me appreciate my students in a different light as well. I get to hear their musicianship, to see their discipline, and to experience their success. Participation in this choir gives me the opportunity to recognize when they are struggling with particular aspects of music or are afraid to sing out for fear of singing incorrectly.

The students also experience working with me outside of the classroom setting. I usually arrive in a t-shirt and jeans, to which the students comment, “You look comfortable.” I usually reply, “I’m off duty,” and we laugh. The conductor is a colleague of mine, and I respect her expertise by arriving on time to rehearsal, being prepared with my materials, and being attentive.

Although I am their professor, I am not perfect. My students get to see me make mistakes in the music and learn and improve from them. Mistakes are how we grow and are a necessary part of the process. Through singing together, my students and I build a relationship that may not exist with classroom interaction alone.

Utilizing student experience in the curriculum is an important component of cultural competence. Below is a personal example of how I utilized student backgrounds in the middle school choral curriculum. In this way, I was able to develop a deeper understanding of my students, which created a stronger teacher/student relationship.

In my classroom, Thursdays were listening activity days when students could write a song title on the classroom whiteboard for study. Of course, the songs had to be appropriate for the classroom, free of expletives or references to drugs or sexual activity. After I screened the song and typed the lyrics, we would study the music. The students would listen to the song in its entirety and answer listening questions (see, Appendix A). We would also discuss the themes of the song and how they were reflected in the students’ lives, themes such as faith, heartbreak, loneliness, conflict, or rejection.

Similar to the team-building exercises, I could learn a lot about students through their song choices. With permission, students whose songs were chosen for the weekly listening activity explained their song choice. Sometimes, they would pick music with heavy themes of hurting and heartbreak and would describe a person or an event that was troubling them. Other times, students would pick a Christian rock song and would describe their faith. Occasionally, we would listen to hip hop music that would address the societal inequalities that students faced. From time to time, students picked a particular song simply because they liked it. It was interesting to see students relate to one another through song choice or the way that the song made them feel. We had some wonderful classroom discussions and were able to use the students' music to discuss musical ideas in class.

Every once in a while, we would analyze a classical piece that I provided. We listened to "Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine" by Eric Whitacre, a song that I performed in college choir, and discussed how the composer made the voices sound like a flying machine. I shared that being able to sing in the college choir was difficult for me since I was unable to read music when I entered school. This was the first song that I sang without fear because I felt competent in my music-reading ability. Through my experience, I hoped to extinguish any fears that they may have had about singing or reading music. These conversations, spurred from the listening activities, created a different lens through which we could learn about each other.

The choir room was a safe place where we could objectively discuss why we liked or did not like a piece. The students were not allowed to simply say, "I don't like this." They had to explain their dislike using music vocabulary (the tempo, the singing, the genre, etc.). Such a process encouraged students to think critically about music without offending their peers.

Academically, students were able to use the music vocabulary that they learned in class and apply it to different genres of music. Bringing students' music into the classroom environment may have bridged the gap between school music and home music. Also, students provided the content of the lesson and, thus, brought their previous knowledge and backgrounds into the curriculum. Through their music, we could discuss social issues and examine sociopolitical topics in the classroom. Being conscious of sociopolitical concerns and how they affect student lives is the third element of CRP.

APPENDIX A—LISTENING ACTIVITY

“Open Arms”

Elbow

You’re a law unto yourself
And we don’t suffer dreamers
But neither should you walk the earth alone

So with finger rolls and folding chairs
And a volley of streamers
We can be there for tweaks and repairs
Should you come back home

We got open arms for broken hearts
Like yours my boy, come home again

Tables are for pounding here
And when we’ve got you surrounded
The man you are will know the boy you were

And you’re not the man who fell to earth
You’re the man of La Mancha
And we’ve love enough to light the street
‘Cause everybody’s here

We got open arms for broken hearts
Like yours my boy, come home again
We got open arms for broken hearts
Like yours my boy, come home again

Everyone’s here
Everyone’s here
The moon is out looking for trouble
And everyone’s here

Everyone’s here
Everyone’s here
The moon wants a scrap or a cuddle
And everyone’s here

We got open arms for broken hearts
Like yours my boy, come home again
We got open arms for broken hearts
Like yours my boy, come home again

Everyone’s here
Everyone’s here
Everyone’s here
Come home again

The moon is out looking for trouble
The moon wants a scrap or a cuddle
The moon is face down in a puddle
And everyone’s here

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJV71cW40OQ

Listening Questions

1. How would you objectively describe this piece?
2. What is this song about? How does this transfer to the world around us?
3. How many voice/instrument parts do you hear?
4. In what setting do you think you would hear this piece?
5. Did you like this piece? Why or why not?

Sociopolitical Awareness

The third criterion for CRP, according to Ladson-Billings (1995), is sociopolitical consciousness. It is defined as the ability to acknowledge the structural inequalities and racism that exist in society and education. According to Gay (2011), culturally responsive teachers "challenge racial and cultural stereotypes, prejudices, racism, and other forms of intolerance, injustice, and oppression" (p. 31). Such pedagogues strive for social justice and academic equity within their classrooms, the wider school community, and the education system. Discussion of sociopolitical issues in the classroom "builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities" (p. 31). Culturally responsive teaching questions the structural inequalities in the education system that negatively impact students of color (Lind & McCoy, 2016). Lind and McCoy (2016) posit, "For learners, culturally responsive teaching transforms the way they [the students] see themselves in terms of their personal efficacy and in relation to their cultural communities and the larger society" (p. 19).

Race should not be ignored as an aspect of CRP, as it is often the cause of alienation and hostility that characterizes the school experience (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Critical race theory, or CRT, is used in education to "analyze social inequity that is covertly demonstrated through racist practices within academic institutions" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 70). The purpose of CRP is not to criticize but to acknowledge race. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) encourage sociopolitical consciousness among teachers regarding the possible effects of race on student achievement. According to the authors, "CRT provides a framework and for some a tool of analysis for examining educational practice and structures that continue to subordinate groups of people" (p. 71). Culturally relevant pedagogy provides a means by which to deliver such instruction.

Racism is interwoven into the social, political, and economic institutions of society. At the macro-institutional level, racism may not be overtly noticeable. This covert racism could result from "acts of indifference, omission, and refusal to challenge the status quo" (Spears, 1977, p. 129). In essence, institutional racism is not a direct malicious act but a rational act to those who seek to benefit from its implementation.

An example of racism in education is and unintended effect of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative. NCLB was an attempt by the federal government to close the achievement gap between majority and minority student populations. According to Gay (2007), the rhetoric used in NCLB does not reflect the reality of its implementation. The purpose of the NCLB initiative was to ensure a quality education for every student. Under NCLB, students were required to take the same test at the same time in the same way. This may not be a realistic structure for schools with diverse populations. Gay (2007) cites many researchers who provided evidence that students learn and demonstrate knowledge in various ways. Learning experiences can be further varied by race, ethnicity, culture, identity, and socialization. In addition, Gay (2007) states that the learning styles of a diverse student body should be welcomed as assets, not liabilities. To avoid negative scores on the school's report card, students who struggle with the English language are sometimes pardoned from taking standardized tests. Some students of poverty and some ethnic groups may not have the linguistic skills associated with Standard Academic English and are not included in any English-language learner categories. Ultimately, according to Gay (2007), minority students may be suffering from the consequences of NCLB.

Saunders (2007) presented a series of experiences that drew him to explore racism in the classroom. Specifically, he recalled listening to rap music on television and realizing that rappers were not solely rapping about sex, drugs, or crime but also about their social struggles. When Saunders (2007) used words such as *ghetto*, students would insist that "life is more complex than any set of stereotypes can capture" (p. 186). Saunders (2007) notes some challenges to the discussion of race in the classroom: being of Caucasian descent and discussing racism, encouraging students to think critically about how to rectify racism in schools without solely taking inventory of racist events, and bridging gaps with students so that they may feel comfortable to discuss racism.

Sociopolitical consciousness in the classroom involves creating a space for students to discuss global social issues within the context of curriculum. I believe that music—and any art form, for that matter—can provide a means for students to identify and interpret current events and critically reflect on society. The following is one way that sociopolitical consciousness is applied at the college level.

Let's talk about it! Current events and viral videos often provide an opportunity to have a sociopolitical conversation in my undergraduate music education classes. I use social media with most of my students and can see articles or videos that they post to their timelines. Sometimes, my students will send videos or articles that they would like to discuss in class. This is one way that students are contributing to the curriculum based on their cultural backgrounds.

Most recently, we discussed Dwayne Reed, a fourth-grade teacher from Chicago, Illinois. A first-year teacher, Reed wrote a rap for his students, created a music video, and posted the video to *YouTube* (Gotham, 2016). The lyrics inform the kids that they will have fun but will work hard in Reed's (2016) class. He also tells the students that he is excited to meet them and to be their teacher:

Wel-come to the 4th grade, so ha-ppy to meet you,
Can’t-wait til I see you, we’re gonna have a good time
We’ll-learn about science, find-ways to apply it
I bet that you’ll like it, we’re gonna have a good time

Hello, I’m your teacher
My name’s Mr. Reed, and it’s very nice to meet ya
I’m from Chicago, I love eatin pizza
And I dress to impress, but I’ll still wear sneakers

It’s my 1st year teaching, so it’s all real exciting
Got some ideas, and I’d really like try them
Like making songs to remember what ya hear
We’ll be learning so much, but the end the year

To my friends and my peers, the parents and the students
I’m ready, you’re ready, we’re ready, Let’s-do-this, (YEAH)
But absolutely no day-dreaming
Working hard til the bell starts ringing

Wel-come to the 4th grade, so ha-ppy to meet you,
Can’t-wait til I see you, we’re gonna have a good time
We’ll study mathematics, division and addin
And don’t forget fractions, we’re gonna have a good time

I’ll always greet you with a smile
I’ll always try to make the lessons worthwhile
And when you do good work, I’ll acknowledge
Cuz I know that you’re headed off to work or to college

So we gotta keep it positiiiiiive, that’s the is key
Have respect for each otherrrrrr, and don’t forget ME
Have respect for yourselves, and the staff, and the school
Having fun can be cool, when we’re following the rules—nah, nah

Time’s gonna fly (breath)
Before ya know it, you’ll be movin in to grade 5
But for now, we’ll be workin, and a-learning, and a-singing
All the way til the bell starts ringing

Wel-come to the 4th grade, so ha-ppy to meet you,
Can’t-wait til I see you, we’re gonna have a good time
We’ll learn about English, write papers and read them
A-pluses, you’ll see them, we’re gonna have a good time

Go teacher! Go teacher! Go teacher! Go teacher! (Reed, 2016)

In addition to describing the expectations that Reed set for his students, my class discussed music advocacy. Reed is a general education teacher, not a music educator, but used music to welcome his students. In his song, Reed (2016) said that he has new ideas that he would "really like to try," such as using music to help students retain information. We talked about how music will help Reed achieve his goal and how important the arts are in education.

We also examined sociopolitical aspects of this video. Reed is an African American male elementary school teacher. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), during the 2011–2012 school year, 76% of teachers were female. Additionally, only 18% of American teachers were teachers of color, with 82% of teachers being white (NCES, 2013). Based on the data, students may encounter a male teacher less often than a female teacher, and even fewer male teachers of color.

The impact of Reed being a male, African American elementary teacher was of particular note to my class. All students, both African American and White, talked about Reed possibly being a role model for African American boys and, for some, a father figure. The students reminded me of billboards that they had seen advertising the importance of being a father, many of which showcase African American men.

Reed utilizes hip hop and rap music genres as a means to reach his students. My students noted how hip hop and rap have traditionally been an avenue to debate social issues affecting people of color and how Reed uses it as a way to reach students with a familiar genre. In the song, Reed (2016) informs students about himself: "I'm from Chicago, I love eatin' pizza/And I dress to impress, but I'll still wear sneakers." He also primes his students for what they will be learning in class as well as the high academic and social expectations of his classroom. Importantly, my students noticed that Reed (2016) provides the students with what they could expect from the teacher: "I'll always greet you with a smile/I'll always try to make the lessons worthwhile/And when you do good work, I'll acknowledge." In this way, Reed understands his role in helping the students be successful.

One quote of particular note to my students was "Cuz I know you're head in off to work or to college" (Reed, 2016). The general consensus of public schools has been that every child would go to college, my class noted, and were deemed a failure if they did not. However, there are some students who do not want or need to go to college to have a successful career and choose vocational or on-the-job training. They mentioned the importance of plumbers, electricians, cosmetologists, and others who are in important and valuable professions that do not require college degrees. I shared that, in my youth, adults would try to scare children into working hard by saying, "You don't want to work at McDonald's when you grow up, do you?" I told my students that, in the morning when I am tired and hungry, I am thankful that Ms. Tracy is at McDonald's to take my order. Moreover, I have watched Ms. Tracy greet me, take another order, answer questions from another employee, and process my payment all at the same time. Ms. Tracy is important to keeping me doing what I do every day. Discussing current events, articles, and videos in the classroom creates a critical discussion of the world around us—a world in which they will soon be educating.

Culturally relevant pedagogy includes racial discussion and its sociopolitical impact on student culture. CRP not only provides a means to present music through a cultural lens but also encourages academic success therein. The elements of CRP—academic success, cultural consciousness, and sociopolitical awareness—can be applicable to any grade level and any subject area from elementary school to higher education.

YOU HAVE TO GO TO THEM!

When I was teaching in public schools, my goal was to create instruction and curricula that were relevant to students' lives so that all of my students would learn the life skill of making music in their respective demographic, economical, and cultural environments. As a professor, I have a goal to help students think empathetically about their future students' lives and critically about the education system. I want my undergraduates and future educators to make the effort to truly know their students outside of the classroom. The students will not always come to you; you have to go to them. *You* have to go eat in the lunchroom. *You* have to go to sporting events. *You* have to listen to their music. *You* have to incorporate their cultures into the curriculum. *You* have to ask them about their day. *You* have to tell them you are glad that they are there. *You* have to be their advocate. *You* have to make them feel important and valuable. *You* have to go to them.

By no means am I advocating for the absence of cultures outside a school's demographic in the curriculum. However, I believe that, when students have a deep connection to curriculum, the experience can be more meaningful to both teacher and student. I am advocating that, as music educators, we find creative ways to incorporate students' cultures into the classroom. I encourage educators to seek ways to understand why their students see the world the way they do and how this worldview is expressed through classroom content. I strive to embolden educators to utilize curriculum that may help their students process social issues permeating our world today. In doing so, teachers and students become co-facilitators of learning and are personally invested in the curriculum.

It is my goal that students graduate feeling important and valuable and that their backgrounds are viewed as assets and not deficits. I hope that, as educators, they will inspire and empower their own students to change the world around them and will continue to work toward social justice and fight inequality in their classrooms. I hope that they will forge strong relationships with their students built on truth and understanding. In the words of the late Rita Pierson (2013), "Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be." By empowering our students to achieve greatness and challenging them to empower the next generation, that is how we change the world.

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JONAI SORRELL

15. THE MINORITY FROM THE MAJORITY

"Did your group discuss a solution, Yaria?" asked Mrs. Tate.

"I don't know what they said," retorted Yaria. "Just take all of the White men and get rid of them. Send them all away!"

Jim's jaw dropped. Listening to the comment felt like watching a toddler stick a fork in a socket.

"Why would you want to get rid of Jim?" asked Mrs. Tate. Yaria's eyes widened. Mrs. Tate knew that Yaria forgot that Jim was in the room, the only White American in the classroom. Both teachers and the students were African American. "I like Jim's opinions and reading his classwork and definitely would not want to see him shipped away. I think that would not be a solution to promote equality. I think it would cause a greater problem. It doesn't bring people together."

Jim would fit in anywhere in America, Europe, or Canada. He doesn't get followed in stores or told not to "loiter" if he stopped to check his phone when leaving a gas station. If he'd gotten pulled over by the police, Jim wouldn't be nervous or afraid for his life. However, on the average school day, Jim got stares, glares, jeers, and various slurs thrown carelessly in his direction because he was part of less than 1% of the White American population in his Title I school in his Southern town. Jim was about 5-foot-9, had brown eyes and dark brown hair, and was rather rotund in the trunk of his body. He also had brown stains on his teeth from where his braces were removed incorrectly.

When people hear Title I, they automatically think illiterate African Americans. Jim was neither of these things. In fact, he loved to read, to write, and to watch anime (*Dragon Ball Z* was his absolute favorite), and he loved his English class.

"I wish you were my stepmom," said Jim to his teacher. "You're the only one who really understands me."

"Well, Jim, you have an old soul," replied Mrs. Tate. "Make sure to submit your sonnet before Friday."

Throughout the day, Jim waved at his English teacher, and she would check on him in return. "How's your day going?" she'd ask.

"Pretty good," he replied with a smile.

Mrs. Tate didn't know how the rest of Jim's days went, but she hoped that they went well. What she did know was how difficult his life was at school. She tried to guide discussions in her class that would make students feel safe to be honest and give input. She found that Jim would often inadvertently be the brunt of comments. Once while teaching about persuasive writing, there was a class discussion about Martin

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 125–128.

Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," and Yaria made the comment that made Jim cringe and left him speechless.

"Don't punish me for what my ancestors did," pleaded Jim.

"He has a point," Mrs. Tate added. "Jim didn't do the things that the men in the '50s and '60s did."

Yaria twisted her face and frowned. Her group members laughed at her. Jim looked at Mrs. Tate and smiled.

"That was terrible," another student commented. "I think we should educate students when they are young about what prejudice means and how it can hurt people," the student continued.

"Excellent suggestion," said Mrs. Tate. "Everyone take out your excerpts of the letter, and let's continue annotating in our groups."

The students all began rumbling in their binders, and soon the hum of conversation filled the room. Mrs. Tate walked over to her co-teacher.

"That was awful," said Mrs. Tate. "They don't think before they speak."

"Do they ever?" replied Mrs. Thomas, shaking her head. "I knew they would come up with something ridiculous." This wasn't their first discussion on this precarious topic. "Remember when they watched *Selma* on reward day?"

"Yep. R'tavious yelled out, 'I hate crackers!' It was awful," recalled Mrs. Tate. "And the worst part is, Jim was truly the only one paying attention to the movie. The rest of them were on their phones or were being rude. I had to remind them that, if the situation was reversed and someone used the *N*-word, they would be ready to fight." The two teachers chatted until class ended.

When planning the next week's lessons, Mrs. Tate paused. She wanted to make sure that nothing she planned could warrant another rude response like Yaria's. It made her feel as though she had failed Jim. In an instant, the discussion went awry, and Jim was the casualty. This could have happened in only three out of six classes. These three classes each have one White American student. Zane was in first period. He had a quirky sense of humor that Mrs. Tate always had to explain. Jim was in third period. Maya was in her last class of the day, seventh period. Mrs. Tate found herself defending, shielding, and protecting them throughout the school year.

How do you do it? How can you make the environment safe for a minority in the classroom that is also the majority in the country? At times, the Black students can be resentful and insensitive. Jim was an incredible student and a sincere being. He didn't deserve the scorn and stereotypes placed on him. All that Jim wanted was to let the class know that he wasn't like those stereotypes. It was like watching him yell in a bullhorn to a room full of deaf people.

The readings for the following months avoided any racial topics and were chosen carefully. Mrs. Tate continued to ensure that all voices were heard in her class. As different texts were chosen, they spanned through various genres. Eventually, they came to a text that stirred the still waters of the racial classroom sea.

"This week, we will be reading a short story by Flannery O'Connor called 'A Good Man is Hard to Find.' It is not a romantic story," said Mrs. Tate.

The students were instantly drawn in, still expecting it to be a romance. Mrs. Thomas read to the class, and most of the students followed along. Some began to drift in and out of consciousness as Mrs. Tate quietly tapped them to keep them awake. Suddenly, one word awakened the whole class.

"[The *N*-word]s," rang out and echoed from the repeating voices of the teenagers.

"This story was written in the early '50s. In the past, people used that word very commonly, even by people who thought that they weren't racist. It was embedded in society," explained Mrs. Tate. Even though she tried to divert the topic, the students all named the same thing when asked about character traits.

"They're racist!" random students yelled.

"Did any of you see ANY other characteristics," exhaled Mrs. Tate.

"No!" yelled a student.

The bell rang, and they all stood. "We'll finish the story tomorrow!" said Mrs. Tate. As they exited, a chill crept over her. The great classroom debacle from King's letter sprang into her mind. She reminded herself to give specific guidelines about discussions. During her planning, she went to her academic coach for suggestions. She prepared her presentation with care and made sure that she would make herself as clear as possible about what could be said and what could not be said during discussion.

The next day, the class created their recap of the story. Each group shared, and then Mrs. Tate reminded them of their learning goal.

"We're analyzing characters. So as we read, remember to write down new traits we see from the characters," said Mrs. Tate.

Mrs. Thomas read through the story. The students became more interested the closer they came to the true conflict of the story when the main character discovers the escaped killer. The characters meet their chilling ends, and the analysis begins.

"Each group will have three to five minutes. Give all of the character traits you all can find in the text about the main family in the story. EXCLUDE any notations on racial slurs," instructed Mrs. Tate. The discussion that arose was pleasingly appropriate. Time soared by, and it was time to share. "All right, guys, let's go to the randomizer. If it lands on you, tell us what your group discussed," said Mrs. Tate. "Kito, tell us what you all discovered."

"We discovered that the main character is racist," he said proudly.

"What did we say in the instructions?" asked Mrs. Thomas exasperated.

Mrs. Tate's mind began to race. She didn't want the conversation to focus on racism and, thus, result in another attack on Jim. Thoughts dashed through her head. Maybe she would implement a consequence for bringing up racism? Or perhaps five points off of the discussion grade for a negative comment.

"Jim!" said Mrs. Thomas. "What does your group think?"

"Well, we concluded that the children were spoiled and rude. The antagonist was a maniac and couldn't remember his crimes. And that the grandmother was racist," said Jim.

"Remember, the colloquialisms and language is a sign of the times. The 1950s South raised people this way," added Mrs. Tate.

“I know. But the times were wrong. It was never OK to say that word. I hate it. I hate that it exists, and I hate what my ancestors did to Black people. There’s no excuse. They’re racist and prejudiced, and that makes them incorrigible people,” explained Jim.

The class went quiet. Before Mrs. Tate could part her lips, the bell rang, and the class ascended from their seats.

“Bye, mom,” said Jim.

Mrs. Tate smiled at him and waved. In spite of the stones that the students tried to underhandedly throw, Jim kept his integrity. Not only did he keep his integrity, but he spoke with genuine intelligence and sincerity. Was it appreciated? Was it heard? Or will the students choose to hang on to what they want to believe? Mrs. Tate hoped that some of the students were truly listening and that they could make new conclusions from experience. If they could, she felt that something more powerful would be learned in her classroom than the textbooks could ever teach.

TRACEY DUMAS CLARK

16. THE “PAYNES” OF THE DEFICIT MODEL

The need to understand and respect diversity has always been the plight of public education. Every day, students from various backgrounds, cultures, and socioeconomic statuses gather together for the common purpose of gaining knowledge. Educators face a constant challenge to meet the personal and social needs of each individual student while ensuring that all receive an equitable education. Many may find themselves questioning how to best serve children of poverty in light of recent economic challenges (Noll, 2011, p. 133). As a result, the ideas and opinions of experts are innumerable when it comes to answering the question “How can educators best serve children who are economically disadvantaged?”

To answer this question, many have consulted the work of Ruby Payne (2011), an individual best known for her work in teaching educators on meeting the needs of impoverished students through the use of the deficit model. In her publications, Payne has suggested that marginalized students lead lives in their home setting that often conflict with the design of the school setting. Her teachings have provided educators with a blueprint for understanding and addressing the characteristics of families who live in poverty. She has encouraged educators to “insist on high-quality work and offer support” (Payne, 2011, p. 135). In her research, Payne (2011) provides nine easy steps for addressing the needs of underprivileged students. Her writings deal with this difficult issue using a formula that all educators can understand. Payne (2011) has made it easy for teachers to implement her nine steps of (a) building relationships, (b) cultivating a classroom community, (c) teaching students how to code switch, (d) identifying student resources, (e) showing kids the secret rules of school, (f) creating and monitoring progress plans, (g) moving from concrete to abstract, (h) teaching students how to question, and (i) developing relationships with parents. Payne (2011) has worked diligently to enlighten readers of the power that the gift of education provides students by allowing them to access choices that may move them out of poverty.

Despite Payne’s eloquent organization of strategies for assisting students through the deficit model, it could be argued that, when educators begin to focus on all of the things students do not have, they tend to forget about all the valuable assets their pupils do possess. In contrast to Payne’s work, Sato and Lensmire (2011) conclude that “children from poverty are being identified and labeled with grossly over generalized, deficit-laden characteristics that put them at risk of being viewed as less capable, less cultured, and less worthy as learners” (p. 141). In some cases, teachers have begun to use sympathy as a means for expecting less from impoverished

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 129–132.

students because they are too consumed with the students' outside circumstances. In an effort to better understand their students' diversity, educators who are not cautious may find themselves falling into a cycle of stereotypes that actually hinder the student's progress. Sato and Lensmire (2011) reminded readers that, while we do not want to underplay the stresses on some children who live in poverty, "we do want to advocate for a perspective that sees these children and their families as histories, and cultural beings, full persons with dreams and aspirations of success, with abilities to use language with sophistication, and with intelligence that may be underappreciated in schools as institutions" (p. 141).

Satos and Lensmire (2011) readily acknowledge Payne's (2011) righteous efforts to offer educators assistance in addressing the needs of marginalized students. However, they also identify a number of ways in which her frameworks are counterproductive in the task that they were created to achieve. What Payne (2011) refers to as "behaviors related to poverty," Satos and Lensmire (2011) consider stereotypes. They conclude that "Payne's work is a classic example of 'deficit thinking,' where students who struggle or fail in schools do so because of their own internal deficits of deficiencies" (Satos & Lensmire, 2011, p. 142). These authors fear that, while Payne attempts to help people suffering from poverty, her frameworks only contribute to society's negative views of poor people. They conclude that Payne has painted a picture that "the poor have inadequate language and inadequate brains, they fight, [and] they're loud" (Satos & Lensmire, 2011, p. 143).

In her work, Payne (2011) also fails to demonstrate the rich culture and value that disenfranchised students have to offer their schools. Her focus tends to reside upon the negative effects of poverty as opposed to the rich language, traditions, and experiences that these students have to draw from. Satos and Lensmire believe that educators should spend more time learning about the marginalized students' aptitude as cultural and thoughtful people as opposed to dwelling on their alleged shortfalls. They note that research on the role of cultural relevance in classroom teaching identifies how students' culture—the values, beliefs, practices, and experiences that they bring with them from their homes, communities, and heritage—can be an integral part of a student's successful academic experience when teachers know how to relevantly build on them (Santos & Lensmire, 2011, p. 143).

These authors also encouraged educators to place themselves under a microscope and study their own personal beliefs and ideas in dealing with children of poverty (Satos & Lensmire, 2011). They argue that Payne's framework allows a profession dominated by middle-class White females to view themselves as normal in comparison to their students. Essentially, Payne (2011) envisions educators as saviors. Satos and Lensmire (2011) accuse Payne of playing on "our sense of ourselves as normal, the norm, as well as our sense of the poor as different, other" (p. 145). These authors in turn encourage educators to journey down a path of self-discovery as not to fall into the trap of believing that their students need to be saved. Santos and Lensmire (2011) conclude that no list of simplistic strategies can fully address the complex issues of poverty and that educators must understand themselves and their worldviews before they can truly be able to engage their students. They work to persuade teachers to “ask students questions, to get to know them as thinkers, as children, and as people” (Satos & Lensmire, 2011, p. 146).

In turn, while reading Payne’s (2011) “Nine Powerful Practices,” I must admit that I experienced a rash of emotions. Initially, I completely agreed with the first few statements that she makes. For example, Payne (2011) acknowledges early in her writing that a respectful relationship between teachers and students means that “teachers both insist on high-quality work and offer support” (p. 135). Agreeably, I also fully support that high expectations for all students are a valued necessity in any classroom. My experiences as an educator have been solely in Title I schools with a high population of low-income families, and on countless occasions, I have witnessed educators expect less from their students based upon socioeconomic status. I have dialogued with teachers who compassionately make excuses for their students’ academic failure based upon financial class. It has always been my belief this type of sympathy is unacceptable. Marginalized children do not need their teacher’s pity. Pity does not offer students a way out of poverty; setting high expectations and a commitment to educating them beyond their situation does.

As I continued reading Payne’s (2011) article, I found her nine practices to be universal items that educators should implement regardless of a student’s socioeconomic status. Her rationale for applying these practices struck me as generalizations that did not apply to all children of poverty. Though impressed with Payne’s attempt to address such a complex issue, I agree with Sato and Lensmire’s (2010) list of stereotypes promoted in Payne’s work, which further supports my feelings of uncertainty concerning the reasons that Payne provided for her nine practices. Sato and Lensmir make excellent efforts in addressing not only the needs of students but also the educator’s need for self-assessment in developing effective ways to teach children in poverty. They succinctly state,

> If we want to help teachers develop awareness and pedagogies that are sensitive to children who live in poverty, we must first challenge the misinformation that is being disseminated and set a new course. This direction should have three key features: an emphasis on children’s competency, a focus on the teacher’s cultural identity, and a professional development model based on ongoing collaborative work among teachers. (Sato & Lensmir, 2010, p. 141)

Ultimately, my greatest issue with the work of Payne (2011) is her approach to instruction as a deficit because the term implies that students are broken and that there is a special formula out there to fix them. Further, Merriam-Webster defines the word *deficit* as “a deficiency in amount or quality” and “a lack or impairment in functional capacity” (“deficit”, n.d.). Neither of these definitions paints this model in a positive light. Therefore, I conclude that, while I’m not sure if I fully support all of her tactics, Payne is on the right track by helping to increase educators’ awareness. However, awareness of the issues that affect students of poverty are equally as important as educators working to increase their awareness of their own personal worldviews.

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MICHELLE VAUGHN

17. PRESERVICE TEACHERS LEARNING ABOUT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVENESS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL IMMERSION

The classrooms of today are becoming more and increasingly diverse, thus requiring teachers who are culturally responsive and able to work with students of differing backgrounds. As the United States becomes more and more diverse, teacher education programs must take this unprecedented growth in consideration and review their current programs (Santoro & Major, 2012). Teacher education programs are charged with the task of preparing our teachers to work with students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (Skepple, 2014). Taylor (2010) recommends that teacher preparations programs be aware of their responsibility to equip pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive. As the diversity in our P-12 schools expands, we are unfortunately not seeing this same level of expansion in the cultural responsiveness preparation with our teachers. Research suggests that teacher education programs should offer courses in which multicultural education is the topic (Schellen & King, 2014). Similarly, after informal conversations with pre-service teachers, it seems that their knowledge of cultural responsiveness lacks because there appears to be an absence of specific courses solely devoted to this vitally important subject matter. Although many teacher education programs have the topic infused within their coursework, the question has arisen of whether teacher education programs need to devote specific courses to culturally responsive pedagogy. If so, how many hours? Or is it just as useful and does it adequately suffice to offer classes infused with culturally responsive pedagogy? Although many teacher education preparation programs are already devoting multiple hours to culturally responsive pedagogy course work, are the materials, guidance, reading material, and other resources in the class enough to give our future teachers the knowledge required to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population?

Over the course of my career, I have served as a college professor teaching courses in the initial certification program as well as serving as a university supervisor for our pre-service teachers in the field, and a few themes have risen regarding the pre-service teachers' knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy. A common theme among students' knowledge in response to culturally responsive pedagogy is catering to our English-language learners, who most of the pre-service teachers believe are Spanish speakers. Although Spanish-speaking students are of great importance and their needs need to be attended to by pre-service teachers, they are not the only ones in the class whose needs must also be met.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 133–143.

In our teacher education preparation classes, we constantly discuss how to be more culturally responsive in the classroom. One common question that I ask each class and each student whom I am guiding through their fieldwork is "When we are planning and teaching, whom are we culturally responsive to in the classroom?" If I am in my college classroom setting, I have my students get into groups, and they brainstorm a list of the students whom we should be culturally responsive to in the PK-12 classroom. After we come back together as a class, the pre-service teachers begin popcorning answers of whom they think we need to be culturally responsive to in the classroom. "Students of color" is a common response from each group and each class to which I have posed this question. I then ask a stream of questions:

- How many students are usually in a class?
- If you have X number of students in the class, how many learners do you have in your class?
- Take a look around the classroom; are you exactly like anyone in this classroom?
- Think about your students; will any of those students be exactly like anyone in their classroom?
- So, if you are not like anyone in this classroom and your students are not like anyone in their classrooms, how many different students do you have in your classroom?
- If all of the students are different in your classroom, how many diverse learners do you have in your classroom?

Being able to go through this stream of questioning or questions similar to these questions allows pre-service teachers to quickly gain a deeper insight to the diversity that already exists in our classrooms and is growing year by year. Our pre-service teachers need to understand that teachers who are culturally responsive respect the diversity of their students (Taylor, 2010). For diversity to be respected, teachers need to be able to identify the diversity.

As stated earlier, a common response to the question of "When we are planning and teaching, who are we culturally responsive to in the classroom?" is those students of color. I often relate a personal story of how people of the same color can be very diverse:

> *If you look at my husband and me, we have the same skin color. However, we each come from a different background. My husband grew up as a military brat in Germany, Ethiopia, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Alabama. His father was a lieutenant colonel in the US Army, and his mother was a nurse. Most of his immediate family and extended family were college graduates, some having advanced degrees. On the other hand, I was a first-generation college student. My dad job-hopped for a while, and my mother started off working at a factory, later on landing a sales job. Although I knew that there were cultural differences between my future husband and me, the differences were blatant the night of our rehearsal dinner. My future husband and I sat side*

> *by side with a line of tables to his right, seated with his family, and a line of tables to my left, seated with my family. The cultural differences between the two families were evident; his family was much quieter whereas my family was more vocal and active. Eating etiquette was different between our two families. For example, when my cousin was up getting another piece of bread to enjoy with his meal, his brother yelled across the room to grab him another piece as well. Everyone looked up in time to see a piece of bread being thrown across the room by one brother to another. Something of this nature would have never occurred with my husband's family.*

If you had put my husband and me in the same classroom, our teacher would have had to understand the cultural differences, albeit subtle, between us to be able to meet our differing educational needs. Yes, our skin is the same color; however, what we believe, how we believe, and what we have experienced make us vastly different. We need to view our students the same way. Each of our students comes to us with varying experiences, beliefs, ideas, and philosophies. How do we, as teachers, instruct our students based upon these varying differences? One way to begin is within our teacher education programs. The first and most basic step is to update our teacher education programs. These programs need to provide pre-service teachers with the necessary instruction in the college classroom as well as experience in the field where they are introduced to environments containing a diverse student population. However, these experiences must end with this step. Teacher preparations programs need to supplement these experiences with applicable courses in which collegial conversations can take place, courses in which the pre-service teachers and instructors can discuss the experiences and review research-based culturally responsive pedagogy approaches to ensure that the pre-service teachers have the skill set required to meet the requirements of their diverse learners.

Currently, I am a professor at a private university that has a relatively small student population and located in the Southeast United States. The following is an excerpt from the university's mission statement: "to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve" (Mercer University, n.d.). Although this is the mission statement for the entire university, it is my opinion that this should be the mission statement for all teachers. In hopes of facilitating an environment for my pre-service teachers to be able to practice each of these components, a transformation is necessary in some cases.

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the definition of the word *transformation* is "a complete or major change in someone's or something's appearance, form, etc." ("Transformation", n.d.). The transformation that needs to take place is in the pre-service teachers' knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy knowledge and practices. After being involved in conversations with pre-service teachers as well as being out in the field observing their teaching practices regarding being culturally responsive in the classroom, I recognized that a transformation needed to occur in their own culturally responsive knowledge but that, more importantly, this new knowledge also needed to be applied. Therefore, structured, supported experiences needed to occur for this transformation to occur (Kambutu & Nganga, 2008).

When pre-service teachers can venture out and take part in an international field experience, the experience can cause the pre-service teachers to become transformative (Marx & Moss, 2011). Being in a structured, supported experience would allow the pre-service teachers "to teach, to learn, to create, to discover, to inspire, to empower and to serve" (Mercer University, n.d.), which in turn would allow them to be more effective teachers who are able to be more culturally responsive in the classroom. Sharma, Phillion, and Malewski (2011) suggest that "participating in well-organized and structured programs such as study abroad infused with opportunities for critical reflection is one way of preparing multicultural teachers" (p. 21). Kambutu and Nganga (2008) explain that "carefully planned international cultural experiences promote cultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation" (p. 949). An outreach and service-learning program for the university, Mercer on Mission, would allow us to be involved in opportunities in which we would be able to critically reflect on our cultural responsiveness and have a better understanding of what we needed to do as pre-service teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of our students. These future teachers need exposure to environments where they can self-reflect and gain an idea of their biases so that respect for the differences between them in the classroom can be made (Keengwe, 2010).

For pre-service teachers to start the process of understanding cultural responsiveness, they need to look within. Walters, Garii, and Walters (2009) advise that, when pre-service teachers are in an international setting completing fieldwork, they can "evaluate their understanding of their world, their practice, and their students in less formal, less didactic settings" (p. 158). For the pre-service teachers to be able to move forward after an evaluation of their understanding has taken place, a teacher preparation program must support this evaluation and foster possible changes that need to take place as pre-service teachers become more culturally responsive.

Taylor (2010) proposes a model wherein teacher preparation programs can readjust their practices that are currently in place. Taylor (2010) explains that culturally responsive pedagogy comprises three dimensions: (a) institutional, (b) personal, and (c) instructional (p. 25). The institutional dimension reflects the administration and its policies and values. The personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional processes that teachers must engage in to become culturally responsive. The instruction dimension includes materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction (Taylor, 2010, p. 25). The institutional dimension, as Taylor (2010) explains, is an important part of the university's plan to ensure the most productive, knowledgeable, and effective teachers are produced. As a faculty member, my role in administration and policy is limited. However, my role in the personal and instructional dimensions is what my entire body of work as a college professor and university supervisor encompasses.

MERCER ON MISSION

Soon after I took the position of being a college professor, I identified the need for our pre-service teachers to become more culturally responsive. Although I infused culturally responsive pedagogy into all of my courses, I wanted to provide students with the opportunity to explore culturally responsive pedagogy and apply their newfound knowledge in a classroom different from the standard fieldwork offered through the university. There could not have been a more appropriate opportunity for this application of practices to take place than Mercer on Mission.

Mercer on Mission Background

In 2007, Mercer University launched an international service-learning program called Mercer on Mission (MOM). MOM is a five-week summer program that begins in a Mercer classroom with students taking two three-hour courses and concludes with students scattered around the world for three weeks, engaging in life-changing service projects. According to Mercer University Religious Life (n.d.), "The twofold purpose of Mercer On Mission is: to provide a transformative experience for Mercer students through focused learning and meaningful service and to make an important and lasting difference for people living in the Majority World."

The recruitment phase consists of several presentations to prospective students, as we provide information about the upcoming MOM trip, including but not limited to destination, what the program will entail, and the expectation of the program participants. Although we attempt to choose students who we think would be the best for the program, it is important that we consider characteristics such as those students who are self-motivated, culturally sensitive, and flexible (Jacob, Swensen, Hite, Erickson, & Tuttle, 2010). Once all of the applicants are carefully screened and the program participants are selected, they meet several times before departure in preparation for the trip abroad. The participants are required to register for two classes that will start on the mission trip and be completed upon their return to the university. While abroad, the program provides pre-service teachers the opportunity to observe the local teachers, plan and teach alongside teachers in the native classroom, participate in service-learning opportunities, and visit the country. These activities allow participants to be immersed in the culture of the country, and they provide a very eye-opening experience.

It has been my pleasure to have sponsored two Mercer on Mission programs with a third one currently in the works. My first MOM program was conducted in Cape Town, South Africa. My second program was in Belize, and our next program will be Bungamati, Nepal. Each program provides the students with opportunities to immerse themselves in a culture very different from their own. The pre-service students were able to explore opportunities that removed them from their comfort zone, resulting in adventures that broadened their horizons and expanded their cultural responsiveness far more than could have been imagined.

On Our Way to Nepal! No, Wait! We're Going to South Africa??

During the spring of 2014, we were invited to bring our pre-service students to Nepal. Soon after accepting the invitation, the planning phase of the trip began, and the recruitment phase began in the fall of 2014. Our team consisted of two university professors and 16 students, both graduate and undergraduate. During the months leading to the trip, the team conducted an in-depth study of Nepal focused primarily on the culture. Extensive readings and study took place so we could gain an insight to this far away land. We felt that, by our providing the pre-service teachers with initial training concerning the diversity of Nepal, their learning experience would be enhanced (Keengwe, 2010). We wanted them to get an idea of the people, the customs, the beliefs, the religions, the economics, and everything that makes up Nepal.

We did not expect the tragic event that would take place on April 25, 2015; a massive earthquake devastated the country of Nepal. Due to the utter devastation and unrest, the United States Department of State placed a travel advisory for US residents to Nepal. While our thoughts and prayers went out to the citizens of Nepal, we had 16 students that needed the courses that were to be offered on this MOM program to graduate, and we had no destination. The week after the earthquake, the team rallied together to discuss options, and with the departure only three weeks away, time was of the essence. Cape Town, South Africa, was chosen as the new destination, and preparations were quickly put into place. As this destination was a surprise to many—and with two weeks until departure—there was not a great deal of time to prepare for the cultural immersion about to take place. This change resulted in many participants going in with a blind eye. Thankfully, our host in Cape Town was extremely helpful. He was able to provide cultural information to our group, giving us a "crash course" in what was to be expected when we arrived at our school the second morning of our program.

Our learning experience took us to a school located outside of Cape Town, South Africa. The school, located in Mitchell's Plain, served learners from the township of Khayelitsha. Although poverty stricken, the students managed to come to school every day with a smile on their faces and eager to learn. The excitement of having new faces in their buildings seemed to ignite a sense of curiosity among the South African students, one that also found its way to our pre-service teachers. The apprehension in our students was quite obvious, and rightfully so. Being in a new environment can cause such apprehension. Thankfully, our pre-service teachers jumped into the new environment with unbridled enthusiasm, eyes wide open and ready to learn all that they possibly could, and learning is exactly what happened.

In any experience, especially one such as this one, the persons involved will most likely have a change in their cultural outlook. This experience was a complete cultural immersion experience, which allowed the students to identify their cultural responsiveness shortcomings, reflect on the shortcomings, and (hopefully) depart the immersion with a wealth of experiences and new knowledge that would positively impact their cultural responsiveness in their future classrooms. When the students arrived in South Africa, a few volunteered to offer their definition of culturally responsive pedagogy. At the onset of our experience these were some of their initial explanations of cultural responsive pedagogy:

- Student 1: "Culturally responsive pedagogy means stepping into [the school]… and adapting teaching skills to what the students are used to."
- Student 2: "To me, cultural responsiveness comes from the teacher listening and responding to the students. By interacting with students, even at a surface level, one gets to understand the students and their culture."
- Student 3: "My definition of culturally responsive pedagogy is simple. It is the best way [practice] of teaching learners when there is a different culture involved, taking laws, social rules, etc. into account. It isn't 100 percent teaching my way; it is very much teaching my way while adapting to their practices."
- Student 4: "Culturally responsive pedagogy is being aware of the diverse backgrounds of all students and striving to be sensitive and accommodating to them all in teaching practices."
- Student 5: "Being culturally responsive recognizes the importance of each student's culture beliefs or practices."

After spending almost three weeks in the classrooms getting to know their students and working alongside the cooperative teacher(s) in the school in outside of Cape Town, our students and their practices were transformed. Their definitions of culturally responsive pedagogy were altered:

- Student 1: "Respecting and adapting to principles and standards that are already in place. I am here to offer support [and] guidance and [to] suggest improvements. However, when I enter a new culture to go teach in, I must show respect. I am no better and no smarter than anyone else here."
- Student 2: "My definition… continues to play on the idea of taking the time to know your students and where they are coming from. To be culturally responsive is to invest in your students. To be culturally responsive is [to] allow one to be valued, heard and respected in the classroom."
- Student 3: "Culturally responsive pedagogy is teaching the best way possible but adapting the content/routines/methods that they use every day to reach maximum knowledge/learning."
- Student 4: "Culturally responsive pedagogy is the practice of education with awareness of the cultures of your students in mind. This includes teaching with awareness for the materials' sensitivity and the classroom climate."
- Student 5: "Being culturally responsive to me is being more than just a teacher of subjects but digging deeper into your students' individual lives/culture in order to connect the subjects to them personally. I believe [that], when a student feels that you really know and genuinely care, they respond to you differently. Students

> will work hard when you are interested in who they are as an individual and their performance increases."

One of our students was able to reflect and offer insight as to how she grew as a teacher. She stated, "I did not expect the response I received from my fourth-grade class at… [the school]. The more I got to know the students, the more I wanted to know about them and their families. They really opened up to me, and we shared each other's culture. Then I applied it all to instruction, and they were fired up to learn—showed more appreciation for learning. I was more fired up about teaching once the connection was there. It became a win-win!"

On Our Way to Nepal, Again! No, Wait! We're Going to Belize??

When we returned from our South Africa learning experience, it was time to start planning for Nepal again. The previous year had led to a strong relationship that was built with our host in Nepal. Our invitation to come and learn in Nepal still stood, and so did our desire to do so. I felt that we were needed in Nepal now more than ever. Our recruitment efforts were underway, and the candidates for this program were excited about Nepal being the next MOM program. Unfortunatley, the plans came to a screeching halt; Nepal had recently ratified a new constitution. However, India did not approve the recent ratification of Nepal's new constitution and unofficially blockaded all trade coming into Nepal between their borders, resulting in our Nepal program being suspended again. This information of the suspension was received after we had recruited our team for the 2016 program. Fortunately, we had enough time to properly plan for our new location, which was Belize, and thankfully, we had a team who understood.

During our MOM trip to Belize, we had the opportunity to serve in a small village in the interior of the country. The village is located in the Cayo district, comprised of mostly farmlands, and did not have electricity. We spent two weeks in this sparsely populated village working in the government school comprised of over 200 students spanning from infant 1 (kindergarten) to standard six (eighth grade). The participants were assigned one to each grade level, except standard six, as this grade was reviewing for the end-of-year exams, and standard four, which received two of our pre-service teachers.

Our first group of students made huge learning gains while in South Africa; each student was challenged culturally, and many were able to make cognizant changes to be more culturally responsive. Therefore, upon returning from South Africa, I started thinking how I could facilitate this change more effectively among our pre-service teachers during the next MOM program. One change that was made for the Belize trip was the textbook for one of the classes (Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko, & Stuczynski, 2011). Using the textbook as a resource to instruct the students was beneficial for the learning outcomes about cultural responsiveness. When pre-service teachers are immersed in any field experience, they need to be involved in explicit instruction about cultural responsive pedagogy (Bennett, 2012). This book allowed the students to pre-assess themselves regarding being culturally responsive, and it helped students identify areas in which they should be more cognizant as well as areas that they needed to focus on to effectively meet the diverse needs of their prospective students. Some of those areas identified were strategies, materials, communication, standards, and assessments. This book gave us a platform to guide us through a reflective process, which is needed to be culturally responsive. For participants to be reflective practitioners, they needed to be taught; therefore, the participants needed to be involved in diverse experiences wherein reflection is consequential. It is necessary for pre-service teachers to be reflective, but the reflection needs to be required and assessed to be meaningful (Rychly & Graves, 2012, p. 48). The daily discussions among the pre-service teachers gave them the opportunity to put into use their evolving skills as reflective practitioners. The diverse experiences were a daily occurrence for the students, and for the preservice students to be able to meet the needs of their diverse learners, they would have to critically reflect on exactly what was going on in the classroom, who their learners were, what they were teaching, how they were teaching, and who they were as teachers.

At the conclusion of the experience, the students were asked if their level of cultural responsiveness evolve during the experience. There responses are as follows:

- I think, coming in, I didn't really even understand what cultural responsiveness was. The definition of it, I understood that, but I didn't know how to apply it or where it would come into work in the classroom, but I think [that], being fully immersed in the different culture and then working with students of different cultures and learning about their cultures, I was able to be culturally responsive and apply it in the way I taught in the classroom and the way I interacted with them… wrote lesson plans, and did activities with them.
- I've done study abroads with teaching before… I have done a lot of traveling, and I thought I was immersed before, and I felt that way… but being actually in the school and teaching and working with another teacher and learning more about how to learn about the students' backgrounds and teach with them and just how to revolve everything around the students, depending on their culture, has changed my way from before.
- I absolutely think it did. When I first got to Belize, I wasn't exactly sure of what cultural responsive was, how or what it necessarily meant to me: as a student; as a teacher; as a person. The longer that I stayed in Belize—the more I got to know the kids—the more I got to know the various different cultures of the people that live in this country—the more I had experience and exposure to different activities and dances and things like that. I'm much more conscious now of other people's cultures then I was before.
- I feel a lot more confident in approaching students in developing relationships with them, just getting the chance to practice that every day. I guess now it feels familiar, and it's easier to access. Back in the States, I used to have this vague

sense that you could connect to students, but it was more of a one-way street, and now, it feels like it's both ways, and I can allow them to affect me as well—to affect my planning and curriculum, I guess.

- I feel like I actually can be culturally responsive now. I've always kind of been in different cultures, diversified in the cities that I've lived [in], but actually being in a classroom with kids that I had no idea what their culture was about and having to make relationships with them and learn based on that culture how they live has made me realize just how different the cultures are and how different each kid's culture is… The ties that we can make between them are extremely important.
- The Belize Mercer on Mission trip completely changed the way I looked at teaching. Instead of teaching to the standards, like I was previously doing, I learned that I need to be teaching to my students. Once I know my students' needs, the standards will come easily.

CONCLUSION

As diversity becomes more and more evident in our classrooms, our teachers need to become more aware and to attend to this diversity in an effective manner: "Diversity is about raising personal awareness about different cultural categories of individual differences, and how these differences enhance or hinder the ways students and teachers generally interact with each other" (Keengwe, 2010, p. 203). Our teacher preparation programs need to attend to the needs of our pre-service teachers and to provide the specific skill set to meet the needs of the diverse student population that the pre-service teachers are about to encounter. One way to prepare our preservice teachers is to provide them with the opportunity to study abroad, where they can immerse themselves in another culture so that knowledge of other cultures can begin to develop (Rychly & Graves, 2012). There is no "one size fits all" model for each pre-service teacher to follow to become more culturally responsive. Each PK-12 student presents their unique challenges, which must be addressed by their teacher if they are going to be academically successful. Being a part of an international experience where they are immersed in a culture different from their own can surely allow our pre-service teachers to become more cognizant of these unique characteristics and to be more culturally aware.

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HEATHER MCKEEN

18. A MICROCOSM IN THE CLASSROOM

When a student is different than the typical college mold within the realm of a class, how do we naturally and unconsciously respond? How do other peers respond? Do we awkwardly pretend that it just does not exist? Or students may not notice that it exists within the context of a classroom setting. Does this circumstance lead to unconscious discrimination or bullying? These were the many questions running through my mind as I was told, “You have a GOALS student in your class this semester, and she will be the first of her kind to graduate from our university as a GOALS student.”

At that moment, the last words spoken made me stop and think. Her KIND? That statement alone disturbed my thought processes, as she was placed in a social category through simple conversation. But he was right; she was a “kind”, a kind of culture that we don’t typically think of as being culturally rich. But she was a culture of ONE in my classroom. She reflected a larger group often overlooked or forgotten beyond the K-12 education. She was a microcosm, and she was a microcosm in my classroom.

For a little background knowledge of the GOALS student, one must first understand the program. Columbus State University (2015) notes:

> The GOALS (Guidance and Opportunities for Academic and Leadership Success) program is a two-year certificate program that provides a college experience for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who received special education services for a developmental disability (i.e., intellectual disability) through most of their K-12 schooling and have graduated high school with an alternative diploma.

How was an educator going to fully immerse this student within the higher educational classroom where she was an essential part of this class family and not a stepchild to it? Having listened to Maria Del Salazar speak to our college, I was already in a sensitive frame of mind to culture and culturally responsive teaching and knew what needed to happen to become a real cohesive unit, respecting our diverse backgrounds. The traditional approach to this class required a change. I wanted positive results for the GOALS student and cultural awareness for my pre-service teachers.

To imagine the classroom environment, it is important to understand this newly adopted teaching philosophy. Think of the typical constructivist approach classroom

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 145–148.

with a blended STEM approach focusing each lesson around problem-based learning. This fusion of instructional styles now needed to have a camera lens that focused on becoming more culturally responsive, responsible, and aware. This kind of teaching was a challenge and took a great deal of thought. However, the question remained, "How do I incorporate these approaches into an already diverse class?" I had to change my style and philosophy to accept more of a melting-pot approach toward teaching, and this became exciting. The question of what to do on the first day still remained a mystery. Whatever I chose to do would set the tone for the remainder of the semester and would either become a complete failure, have no effect, or culturally enrich all parties involved.

Teaching the GOALS student and pre-service teachers needed to be a success. This situation was an excellent way to scaffold learning disabilities within an educational setting for pre-service teachers to gain experience for a situation that may one day exist in their own classrooms. Sharing the diversity together regardless of learning disability, race, or gender was an essential goal of the scaffolding concept. At first thought, this idea may sound easy, but to flow with my blended style of teaching made it problematic. I forcefully set it on that invisible (mental) shelf, as some may have experienced, and let the topic saturate naturally, quietly for many days. Then, eureka!

The journey began with the first assignment on the first day of class. The microcosm was not noticed at a glance. She blended so well with the college environment that, even being aware of the situation, it was hard to pick her out in the classroom. At the end of the culturally responsive teaching lesson, each student was handed a manila folder. The lesson had opened the door for uncomfortable conversations dealing with ethnicity, beliefs, values, etc. The students were assigned the tasks of turning their manila folder into a "suitcase" reflecting their thoughts, experiences, beliefs, and values. This assignment required students to take a blank canvas and transform it into a cultural timeline of their lives. Students were instructed to design, illustrate, and fill their suitcase with items and pictures to express or explain who they were and their history, values, and core beliefs. To prevent limiting or inhibiting student creativity, there were few parameters for completing the assignment. Students were expected to peel back the layers of who they were and create a pathway for the next class session.

The results of the new method would begin to unfold in the next class session. As students chose to peel the open up to the process and be "real," the class was able to understand who they were on a personal level. There were many questions about how the microcosm would handle this assignment. Would she be real and also share the truth? When class reconvened, students were very nervous and unsure of how the classroom climate would evolve. To help facilitate open discussion, my suitcase was the first one presented. My suitcase revealed an unexpected background and created a sense of vulnerability. With shocked looks, students seemed to panic at the realization that they, too, may become publicly vulnerable.

In perfect timing, the tension in the room was relieved when they were instructed to work in small groups. They would have to set their shield and sword down for 24 minutes and allow themselves to become completely transparent within a small group setting. Students were instructed on an effective collaborative method called jigsawing. Under this approach, students were directed to move around the room, meeting and connecting with students like puzzle pieces to a jigsaw puzzle. The criteria were simple; students would have to communicate with each other as demonstrated by the whole group. They were expected to speak with and share experiences with three people whom they did not know. Then they were expected to connect with people whom they thought they knew, with all sharing vulnerabilities with each other for the allotted time frame. The GOALS student was immersed in this activity and did an excellent job with the social experiences put before her. All the while, students recorded what others were sharing and personally finding impactful. The final portion required students to reflect on what others shared to find commonality with their peers to conduct open communication as a whole group.

After facilitating the culturally sensitive conversation, the microcosm closed out the class session by sharing her story with the entire class. As the microcosm spoke, her speech was prearranged and well rehearsed, and she spoke with some struggle trying to find the right words in her vocabulary. Her only goal in life was to become a "teacher helper," or what is typically called a paraprofessional. Her dream job was to assist in a pre-k/daycare setting. Many students were humbled with that simple yet powerful aspiration in life.

This activity allowed for a smooth transition into the chosen culturally responsive text for the next class. The third class day revealed the actual impact of the students' collaborative efforts. *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams—which tells a story about a child, her waitress mother/single mom, and her grandmother—was presented to the class. The story culminates in the family having saved enough money to buy a magnificent chair for the overworked mother to rest in at the end of the day. Fast-forwarding to the culminating activity posed to the students: Can you design and engineer an armchair for the little girl's mother? The materials were restricted to toothpicks (10 cents each) and gumdrops (5 cents each) for the structure of the chair. The other materials or "design extras" were free (pipe cleaners, tissue paper, and beads). The math link: How much does it cost to build the chair? ELA link: Write the steps or action plan used to save enough money to purchase the chair for the family.

The challenge was to blend traditional teaching styles with cultural responsiveness in a manner that an intellectually disabled student could comprehend. Literature was used to introduce the concept on a level for which the GOALS student could understand while at the same time allowing pre-service teachers to grasp the method/approach for introducing STEM teaching. The picture book also opened the door for teaching about other cultural differences, collaboration, and problem-based learning while incorporating STEM and cultural awareness. I call this the hybrid approach to teaching: a style that has evolved in my teaching as new methodologies become more relevant and current.

The microcosm's group was very conscious of her needs, and it allowed for her to take the lead, to communicate, and collaboratively work on the design and structure a chair for the mother. This STEM lesson was called “The Best Seat in the House.” It was interesting to see the intellectual challenges respectfully accommodated and the instant modifications that the pre-service teachers developed for the GOALS student during this lesson despite the intellectual differences. Periodic checks were made, and efficient communication, collaboration, and respect were noted.

Is it possible that pre-service teachers can actively learn from a microcosm in the classroom while she is learning to lead a STEM challenge, to communicate ideas, and to grasp the concept of learning from them? The active and positive inclusion in the higher educational setting was a challenge. Getting full buy-in and support from those around the microcosm in the classroom was attainable, productive, and culturally responsive, providing me as the instructor to have the best seat in the house.

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SHERIKA DERICO AND AMANDA HAWKINS

19. EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE NURSING PROFESSION

A Model for Other Disciplines

Today's nursing students do not mirror the United States (US) population. Diversity and inclusion are significant concerns in higher education and nursing education. The way that nursing schools can support our profession is by finding and implementing solutions to recruit, retain, and graduate men and minority students. However, there are no clear solutions to rectify this concern. Solid solutions for increasing diversity may prove to be beneficial in higher education and nursing education. Collaboration between various entities may possibly resolve the diversity dilemma in higher education and nursing education.

How would it feel to wake up in a hospital in pain needing care and have a nurse that looks like… well, what should a nurse look like? As a Registered Nurse (RN), all graduates take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), a standardized examination for licensing all nursing graduates in order to become professional nurses. So why should one care about the race and ethnicity of a nurse? Patients are all being treated equally—or are they? According to researchers, an important strategy to assist with eliminating health disparities and achieving health equity is to increase the number of diverse nurses to help deliver culturally competent care to the vulnerable populations (Degazon & Mancha, 2012; Institute of Medicine, 2010; Williams et al., 2014). In order to eliminate health disparities and to achieve health, nurses should provide culturally competent care. Culturally competent care involves caring for patients with diverse values, beliefs and behaviors. There are several sociocultural factors that nurses should acknowledge that relate to a patient's culture. Sociocultural factors include but are not limited to sexual orientation, occupation, religion, attitudes, and language. These are some of what shape our values, form our belief system, and motivate our behaviors. Also, social determinants shape individuals' finances and the dissemination of control and resources at various levels. There is overwhelming evidence described in the literature that social determinants have a profound influence on a member of a minority's academic success in nursing education. Increasing the number of diverse nurses who can provide culturally competent care in nursing is warranted. Olsen (2012) notes that diverse nurses may improve patient outcomes by narrowing the gap of language and cultural barriers.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 149–159.

DIVERSITY STATISTICS IN NURSING

According to the United States Census Bureau (2012a), African American, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Asian populations have increased significantly; therefore, increasing the number of diverse nurses would sound like a simple task. Individuals from ethnic and racial minority groups account for more than one-third of the US population, with projections pointing to minority populations becoming the majority by 2043 (US Census Bureau, 2012a). Hispanic and Asian populations are comprised of 37% of the US population, but by 2060, Hispanic and Asian populations are predicted to consist of 57% of the US population (US Census Bureau, 2012a). The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population alone has increased more than three times faster than the total US population, growing by 35% from 2000 to 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2012b). The African American population increased by 41% from 2000 to 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2015). According to the Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (2013), nurses from minority backgrounds represent 19% of the RN workforce. The RN population is comprised of 83% White/Caucasian; 6% African American; 6% Asian; 3% Hispanic; 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; and 1% other nurses. Based on this data, it is clear that the nursing workforce does not mirror the current or changing US population.

According to American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2013), diverse males are not adequately represented in the nursing profession because of feelings of inadequacy, role strain, economic barriers, and fear of gender stereotyping. These barriers may lead to recruitment and retention issues of a diverse male population that may significantly impact successful completion in nursing programs (Loftin, Newman, Dumas, Gilden, & Bond, 2012). In 2013, men in the nursing workforce comprised 9.6% of all RNs (US Census Bureau, 2015). It is well known that discrimination can occur where a power imbalance exists among groups of people. Increasing diversity in nursing programs and the nursing profession may impact the care that diverse populations receive (Bednarz, Schim, & Doorenbos, 2010).

WHAT HAS LED TO THE LACK OF DIVERSITY IN THE NURSING PROFESSION?

Perhaps, the lack of diverse students entering and graduating from nursing education programs is the reason for the lack of diversity in the nursing workforce. Retention is problematic, and the need to retain students from diverse populations is a high priority for the nursing profession (AACN, 2015b). In keeping with the goals of Healthy People 2020 and the Institute of Medicine, nursing schools must be committed to increasing the retention of diverse students in nursing programs to ultimately provide better culturally appropriate nursing care to the vulnerable diverse populations. Imagine if all schools of nursing were truly committed to recruiting, enrolling, retaining, and graduating a diverse, culturally competent health care work force that can adapt to the population's changing health care needs and provide the highest quality of care. Adopting the right solution to retain minority students enrolled in nursing programs is key in order to assist them to progress to graduation.

A variety of factors affects student retention, among them the level of financial need, academic performance, engagement in campus, and institutional support systems. One important element in academia is to have a mentoring program with faculty of similar ethnic backgrounds as diverse students, faculty members who are patient, approachable, available, and encouraging. Nursing faculty should acknowledge the needs of diverse students, provide support, and display patience in order to retain diverse nursing students (Hansen & Beaver, 2012; Ku, Lahman, Yeh, & Cheng, 2008). In addition to recruiting and retaining diverse nursing students, the need to recruit diverse nursing faculty is warranted. However, this may be a challenge due to the lack of ethnically diverse faculty currently in the nursing programs. Diverse faculty and students need role models. With the limited number of minority nurse faculty serving as role models for diverse students, this can contribute to the recruitment and retention of diverse nursing students. Without adequate representation, this may be a signal to potential students that nursing does not value diversity or offer advancement for them. For example, only 13.1% of full-time nursing school faculty members come from minority backgrounds, and only 5.5% are male (AACN, 2013b).

By having a shortage of nursing school faculty, nursing programs have to limit nursing school enrollees. According to AACN's report on 2012–2013 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing, US nursing schools turned away 79,659 qualified applicants from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2012 due to insufficient number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints (AACN, 2013b). According to a 2013 survey conducted by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers, 55% of the RN workforce is age 50 or older. The Health Resources and Services Administration projects that more than one million registered nurses will reach retirement age within the next 10 to 15 years (AACN, 2014). Unfilled faculty positions, resignations, projected retirements, and the shortage of students being prepared for the faculty role pose a threat to the nursing education workforce over the next decade (AACN, 2013b).

HOW CAN EVERYONE GET ON BOARD?

Diversifying the nursing workforce should include a realistic, measurable, and innovative plan for recruiting and retaining racially and ethnically diverse individuals in nursing programs, but organizational and university commitment must be paramount. Here are some practical recommendations that can be implemented to increase diversity in academia:

1. Institute innovative university policies applicable to diverse students and processes that facilitate student success.

2. Provide a supportive admission process such as an application walk-through, support in document collection and submission, and assistance in post-acceptance registration.
3. Consistently communicate with diverse applicants via phone, text, and email and provide such individuals with personalized guidance enrollment.
4. Assist with first-course preparations that will connect students with university services that address their individual needs.
5. Assign faculty mentors and/or student mentors to students.
6. Develop and introduce classes using advanced technologies and multiple delivery formats using a variety of teaching methods to stimulate all learning styles.

These recommendations require the personalized support and encouragement that students need during their educational experience to ensure that they are motivated and engaged with their coursework in order to reach their academic milestones and successfully complete a nursing program.

Once students are in a nursing program, a retention recruiter or team may prove to be beneficial. A retention recruiter or team involves weekly reaching out to minority students to assess their needs and connecting them with campus resources to help them be successful. Campus resources can be vital to retaining diverse students. A win-win for everyone is to know and call upon a variety of campus resources for guidance and tutoring such as a writing center, tutoring services, the office of disability services, an information and technology services office, an office of diversity programs, and a career placement center. The purpose of the various programs is to promote successful experiences for diverse populations. These services aim to foster student development and provide support in a variety of areas, promoting successful experiences that enhance the academic and social needs of a diverse population. The financial aid office needs to offer financial advice and guidance on applying for Federal Student Aid and scholarships. Many current minority students have taken out large student loans to cover the cost of their degree, and unfortunately, many are still paying student loans from prior degrees. Some minority students have reached their federal undergraduate student borrowing limits and have been denied federal financial aid due to reaching the undergraduate student borrowing limits. Hence, their only option may be to secure private loans for which it is hard to qualify, loans that usually carry very high interest rates without a grace period from the time of graduation to begin to pay back such loans (AACN, 2015a).

Minority students need help in looking for scholarships and stipends. Scholarships and stipends that offer the flexibility for the student to decide how best to use the funds are essential for success (e.g., to pay tuition or to help pay for other educational or living expenses such as child care). It is evident that a combination of approaches must occur to create the infrastructures that can address issues of diversity and remove barriers to graduation.

Demographics, race, gender, culture, and language are often aspects of great difference between community leaders and the diverse students that they represent. Retention methods should focus on the cultural needs of diverse students in order to increase diversity within the profession and the community. Community partners must understand this facet and be committed to facilitating this process. Several community agencies may be instrumental in improving the retention of diverse students to help realize a better world and future for all. The agencies include but are not limited to local hospitals, health departments, advisory committee members, technical schools, and professional nursing organizations.

Agencies instrumental in aiming to eliminate health disparities must be diligent in assisting to recruit and retain diverse students. Articulation agreements with technical schools can provide swift transfer of credits, drastically reducing the registration/application process for students. Partnerships between community colleges and universities can assist in complementing health care services by working together. Advisory committee members could include individuals from major area medical facilities, and the committee can provide recommendations into factors related to nursing practice, nursing job development, and job placement. The advisory committee may assist nursing programs in evaluating the program's effectiveness and providing advice for nursing programs. Inviting someone from a minority nursing organization such as the National Black Nurses Association, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, the Association of Black Nursing Faculty, and the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations (comprising the Asian American/Pacific Islander Nurses Association, National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, National Black Nurses Association, & Philippine Nurses Association of America) to assist with this effort will have a long, rich, demonstrated commitment to reducing health disparities and achievement of mutually determined diversity goals. These individuals can recruit others to become actively involved in successfully retaining and graduating minority students for the health care arenas. Individuals in these types of organizations have worked passionately to recruit and support underrepresented minority groups in nursing by providing mentoring, financial resources, ongoing professional development opportunities, and role modeling for racial/ethnic minority nurses. Eliminating health disparities is of highest concern for these organizations and their members. Partnerships can be helpful in identifying, recognizing, and understanding local issues impacting diverse students. Local Area Health Education Centers are designed to improve the health of underserved, underrepresented populations with focused initiatives on addressing health care workforce and diversity issues (National Area Health Education Center, n.d.).

Working with an office of diversity programs and services to participate in diversity forums would highlight diversity as a campus priority and the necessity for maintaining institutional excellence. With the forum, students are recognized for their efforts in continuing the legacy of inclusion, celebrating diversity and educating others through their hard work, volunteerism, and leadership. In addition, the office could showcase campus diversity achievements and best practices to internal and external audiences and enable students, faculty, and staff to communicate and document their achievements.

THE PURSUIT OF MINORITIES AND MALES IN NURSING EDUCATION

Pursuing diverse students can be a challenging task; however, institutions of higher learning must be persistent and diligent in their recruitment and retention efforts. In order for institutions of higher learning to understand the significance of diversity in nursing, they should develop and implement evaluation measures that assess the contributions of a diverse workforce in addition to understanding the impact that diversity has on health care disparities. Institutions should establish stronger connections between nursing practice and the social determinants of health in nursing education and clinical practice. The linkage involves expanding service-learning activities focused on reducing health disparities and achieving health equity in nursing programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. It is also important to develop special training programs to support diverse students in an effort to promote equality in health care fields in order to decrease health disparities for diverse populations. Also, providing interdisciplinary centers of excellence provides opportunities for students to be become diverse nurse leaders with community and institutional involvement.

From a nursing program perspective, diverse students entering nursing programs should be offered a faculty and/or peer mentor. In nursing education, all of the attributes related to mentoring are significantly important in order to enhance recruit and retain diverse students. Mentoring can consist of an array of relationships in nursing education including but are not limited to faculty-to-student and peer-to-peer mentoring. Faculty mentoring can be influential by identifying the challenges of the diverse students and providing solutions that will address challenges (Starr, 2009). Students prefer an environment with sincere faculty members who demonstrate compassion and caring (Colalillo, 2007). Peer mentors should be assigned and have successfully completed the coursework for the classes in which the student is currently enrolled. This will increase diverse student engagement and enhance a sense of community, thus alleviating the sense of isolation. Nursing students in a mentoring program contribute their success to a support system that was respectful and valuable, provided one-on-one interaction from their mentor, and gave a better insight into the nursing profession (Boughton, Halliday, & Brown, 2010; Wilson, Sanner, & McAllister, 2010). However, failure to commit to the mentoring program can negatively impact the academic success of diverse students (Robinson & Niemer, 2010).

Communication is an integral component in education and health care, especially with diverse students. Diverse students can experience language challenges that may lead to miscommunication and misinterpretation of information. All faculty and staff collaborating with diverse populations should be knowledgeable of communication barriers and the most appropriate means of communication. Communication must be consistent and understandable by both parties. It can consist of follow-ups that discuss progress in courses, clarifying concepts, recommend resources, proofreading papers, and providing support and encouragement. Communicating with diverse students may occur using several methods. The communication methods may include but are not limited to face-to-face, telephonic, and digital by Skype®, Facetime® for iPhone, or other digital contact software. A variety of social media websites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* may serve as a method of communication to enhance communication for diverse students.

Workload balance and academic support is a major concern for diverse students in nursing programs (Degazon & Mancha, 2012). The nursing programs should engage diverse students and recognize the need for flexibility in order to meet the needs of diverse students and their employers. Faculty should be more engaged in high-touch course activities while coupling such with high technology to engage students and to provide meaningful feedback to diverse students. It is well documented that a culture of learning must be nurtured to ensure high completion rates (National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education, 2014).

Flexibility is needed with program course load and study options. Without part-time educational opportunities, diverse students have low or no entry means to progress in a program, and this will reduce the opportunity to succeed (National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education, 2014). Within a program, flexible opportunities may improve diverse students' progression, reduce inequalities, meet the needs of diverse students, and specifically help the retention of diverse students. Although flexibility is warranted within a nursing program, rigid entry dates are essential because research has shown that late applications usually coincide with lower levels of retention and success (National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education, 2014).

Diverse students have unique needs that must be handled on an individual basis. A dedicated coach or faculty assistant is needed to assist with progression through a nursing program. This entails having protocols for contacting students on a weekly basis to determine factors that may impede their success (e.g., financial reasons, academic challenges, family care/child care issues, awareness of deadlines, etc.). Any challenges to their success should be addressed to discuss barriers and social determinants of health that impact success should be identified and addressed to prevent "stop out" (voluntarily) or "drop out" (involuntarily) experiences from occurring by the students. Research has shown that students who "received a weekly telephone call from a coach were 12% more likely to remain in the course and 13% more likely to graduate" (National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education, 2014, p. 58).

According to Degazon and Macha (2012), financial needs are barriers to retention of diverse students in nursing education. Federal grants such as the Nursing Workforce Diversity Program (NWD) help support retention and attainment among diverse students (National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education, 2014; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Diverse students who are supported financially with NWD funds will be able to maintain progress toward pursuing nursing degrees (Degazon & Mancha, 2012). A supportive network among faculty and staff members is essential to maximize students' potential for success. Each key stakeholder should know their responsibilities and involvement in the success efforts (Advancing Equality and Diversity in Universities and Colleges, 2015).

THE VALUE OF PEER MENTORING AND MINORITY SUPPORT GROUPS

According to Crooks (2013), "a mentoring program may narrow the gap between the number of White and non-White health care providers" (p. 49). Mentoring provides retention by means of a personal relationship with a peer mentor. Personal relationships alleviate the sense of isolation and discrimination experienced by minority students. A peer mentor will be able to share experiences, listen, and provide appropriate information and solutions to potential problems that one may experience. A minority support group will provide emotional support by decreasing the sense of isolation and provide a sense of inclusion. Attitudes and relationship with role models in nursing play a key role in diverse student success and breaking down barriers. The activities facilitate positive pathways for success and are important in helping new diverse students achieve success and address barriers that they encounter. Mentors who show patience, are approachable and available, and encourage students often are the most receptive (Gardner, 2005; Noone, 2008). Mandatory attendance at enrichment activities such as a detailed orientation and mentoring sessions will help ensure academic progression and build self-confidence from the beginning (Beacham, Askew, & Williams, 2009; Degazon & Mancha, 2012).

NURSES WITH DISABILITIES: ANOTHER MINORITY GROUP

Image dreaming of a nursing career but being told that you are not a candidate for nursing school because you have a disability. What about a practicing nurse who becomes disabled? In reality, who is better to serve a patient than someone who has experienced a recent or lifelong struggle with a disability? What would it take for them to be or maintain being a competent health care professional? Would a facility hire them or sustain them if already employed? There are laws the facility would be required to make "reasonable accommodations." Nurses with disabilities often encounter prejudices well before applying to nursing school. This group of individuals already knows that the biggest obstacle to overcome is a person's or employer's attitude. Students are often forced into choosing not to disclose their disability status, which effectively denies them access to accommodations, which they have a legal right to obtain under the Americans with Disabilities Act (Minority Nurse Staff, 2013). Students with a disability have limited opportunity for a role model, but they do have the National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities (n.d.), which promotes equality and helps empower people with disabilities.

THE JOB FORECAST FOR MINORITY NURSES

The future looks bright for hiring minority nurses because there will be far more registered nurse jobs available than jobs in any other profession through 2022 in the United States. According to the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), employment projections for RNs are listed among the top occupations in terms of job growth through 2022. The RN workforce is expected to grow by 19%. The Bureau also projects the need for 525,000 replacements nurses in the workforce, bringing the total number of job openings for nurses due to growth and replacements to 1.05 million by 2022 (United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). The shortage is expected to be most intense in the South and West (Comer & Couto, 2012).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

For nursing to continue to grow, flourish, and change, commitment to the inclusion of more diversity in the nursing profession must occur in order to lead nurses forward. The nursing arena is well aware that the Institute of Medicine (2010) recommends increasing the number of minority health professionals as a key strategy to eliminating health disparities. The lack of substantial numbers of minority students in nursing programs in general can be attributed to many factors. As previously stated, complex reasons exist for lack of diversity in nursing such as but not limited to financial burdens, past discriminations of ethnic minorities, and lack of academic preparedness. In the future, it is critically important to provide financial resources as well as to develop and implement policies to make sure that we continue to increase workforce diversity in the nursing profession. In order to eliminate health care disparities, increasing workforce diversity and leadership development opportunities for ethnically diverse nurses must remain a high priority.

As stated by Degazon and Mancha (2012), minority nurses and patients share similar life experiences, and such nurses are able to understand patients' culture, facilitate patient-provider communication, and establish partnerships that will improve patient care. Also, minority nurses will be more culturally and linguistically familiar with the populations that they serve. Ultimately, the knowledge received can be used to improve access and quality patient outcomes in order to reduce health disparities (Degazon & Mancha, 2012). Increasing diversity within nursing education programs and the nursing profession is a goal that will prove beneficial to the nursing profession and the diverse population that nurses serve (Bednarz, Schim, & Doorenbos, 2010). Although nursing has made great strides in recruiting and graduating nurses who mirror the patient population, more must be done before adequate representation becomes a reality (AACN, 2015a).

Nursing schools therefore must take the lead in launching new and aggressive strategies to increase diversity and inclusion in our profession. In order to increase diversity and inclusion in higher education, institutions of higher learning must make a conscious effort to implement strategies that are successful in order to recruit, retain, and graduate men and minority students. This is essential to maintain in integrity of the nursing profession. Higher education should be diligent and consistent in implementing strategies in order to increase diversity and inclusion.

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LINDA HENSEL

20. STUDENT SUCCESS DIFFERENCES IN A JUNIOR-LEVEL UNDERGRADUATE GENETICS COURSE

Institutions of higher learning have moved from offering curriculum to a wealthy few interested in academic pursuits to educating the general public interested in obtaining employment, yet the cost of a college education has remained substantial. As a result, higher education has moved toward a business model in spite of the resistance of members of the academy. Thus, student success and faculty accountability for student learning are often the centerpiece of accrediting bodies, consumers (parents and students), and those in the academic realm. This paradigm shift has had a daunting effect on STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) disciplines and those who teach in these disciplines. STEM disciplines, in general, are content-heavy, given the relatively rapid accumulation of new knowledge and discovery in these fields. Students are challenged to master incredible amounts of content as well as problem-solving skills in each of the STEM discipline courses, and these courses most often have higher failure rates than those in business or the humanities. Thus, as the nation's focus has moved toward faculty accountability for student learning, those who teach in the STEM disciplines are often criticized for lack of student success. Two cohorts of students have less success than other cohorts in STEM disciplines, the underrepresented and transfer students, and there is a shift toward addressing these discrepancies.

National organizations (AAAS, NSF, and NIH) and private funding sources (e.g., HHMI & The Gates Foundation) have focused on and continue to focus on underrepresented student success in STEM education; more recently, agencies have begun to focus on transfer student success as well. The focus of these organizations and their willingness to fund projects that address underrepresented and transfer student success has stimulated academics to begin to research the issue. For example, in the last decade, publications related to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) overwhelmingly reveal that underrepresented student success in STEM disciplines in an undergraduate setting increases with high-structured, student-centered pedagogy (DBER, AAAS 2010 Vision, and Change). Overall, as a nation, we have identified a problem of differential success, and we are beginning to determine how to solve that problem. In the last five years, I have begun to address this issue in my own realm of academia—genetics.

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 161–166.

Several avenues of information inspired me to move toward a student-centered medium-structured active learning pedagogy in my classrooms. Annual meetings that I attended began to focus on SoTL presentations, the SoTL STEM literature in my field flourished, an external reviewer convinced the Department I chair of the relevance of AAAS 2010 Vision and Change, and external funding to focus on STEM education became available. The most influential experience was my participation in the HHMI-funded 2014 summer SERP PULSE workshop; four members from my department and our former dean attended. Evidence-based research was the foundation for every seminar and exercise that we attended, and my colleagues left that meeting armed with ideas for changing their classrooms and the way that they delivered the content to students. After exposure to all of this information, I took ownership of the assault on my former way of teaching—the passive-learning lecture-only model—and I began to use some of the evidence-based practices in my own classrooms in the last five years.

I added weekly quizzes, take-home problem sets, and a formal research paper addressing an ethical dilemma, and I increased scaffolding for formal written laboratory reports. Anecdotally, student success appeared to increase in this time span. I had not put assessment tools in place other than to continue to use a final exam that was only modestly altered each semester. I noticed that the failure rate in my courses began to decline. The increase in classroom structure in the last five years was only the beginning; I have more recently begun a more concerted intentional effort after immersing myself in the SoTL literature.

In the last year and a half, I have been convinced to incorporate the following three items in the lecture portion of the courses I offer: (a) student metacognitive awareness of personalized programs of study for success, (b) in-class group problem-solving for more than 85% of class meetings, and (c) daily immediate-feedback response with iClicker quizzes. In addition to changes in the classroom, I replaced the traditional "canned" laboratory experience with authentic inquiry-based research. All of these changes required nearly twice the amount of prep time, but I am hopeful that student learning outcomes will improve and support my efforts.

Metacognitive awareness is not imperative to student success, but these discussions seem to help students find study groups and plan for course success. Even though my students in genetics are juniors and seniors, I have learned that at least half of them are unclear about successful study habits. Over the last two decades, students come to my office after a less-than-stellar performance on the first exam and claim that they never had to study like this before. So I now spend lecture time in the first two weeks describing the study cycle (pre-read, go to class, take notes, read the book, use the text to fill in notes, and teach the material to someone/something) and the fact that they must do textbook problems each day. I reinforce this throughout the semester and then have a group session mid-semester on successful study techniques. I then post a slide with all of the successful techniques that the students reported. Students have to learn what works for them and the fact that learning is different for each individual. Some succeed by recording lectures and repeatedly listening to the lectures while others use flashcards and work every problem in the textbook. My goal is to have every student aware of what process works for them and to actively think about how they learn.

In lecture, not only do group problem-solving and quick-response questions with immediate feedback teach students material, but these methods also help students think about how they themselves learn. I have sacrificed some detailed content in order to allow both group problems in lecture time and to have five-question multiple-choice questions at the beginning of each lecture. The group problems in lecture have replaced the problem sets that I used to assign out of class. I learned that students can learn concepts by guessing if they receive the answer immediately after they have attempted the question, so I use iClickers in order to test students one question at a time. They receive immediate feedback after each question before moving on to the next question. Hence, I have essentially turned quizzes into a learning tool and am able to reinforce the material from the prior lecture without having to repeat the lecture. I can also gauge if a question is too difficult by the answers being submitted and often will allow group discussion for a minute or two prior to submission of the final answer. My goal is not only to increase student understanding but also to allow students to teach the material to each other in the classroom. I am convinced that, in order to really learn the material, one has to teach it to someone or something else. An additional advantage of using both of these tools on a daily basis has resulted in lecture attendance of greater than 95%.

In addition to enhancing the lecture period with active learning, I have restructured the laboratory component of genetics to engage in authentic research in a project-based learning environment. The students learn skills in the first three laboratory periods and then expand with an authentic research project. They engage in the primary literature and address the next question in the field in a laboratory setting. Students are learning the actual process of science and tackling the actual data base rather than watered-down versions of experiments that have already been performed and archived. This undertaking has proven both rewarding and disappointing. Students show much more enthusiasm for the laboratory and are appreciative of actual research, which has been very rewarding. However, students are also very uneasy about not being able to obtain a "known" answer. They continually ask me if their data is correct, and I continually have to explain that all data is good and that there is no "right" answer, which is why scientists perform replicate trials, etc. I am unsettled at the level of naïveté about scientific research that my junior and senior college students possess. For this reason alone, I will continue to move toward authentic research in all of my laboratory courses.

As a geneticist and one of 13 faculty members in the biology department in a small, private liberal arts college, I have become interested in student success of at-risk groups—in particular, underrepresented and transfer students. In my 22 years of teaching at this institution, I have noted to myself (anecdotally) that the students placing in the bottom third of my junior-level genetics course are often students belonging to either the underrepresented or transfer student cohort. As a scientist, I am data-driven and am skeptical of anecdotal evidence, so I obtained data from our Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). I wanted to know if my hunches from anecdotal evidence were valid, so I asked for data from 2006 to 2015 to determine if course GPA averages were different for underrepresented or transfer students when compared to the general population. I obtained the data from OIE because my own records had names and grades but did not have the cohort classifications for individual students. I used the data from genetics because I had offered the course frequently enough to have substantial student numbers to determine if the increased structure in the classroom in the last five years had affected the course GPAs for different cohorts. The summarized data is shown in Table 1 and indicates that the infused increase in classroom structure (group problems, daily immediate-response iClicker quizzes, and metacognitive skills, etc.) had not increased the GPAs for either the transfer student or underrepresented study cohorts. These two cohorts of students have a GPA that is more than 20% lower than the class GPA, and this noticeable difference is dramatic enough that it would be unethical not to address such a discrepancy. However, the pedagogical changes that I had made had no impact on the cohorts of interest.

Table 1. Mean student GPAs for BIO 310—genetics
(n= number of students in that category)

Years offered	*Total*	*Non-transfer*	*Transfer*	*Underrepresented*
2006–2010	2.459 (276)	2.596 (208)	1.975 (59)	1.979 (73)
2011–2015	2.557 (255)	2.543 (223)	1.859 (32)	1.993 (71)
Total	2.507 (522)	2.569 (431)	1.934 (91)	1.986 (144)

I was saddened that additional structure in the classroom had not resulted in a noticeable increase in GPA for underrepresented students or transfer students although a trend toward a higher overall class GPA is apparent. So I have to conclude that the increase in structure helps the students who put forth an effort, but I have yet to “inspire” the transfer and underrepresented students to the same level.

In the last year, an increase in classroom structure has been implemented on a daily basis in addition to incorporating an authentic research project-based laboratory. Though the student numbers in one year are small, Table 2 shows an increase in course GPA with these implementations. The at-risk cohorts also improved, but are still more than 21% below the overall class GPAs. Even though the evidence is based on a small sample size, I surmise that, within two years’ time, enough data will be gathered for a sound statistical analysis.

I should also share that the increase in class GPA could have resulted from a more capable student body, as my institution has successfully obtained an entering class with higher SAT scores and high school GPAs for the last five years. Thus, it is difficult to determine if additional structure is leading to an increase in student

Table 2. Mean student GPAs for BIO 310—genetics (n= total students)

Years offered	*Total*	*Non-transfer*	*Transfer*	*Underrepresented*
2006–2015	2.507 (522)	2.569 (431)	1.934 (91)	1.986 (144)
2015	2.727 (99)	2.8125 (88)	2.045 (11)	2.15 (20)

success at this time. I am, however, not inclined to return to a low-structure, passive-learning, lecture-style pedagogy; instead, I wish to discover and incorporate mechanisms to address the discrepancy between both transfer and underrepresented student success.

Data from other faculty members offering the same course shows the same discrepancies between the different student cohorts that are apparent in the data from my students. When I looked at the data from all genetics courses offered from 2006 to 2015, I found one statistic that I have yet to explain. For underrepresented students, the average fall GPA in genetics is 2.122 (n = 115), compared to the average spring GPA of 1.828 (n = 102). The overall course GPA difference between fall and spring—2.567 and 2.511, respectively—does not show a dramatic difference. When fall and spring GPAs for transfer students are compared, there is only a slight difference (1.975 versus 1.949). Hence, the difference in performance in the underrepresented cohort in fall and spring semesters is large enough that we, as an institution, should be able to address. For now, implementing what we know works from evidence-based research is a continual challenge.

After over 20 years of teaching in a predominantly undergraduate institution, the resistance to change in order to address the issue of best practices for at-risk groups is overwhelming. In my own discipline, more than half of my colleagues are cynical or skeptical, at best, about the results from the large body of SoTL literature that supports high-structured, student-centered pedagogy. My colleagues and I realize that this type of pedagogy requires an extraordinary amount of prep time, but my colleagues are not those who would shun the extra effort if they were convinced that the effort would result in increased student learning. Instead, some colleagues believe that the self-motivation required for college success is inherent and that not everyone should be in college. In essence, they believe in college in the traditional sense, when only a select few of highly self-motivated and driven individuals would be accepted to attend. In other words, not everyone has the drive to succeed in STEM disciplines, and it is not the responsibility of faculty members to instill this motivation and drive. Others believe that this drive cannot be instilled but is instead inherent. Other faculty members who believe in the passive-learning lecture model consider any course with an alternative pedagogy as “soft” because the instructor is “giving” the students too much instruction and, hence, “the answers.” Obviously, this sentiment discourages other faculty members, especially newer faculty members, from even attempting to change the culture, let alone their own classrooms. Overall, the call for change in the culture has not convinced many of those in charge of the classroom to change.

In contrast to those who believe that the motivation and drive is inherent, there are faculty members who believe that we, as faculty, have the responsibility to instill that thirst for knowledge and the motivation and drive to succeed in STEM discipline courses. The SoTL literature and workshops are plentiful with material and methods for use in the classroom. Some of my colleagues take ownership of the material and are even enthusiastic, yet faculty members are slow to move toward offering courses with such pedagogy. As workload increases from service and scholarship obligations, increased student number per course, etc., faculty members' resistance to changes that require additional work increases as well. The acceptance of the movement from scholarship of discovery to SoTL publications for STEM faculty members has begun to persuade a few faculty members to move toward pedagogical reform. However, our own provost's office still prefers scholarship of discovery to that of SoTL, and I imagine our provost's office to be similar to that in other undergraduate institutions. Hence, even though I have convinced myself and work with a few others who have convinced themselves as well, I fear that the changes in the STEM classroom culture that enhance learning described in the evidence-based research will be slowly implemented, if at all. Finally, even though implementing increased classroom structure and authentic research in a laboratory setting has improved student success in my junior level genetics course, the gap between underrepresented and transfer students is still apparent.

Additional research will be required to narrow the GPA gap. The classroom environment is not the only place that needs to be addressed for increased success for transfer and underrepresented students. I believe that the living community is just as important, if not more so, to induce the cultural change required for success in STEM disciplines. Anecdotally, I have witnessed the following defeatist attitudes among these cohorts of students and have not been armed with the tools to combat these attitudes:

- "I just need to get a C (or even D) in the course to graduate."
- "I just want my diploma. I am not going to medical school."
- "I do not want to take the time to learn this material that I am not going to use."
- "I can look this stuff up, so why should I learn it?"
- "I have to work, so I do not have the study time it takes to earn an A or a B."

I often hear these statements after the first exam. I am amazed at how often students defeat themselves rather than asking what they can do improve their understanding of the course material. The self-defeating attitudes and lack of understanding that knowledge is empowering are barriers to student success. If institutions move toward focusing on student success of these particular cohorts, then the living environment is one aspect that can be influential. Toward this end, STEM living communities with tiered-mentorship and appropriate programming one avenue that has some potential. Faculty members must work together with student support services to coordinate both living and learning environments that allow these students to move past self-imposed stigmas.

CAROL RAINES

21. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND BULLYING

Peer Victimization at Different Levels of Education and Adulthood

Bullying is an unbalanced power relationship between the strongest and the weakest, who are unable to reply to the hostility, attack, or violence of the strongest. According to Kolstrein and Toledo (2013), it is the "recurrent harassment of a student or group of students by another student or group" (p. 46). Bullying is displayed through physical belligerence, verbal belligerence, and exclusion. This unacceptable act of cruelty is present among all age groups and diversities. With discrimination being such a prevalent part in today's society, bullying is at high risk for increased rates. Specifically, the educational setting is a target. With each passing day, K-12 schools, colleges, and universities are becoming more and more diverse. Exploring and learning about bullying in concerns to diversity can aid in providing safe and healthy educational environments. This chapter discusses and analyzes features of bullying, including characteristics of bullies and of those affected, bullying within the classroom setting, the connection between diversity and bullying, and bullying at different levels of education.

Even though children, adolescents, and adults normally view bullying in a negative way, it is still a large-scale issue amongst all age groups. Why, then, do individuals participate in this cruel act? Through extensive research, it is apparent that bullies' main goal is to get hold of or keep a dominant role in a peer group. In coherence, bullies work to gain respect and supremacy. It appears that bullies end up obtaining what they desire through the significant aspects of power and popularity (Sentse, Veenstra, Kiuru, & Salmivalli, 2015, p. 944). Research has turned its attention to the difference between popularity and likeness. Specifically, Sentse et al. (2015) studied these characteristics in regard to their relationship with bullying. Just because an individual is popular does not mean that he or she is well liked. Even though bullies have established high-ranking positions (popularity), research has indicated that their peers generally do not like them. These two characteristics refer to an individual's social status within the peer group; therefore, the members of the peer group determine rank and approval of other members (Sentse et al., 2015, p. 944). Individual characteristics are only a small part to the complex system of bullying.

In addition to traits of individuals, settings and environments such as classrooms play a large role in the act of bullying. Bullying in the classroom setting is not

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 167–174.

always what one might expect. In addition to bullies and their victims, classmates engage in the process as well. Sentse et al. (2015) describe how classmates can add fuel to the fire by contributing (participating) or supporting (expressing amusement, applauding) the bullying. In contrast, classmates can stand up for the victim or remain neutral by not participating on either side. K-12 school is generally a place where children do not willingly go but instead are required to show up five days a week. Classrooms are places where students socialize with one another and spend most of the school day. Each classroom has its own standards and frequencies of bullying. The occurrence rate depends on the particular classroom's norm. Sentse et al. (2015) discuss the effects of two different norms that are commonly associated with classroom behavior: descriptive norm and injunctive norm. The descriptive norm describes how prevalent behaviors are within a particular setting. When behaviors occur frequently, individuals begin to subconsciously see the behavior as "normal." When an individual sees an act of bullying occur often in a classroom, they begin to believe that it is acceptable for that particular environment. This may cause someone to engage in bullying in one classroom but not another (Sentse et al., 2015, p. 944). In relation to the descriptive norm, the injunctive norm incorporates the outlook on bullying from each individual. Whether it is in a negative or positive fashion, whichever way a classroom as a whole tolerates bullying, that attitude will transfer to new students coming into the classroom. Sentse et al. (2015) state that both

> prevalence of behavior and collective attitudes towards such behavior are sources of how normative and legitimate behavior is for individuals in the group and it can be assumed that children are more inclined to bully when their context (classroom climate) is permissive with regards to such behavior as compared to when their context is less permissive. (p. 944)

Also, another reason as to why individuals choose to participate in bullying may be because they perceive it as worthwhile to do so. For instance, studies have shown that, when bullying was engaged in at higher frequencies, it was less likely to be connected with peer rejection and more with peer approval (Coulter, Herrick, Friedman, & Stall, 2016). This environmental characteristic causes individuals to act in equivalence to the classroom norm. The fear of being rejected for going against the class norm overpowers the individual from doing the right thing. With this behavior, the phenomenon of "pro-bullying" happens. Pro-bullying occurs when individuals with a lower popularity status participate in bullying in order to raise their status or to prevent further rejection from others (Sentse et al., 2015, p. 945). These negative aspects can put a great deal of strain on a classroom environment. This can cause unnecessary trouble for teachers and constrict learning possibilities for students, which needs to be prevented.

Not only do individual and group characteristics contribute to bullying, but diversity is also one of the main factors in the occurrence of bullying. Numerous studies have researched the relationship between target groups and the act of bullying. No two people are alike. Diversity is what makes each individual who they are and what brings groups of people together at the same time. One might ask oneself, “Why does discrimination have to occur?” It is something that cannot fully be answered but can and has been researched to reduce its occurrence and affects. Such extensive research has analyzed features such as gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and disabilities.

Gender is one trait of diversity that affects bullying. Research shows that males bully (participant) and are bullied (victims) more often than females. Even though both males and females use a variety of techniques for bullying, they usually use methods on opposite ends of the spectrum. For instance, in general, males result more toward physical violence whereas females tend to use verbal violence. Physical aggression is easier to notice than verbal aggression, which may be the reason as to why males are reportedly more involved with bullying than females (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

Not only does gender affect the rate and extent of bullying, but sexual orientation does too. Homophobia is the “irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals” (“Homophobia”, n.d.). It is highly prevalent in today’s society and often the underlying cause for different instances of bullying. Studies conducted in the United States have confirmed that classmates frequently abuse sexual minorities verbally while trying to make them take on “accepted” sexual behaviors (Kolstrein & Toledo, 2013, p. 49). Humans have an instinctive drive to be well liked and confident in themselves. The Five *C*s model consists of five characteristics that serve as stepping-stones to wellbeing. The main goal of the Five *C*s model is to endorse “positive youth development” (Coulter, Herrick, Friedman, & Stall, 2016, p. 691). The Five *C*s consist of competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring/compassion. Research has indicated that sexual minorities suffer from less support, lower success in academics, and less mental stability than heterosexual individuals. With these aspects being related to the Five *C*s, it is probable that sexual minorities undergo a less positive youth development than heterosexuals (Coulter, Herrick, Friedman, & Stall, 2016, p. 691). To further research on the relationship between sexual orientation and bullying, Coulter et al. (2016) conducted a study that examines how bullying victimization attributes to sexual orientation dissimilarities in positive youth development. The results indicate that, in comparison to sexual minorities (e.g., non-heterosexual or bisexual), heterosexuals were less likely to fall victim of bullying. Also, heterosexuals showed higher rates of the traits within the Five *C*s model, which indicates that they had more positive youth development. Coulter et al. (2016) note that “Bullying hinders sexual minority youths’ access to the essential building blocks of health and well-being, making it imperative for interventions to explicitly address bullying victimization against sexual minority youths” (p. 696). Three out of four individuals who are bullied through sexual orientation name-calling do not classify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) (Riese, n.d.). Such insulting comments are commonly used in a broad manner and are not actually used to offend someone who identifies with the sexuality being exploited. This form of bullying can offend both parties. Sexual orientation is one of many aspects of diversity within bullying that is unsolicited.

Racism is a major element of diversity and another reason for bullies to target specific individuals. Xenophobia is the "fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign" ("Xenophobia", n.d.); therefore, racist or xenophobic bullying occurs when bullying is aimed at someone because of their ethnicity or culture. Bullying in regard to race is derived from one's ethnic foundation, skin color, or religion. In recent years, student race or ethnicity has gained more concentration. Studies have come up with varying results, but all agree that there is a significant relationship between bullying and race/ethnicity. Not only do individual factors of race and ethnicity take part in bullying, but the racial make-up of schools and classrooms contribute as well. Referenced in Fisher et al. (2015), "The relationship between race and bullying is multifaceted and influenced by the racial make-up of schools and classrooms" (Juvonen et al., 2006; Graham, 2006). A recent study conducted by Fisher et al. (2015) "explored the relationship between school diversity, student race, and bullying within the school context" (p. 1,241). The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of school diversity on bullying and race-based victimization. There were 4,581 participants; of those, 89.4% were Caucasian, and 10.6% were African American. The study projected that the strength of a particular group is partly decided by the number of members within the group. An imbalance or balance of group numbers among various ethnic groups can result in higher degrees of peer victimization (Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1,242). First, the results indicate that Caucasian middle school-aged students face bullying more often than African American students of the same age, particularly when they were minorities within the school setting. Second, Caucasian students face race victimization roughly three times more than African American students when diversity was constant. Lastly and captivatingly, African American students face race victimization roughly twice as much as Caucasians when the school setting was comprised of mostly students of color (Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1,241). As stated previously, studies in this particular area vary in outcomes, but all prove that there is a negative significant relationship between race/ethnicity and bullying. Students are more at risk to be bullied if they do not fit within the ethnic norm of the school setting; therefore, ethnic minorities might be more likely to experience racist victimization (Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1,243).

Individuals with disabilities often undergo experiences that others do not encounter. Sometimes, an individual with a disability may experience the same situation as someone without disabilities, but they may interpret it differently or have different emotions and reactions. For example, the effects and frequencies of bullying differ for someone with disabilities than for someone without disabilities. It is often difficult to determine the exact degree to which the bullying has affected an individual with cognitive, physical, or psychological disabilities. However, bullies often target those with disabilities or special needs. Since bullies choose victims who are unable to react or defend themselves, those with disabilities are "easy" targets. Subsequently, those who are cognitively disabled and show less self-esteem or confidence are at higher risk of being bullied (Kolstrein & Toledo, 2013, p. 51). Furthering their discussion, Kolstrein and Toledo (2013) explain that individuals with social impairments are sometimes excluded by their peers because they do not fit in with the norm; therefore, they are at high risk for becoming victims of bullying.

It is often assumed that bullying primarily or solely occurs in school-age student grades K-12. This assumption is false. Not only does bullying occur in grades K-12, but it is also heavily present in higher education and the workplace. Like most research, the research on bullying at the different levels of education varies in findings, but all share a general idea of what is occurring. Some studies insinuate that bullying peaks in the middle school years and then starts to decrease. In contrast, other research studies imply that some forms of bullying may stem from childhood but start developing in adulthood. This type of bullying occurs in higher education and the workplace. Common types of bullying are verbal and physical violence, language (jokes), teasing, belittling, insulting an individual's characteristics or personality, etc. Bullying impacts school grades K-12, higher education, and the workplace in different ways but causes each group to be unproductive.

Grades K-12 are developmental stages when bullying is often generated. With K-12 being a large time frame, there are roughly three stages that make up K-12 as a whole. Elementary school students make up the youngest age group that is affected by bullying. At this stage of development, children are not capable of rationalizing and often result to small acts of physical aggression and name-calling. Bulling at this level reduces academic achievement and can even cause trouble with mental wellness and physical injury (Jan & Husain, 2015). These children might engage in what one refers to as "picking on" or "getting picked on." These actions are a milder version of bullying that older students engage in. Some actions include "name calling, hitting or threatening others, and spreading false rumors" (Jan & Husain, 2015, p. 43). Elementary school-aged victims are often socially isolated and apprehensive because they are incapable of adapting to the changes and desires needed to keep up with the group norm. These characteristics make them easy targets. Schools have a moral and legal duty to form a safe and welcoming environment for students. In comparison to elementary school-aged students, middle school-aged students take bullying a bit further. At this stage, the characteristics and effects are more developed and harmful. Also, the various locations where bullying takes place start to become more relevant. Perkins, Perkins, and Craig (2014) discuss how locations of bullying have changed since the year 2000. Before, bullying usually took place in areas that were recreational, unstructured, or away from adults. In recent studies, elementary school students suggest that bullying takes place on the playground, but middle school students state that bullying begins to take place in classrooms and hallways. This may be because children in middle school are more mature and are not as afraid of authoritative figures. In addition, middle school bullying might take place in cafeterias or locker rooms (Perkins, Perkins, & Craig, 2014). In middle school, cyberbullying is introduced through the use of electronics and social media. Faucher, Cassidy, and Jackson (2015) further explain information on how gender affects cyberbullying. These researchers note that female students in grades K-12 are more likely to be the ones participating in cyberbullying. Because males engage in more face-to-face bullying, they do not use the passive-aggressive outlet of cyberbullying as often as females do. The last stage of K-12 is high school. High school bullying takes the features of elementary and middle school bullying and develops them into more complex and severe actions. Here, cyberbullying continues and transfers into the world of video games. This worldwide community works with each other through indirect communication. Jackson et al. (2009) state that "students reported various types of inappropriate messages, including gender-based harassment, harassment about sexual orientation, having personal information posted about them online, being deliberately excluded, and received messages that made them afraid." Students who are bullied or undergo some type of peer maltreatment suffer from lower academic achievement than those who are not bullied. Studies have shown that students who have a better relationship with their teachers have higher academic success.

Continuing from K-12 school to higher education, cyberbullying is a pressing issue of faculty's everyday jobs. For a long time, bullying in higher education did not have much attention. When a student from Rutgers University unexpectedly committed suicide after a video of him and another male participating in sexual activities was exposed, the awareness of bullying after grades K-12 increased significantly (Faucher et al., 2015, p. 111). Differing from school grades K-12, males in higher education are more likely to participate in cyberbullying than females. In this case, males are viewed as the perpetrators, and females as the victims. Also, in post-secondary education, female students are generally sought out by someone whom they know or are aware of while males are generally sought out by someone whom they do not know. Not only are students affected by bullying in higher education, but faculty and staff are, too. In some cases, the faculty is sought out by their own students (Faucher et al., 2015, p. 114). In addition to gender, within the environment of higher education, sexual orientation is targeted by bullies. Referenced in Faucher et al. (2015), "Finn (2004) reports that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students are twice as likely to experience online harassment as heterosexual students" (p. 114). Additionally, racist and sexist bullying incidents are frequent. Bullying takes a step further at this level of education because it can occur over longer periods of time, such as months or years, due to the long-term relationships that are formed (Faucher et al., 2015, p. 113).

Workplace bullying is different from the other forms because it is not related to education. Referenced in the study conducted by Faucher et al. (2015), "Bullying at work means harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone's work" (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003, p. 15). As in K-12 and higher education, gender differences are reported in the workplace. In general, women seem to be bullied more than males in the workplace. Also, men tend to be the perpetrators. As in the educational setting, racial and sexual minorities also tend to be more susceptible to bullying (Faucher et al., 2015, p. 114). Not as much research has been conducted on the differences in gender targeting within businesses or corporations although one study does report that “men and racial or ethnic minority individuals are more likely to be bullied by their superiors whereas women and GLBTQ staff are more likely to be bullied by their superiors, colleagues, and subordinates” (Sallee & Diaz, 2012). On the other hand, Namie and Namie (2009) report that same-gender bullying is more common, particularly with females. In the workplace, bullying affects witnesses and bystanders in the same manner. Some of these effects include stress, less job satisfaction, avoidance, absence, less efficiency, and mental and physical impacts (Faucher et al., 2015, p. 118). The workforce is a place where individuals spend much of their time. Bullying and discrimination in this environment can be detrimental in many ways. Since not as much research has been conducted in this particular area, further investigation might help understand why it occurs and how to prevent or decrease it.

Bullying is an issue that exists in the every day lives of students. It does not just affect the victim, but also affects the person who bullies, witnesses, and those who intervene. Not until recently has bullying been studied outside of the educational setting. It is now researched in other settings such as personal relationships and the workplace. The influence of bullying in relation to discrimination should not be taken too lightly. Bullying must be acknowledged, comprehended, and taken seriously. Discrimination is impossible to completely eliminate but can be decreased through prevention tactics.

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ELIZABETH DORE

22. DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM IN TODAY'S CLASSROOM

As classrooms become more and more diverse, it is imperative that classroom teachers are aware of the many cultural customs and differences inherent in this diversity. Many times, teachers will say that there is no diversity in their classroom if everyone is white and the only differences are male and female, which they do not consider diversity. Diversity includes many differences including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical size, abilities/disabilities, geographical area, religion, sex, age, hair color, hair texture, homelessness, and cultural beliefs, to name a few. Just as there is diversity in every classroom, there is diversity within diversity. All Native Americans are not alike! All Asian students are not alike!

INTRODUCTION

> Teachers must recognize their own prejudices and biases before they will be able to help their students with prejudices and biases. 'If she didn't eat so much, she wouldn't be fat. Fat students are lazy.' 'You know how those Hispanic students are. Here today, gone tomorrow. No use in spending extra time with them.' (Dore, 2004, p. 49)

If educators want their students to embrace diversity, they must provide a model for them. If a new student enrolls in the school from a diverse culture/country, it is the perfect chance for students to learn from that student what their culture consists of and what the traditions are in their home or religion, etc.

Educators in today's multicultural classrooms need to constantly and consistently be aware of the backgrounds of their students as they plan their lessons. What is their home life like? Do they have a family unit to go home to after school? The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2012) reports that "every day thousands of children arrive home from school to an empty house. Every week thousands of parents make decisions to leave children home alone while they go to work, run errands, or for social engagements. It is estimated over 40% of children are left home at some time, though rarely overnight."

Did students have breakfast in the morning or even dinner the night before? The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC, 2015) reports that "an average of 11.2 million low-income children ate a healthy morning meal each day at school during the 2013–2014 school year, an increase of 320,000 children from the previous school

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 175–180.

year." Many parents or guardians are on extremely tight budgets and do not have the money to buy groceries. It is not only low-income students who are going without breakfast, however. Some parents are just not inclined to get up and get breakfast ready for their children.

What of the students who have no home to go to after school—the ones who live in cars or in motels because they are homeless? If a student is unable to secure adequate housing, especially overnight, how are they going to study and get work done? How important will World War II be if the student is going through their own war? Especially in middle school, when identity is so terribly important to the students, how will the homeless student feel without the same clothes or shoes or notebook as the rest of the students in the classroom? Homeless students are not just found in inner cities any more. Rural and suburban communities have their share as well. These are just a few examples of the diversity of the students in today's classrooms. Rich, poor, or in between—each student is an individual, and we must rejoice in those differences and give each student an environment conducive to learning. The purpose of this chapter is to bring awareness of diversity and multiculturalism in classrooms across the country and around the world.

BACKGROUND

According to *The Glossary of Education Reform*, "multicultural education evolved out the Civil Rights Movement in the United States" ("Multicultural Education," 2013). Multicultural education began with the African American community and expanded as other cultural groups were routinely being discriminated against—i.e., the disabled, women, and the LGBTQ+ community, among others. Manning (1994) notes that "Multicultural education was not listed as an identifying term in the *Education Index* until 1978" (p. 39). Below are some historical happenings that have affected the multicultural classroom of today:

- In the 1950s, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, only to discover in 1957 at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, that integration was easier said than done.
- Fourteen-year-old Black child Emmett Till was murdered, and the White men arrested were acquitted by an all-White jury.
- Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in the White section of the bus to move to the "Colored section."
- Black students began a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter.
- In the 1960s, students founded organizations giving young Blacks a place in the Civil Rights Movement, and the "Freedom Riders" started taking bus trips through the South testing segregation laws.
- James Meredith became the first Black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi, causing violence and riots, forcing President Kennedy to send in 5,000 federal troops (Brunner & Haney, 2015).

- In 1998, Matthew Shepard, "who was a 21-year-old University of Wyoming student, was found trussed to a fence post, bleeding and half-frozen to death. He had been pistol-whipped so severely that his brain stem was crushed" (Gumbel, 2013). Shepard's death became a "rallying cry against anti-gay bigotry and a cry for more tolerance and inclusion in society" (Gumbel, 2013).

In America, one in four school children are immigrants (Peng & Dissard, 2013). According to Peng and Dissard's (2013) documentary *I Learn America*, in one Brooklyn high school, 50 different countries are represented. How does this affect the classrooms? Are the students immersed into the English language? How is news from the school—e.g., meetings, events, etc.—dispersed to the students' parents or guardians? In this day of modern technology, teachers are able to find translations of nearly any given language. These translations could be used to send newsletters to parents in a language that they can read and understand. Recently, a student teacher in a seventh grade mathematics classroom experienced a new student registering in her classroom. He was Chinese and spoke no English. Searching the Internet, she found a site that would translate her lessons into Chinese, helping the student keep up while he was learning to speak English. What difference did it make to the student? Did he feel comfortable and safe in the classroom knowing that his teacher cared enough to do this for him? One would believe so. Donald Hones (2000) describes this synthesis as story weaving, "a story that is a weaving of two lives, a story about bridging the gap between schools and the homes of bilingual students and families."

Traditionally, December is celebrated in America as Christmas. However, what of the growing populations of those who celebrate Kwanzaa (African American), Hanukkah (Jewish), Bodhi Day (Buddhists), Feast of Sacrifice (Muslims), or Soyal (Native American Hopi)? Must students endure all of the Christian celebrations just because these celebrations are all that there are? In a discussion of ethnic and racial celebrations, Francis Wardle (2000) of the Center for the Study of Biracial Children states, "Because curricular materials for this population hardly exist, educators must be creative in changing and adapting curricular content and insisting that new materials purchased by their districts include positive examples of multiracial successes, heroes, and collaborations."

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Maine has traditionally been known as "the Whitest state in America," but according to *I Learn America*, Portland, Maine, is becoming the exception (Peng & Dissard, 2013). It has become one of the main refugee resettlement hubs in the country. Now, one-third of the students are immigrants (mainly refugees) from Somalia, West Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia (Peng & Dissard, 2013). As an example of the "Whiteness," my grandmother was a first- and second-grade teacher in rural Maine in the 1940s. I have some of her children's reading books, and what is reflected in the *Ginn Basic Readers, Second Reader* is an abundance of blonde, curly-haired girls wearing dresses and playing with dolls or cooking with their mothers; young boys with shorts and playing sports; mothers doing housework and cooking, wearing dresses, high heels, and aprons; and fathers coming home with a brief case, sitting and reading the paper, waiting for dinner to be served (Russell et al., 1948). Likewise, in *At Play*, children in a first reader were reflected in much the same way (Hildreth, 1940).

I was a seventh grade teacher in that same rural Maine in the ’80s and ’90s. When I developed a six-week unit on Black history, which turned in to a 10-week unit, one of the students asked, “Why are we studying Black history? We never study White history.” In turn, a young multiracial student stated, “I’m so glad we are learning about my history!” It was then that I became even more acutely aware of the need for this unit.

In 1959, journalist John Howard Griffin (1961/2010), a White native of Dallas, Texas, had his skin artificially darkened by a doctor and spent six weeks riding Greyhound buses in the racially segregated states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Griffin kept a journal of his experiences and wrote the book *Black Like Me* in 1961. Some of his experiences were scary, and some were heartbreaking, but most of all, they were true and eye-opening, especially for a White teacher from the State of Maine. If he were to repeat his trip today, would the results be the same, or has mankind learned from his experiences?

Even today, teachers need to be sure to check for bias and prejudice in the textbooks that they are using in their classrooms. Is there representation of many cultures and ethnicities, or is one culture predominant? Do the word problems in mathematics classrooms relate to the real world of the students, or are they using examples that some of the students have no way of relating to in their world? As an example, does the mathematics teacher tell her students to measure their driveway and figure out the area for tonight’s homework? What if there is no driveway? Does the English language arts teacher instruct her students to go home tonight and read a magazine article of their choice to report on in class tomorrow? What if there are no magazines from which the student can choose in the home? What if the social studies and/or science teacher gives directions for looking up a battle site or a certain disease when there is no Internet connection in the home? Not all homes have Internet connections and computers.

Emily Bazelon (2013) states, “research shows schools have to teach not just tolerance of an alternative lifestyle—the old code for keeping homosexuality at arm’s length—but acceptance” (p. 158). She goes on to explain that even very young children need to know family structures differ and that there is nothing wrong with that. It has been estimated at least 10% of any given middle school classroom are questioning their sexual identity, fueling the harassment and bullying in the hallways, on buses, and in lunchrooms. How can students focus on math and English with this going on around them?

Teachers must know their students. Some students are essentially responsible for the primary care of their younger siblings. Other classroom barriers include ability grouping, lack of equal access, and lower expectations of culturally diverse students. How many students don't know their reading ability when there are blackbirds, crows, bluebirds, and wrens names for reading groups? It isn't difficult to figure out where they stand in their classroom. This then leads to continued grouping on the playgrounds, in lunchrooms, and in hallways, and the cycle keeps continuing.

Sylvia Helmer and Catherine Eddy (1996) describe instances of students not making eye contact with their teachers: "An exasperated teacher proclaims, 'Look at me when I talk to you!'… In many cultures this kind of frequent eye contact, particularly between an adult and a younger person is considered the height of rudeness, if not a show of outright hostility and a challenge to the authority of the adult" (p. 39). This is another time when teachers must know their students and the traditions in their cultures. Another cultural example would be allowing a brother and sister to be placed in different classrooms so that the female student feels comfortable doing well and not being told that she is not allowed to do better than her brother.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Because the main focus of this chapter is to promote more awareness of diversity and multicultural education in the classrooms of today, future research will involve creating even more awareness so that all students have the same opportunities to become lifelong learners. The "impossible" dream is to have no students slighted in any way. Money, gender, ethnicity, religion, or any other form of diversity will be simply a matter of fact, not something to be used in a negative manner when it comes to the education of our students.

Activities and assignments can help lead students to more awareness of different cultures and family structures. One activity introduced to me by a colleague at Appalachian State University is an inquiry project on young adolescent culture. Student teachers keep a notebook of interviews that they held with the students, including the culture of their school and community as well as the culture of their daily lives. The assessment is a PowerPoint presentation of the findings. The results were very eye-opening for some of my students and made a difference in how they prepared for their classes.

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Radford University prepared a handout entitled "Incorporating Diversity Into Your Curriculum," with resources including suggested readings, Web resources, and videos (Townsend & Fajardo, 2015). Basically, three questions were presented:

- Why use inclusive teaching strategies?
- How can you teach inclusively?
- How can you incorporate diversity into a course?

Answering these questions and following the suggested strategies in the handout will help teachers as they prepare for the ever-growing diversity in their classrooms.

Our students notice everything that we do and say—particularly our silence. If we do not say anything when diversity issues arise in your classroom or school, we are actually approving of whatever is happening. Whether it be teaching or just observing in the hallways between classes, the students are noticing it. What is your silence saying about you?

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TAELOR RYE

23. HOMOPHOBIA IN SCHOOLS

Insufficient Teacher Preparation

I was hired to teach tenth-grade English at a small school six weeks into the school year. Although my late arrival was daunting for me—having no week of pre-planning and getting to know no coworkers before teaching scores of students—I felt that my teacher education program had sufficiently prepared me. For example, 94% of students where I completed my student teaching were economically disadvantaged, providing experience for my new school, where 75% of students are economically disadvantaged. The curriculum taught at my university incorporated many factors of modern education, including a general focus on diversity among my students, discussions on class sizes, and methods to pique the interest of disengaged students. However, time in my own classroom exposed an issue under-addressed by my own undergraduate college education: homophobia.

During my second week teaching, an unfamiliar student entered my room as classes were changing and approached my desk. He snickered, looked me in the eye, and said, "Can I ask you a question?" I dreaded what would come out of his mouth, freezing and anticipating the following: "Are you gay?" Instead, he laughed more, said, "I can't do it," and left. Two days later, I overheard him attempt to whisper to another student, "I think the new teacher's gay," as I passed them in the hallway.

I'm always aware of the way that I present myself to prevent any teasing from students because I've witnessed many teachers lose credibility through wearing unflattering clothing or tripping over trash cans during class. Even when I was in school, I recognized a general student-versus-teacher dichotomy, and my classmates and I developed camaraderie in part by complaining about or commenting on our teachers. Now, as an openly gay teacher, I keep these truths in mind in my own classroom.

Of course, my professors gave advice on how to address instances of student-to-student homophobia and other means of discrimination, but no part of my education addressed student-to-teacher homophobia. I've overheard one student reference my hypothetical girlfriend, and another student softly rebutted, "Or boyfriend," and laughed. Yet another student—one who would later be removed from my class by administration—expressed insincere interest in my dating life, spitting out a rapid-fire series of questions: "Are you married?" "Do you have a girlfriend?" "Or boyfriend?" "But is the person you like a girl or boy?"

J. R. Jones (Ed.), Feather Boas, Black Hoodies, and John Deere Hats, 181–185.

Naturally, students aren't the only ones who voice homophobic microaggressions. I've also overheard one teacher say to another, "That boy wants to be a girl so damn bad, don't he?" She responded, "He doesn't know *what* he wants to be." That same teacher referenced an openly gay student whom she teaches and said, "That boy right there weird as hell." Before I came out to my coworkers during a presentation about homophobia in schools, I could not imagine the reactions that I would get if news of my sexual orientation spread across the school—from students *and* teachers.

I am an advocate for other LGBTQ+ people, and I am quick to the draw with addressing instances of homophobia from students in my classroom or in the hallways. But with so much acid being spewed these days, especially in this political climate, teachers need to make sure that they advocate for themselves and that they have other advocates for them. For too long, I felt uncomfortable revealing any personal information about myself to any other teachers in my small school of roughly 420 students.

Obviously, I'm not the only gay teacher who experiences discomfort in the school. Others are in situations similar to mine, and some have been in worse. I interviewed other LGBTQ+ teachers who were willing to add anecdotes from their own lives, and—at the risk of sounding like a clickbait headline—some of the results were shocking. I asked some pretty standard questions, documenting age and the level of the school where participants work (elementary, middle, high, and so on), but I also asked how comfortable they felt identifying and addressing homophobia in the classroom.

One question that I asked is a pretty basic "Have you witnessed homophobia or transphobia in a school setting?" One response was "I have had a number of LGBT students in my classroom while teaching and have led discussions on the proper way to speak of LGBT students—especially trans individuals—with my classes. All of those conversations have been overwhelmingly positive. I have not witnessed direct bullying or homophobia in my class." That made me happy. He then added, "However, it is my understanding that a lot of that kind of bullying has moved online." I then asked the same person whether he had ever experienced homophobia in a school setting himself. He responded, "I have never experienced homophobia from a colleague or an administrator. And I have never heard a student make a comment about it directly. Though I did once confiscate a student's phone to discover he had taken a picture of me and captioned it, 'gay-ass history teacher.'"

When other participants were asked if they had witnessed homophobia in their schools, most responses were along the lines of "Yes, I hear *gay* or *queer* being used derogatorily." Interestingly, one person said, "I teach choir part time, and in the boys' ensemble, there is a young boy who likes to sing the girl's part at times, and the full-time teacher will say things like: 'Are you a girl?' 'Do you want to be a girl?' 'Sing like the man you are…' etc." As we all know, this type of language can really hurt students—not just the one being spoken to but also those who have to hear it. But imagine having to play second string to that person. Teacher education programs don't typically address this type of friction in a school. And, upon immediate thought, one may ask, why should they? I mean, surely a college student with a business major doesn't receive formal instruction on how to just move past disagreements with a coworker, right? Well, when it comes to discriminatory practices or language in the work environment, there should be some sort of preparation.

Similarly, the co-teacher for my inclusion class last year made a remark in front of my class. We were studying poetry from Emily Dickinson, and I was giving context, explaining that some of her writing shows romantic attraction and feelings of being jilted. The co-teacher added on, "Yeah, and you can tell that the boy—well, at least, I *hope* it was a boy"—students laughed—"didn't like her back, or else she wouldn't be so sad." I felt uncomfortable in my own classroom, and so did my interview participant in the choir room. The co-teacher in my class has made other statements like that. I've never addressed it because—how *do* you address it? She's an adult, not a student; I can't tell her what to do, and I especially wouldn't want to undermine her in front of the students. I probably will never address it directly. The choir teacher also said, "At times, I find myself wishing things won't come up so I won't have to be the one to address issues, but with students, I'm always willing to be the person who does it. If a student needs my voice, it's theirs." How do we know how to speak up for ourselves?

Other participants gave a range of responses when asked how comfortable they are with identifying and addressing instances of homophobia. A couple said, "Very comfortable," and one said, "Not very comfortable." One articulated, "As an LGBT teacher, I need to be an advocate for LGBT students at my school." Another stated, "Uncomfortable, as I would feel my personal life would be put under a microscope." Someone responded, "It's about building empathy and addressing ignorance," while yet another said, "Definitely not! I have two coworkers that know because I'm close to them. No one else officially knows. They may suspect it… I feel like it immediately gives my sexuality away when I try to defend it."

I asked participants how comfortable they would feel with coworkers and administration knowing their sexual orientation. One said, "At my first school I worked at, the teachers I was closest with were aware of my sexuality. I'm sure other teachers had their suspicions, but the topic of really any part of my personal life never really came up (we all mostly worked in our classrooms). At the school I am at now, there is a designated group for LGBT educators. It's not a secret to my coworkers, and I feel highly supported." Another said, "Everyone knows. I blog about it and talk about it." There was a response of "Totally. I work in a very inclusive, progressive school." On the other hand, participants also said, "Very uncomfortable," "Not comfortable at all," "Very uncomfortable, as I work in a very rural school that's highly conservative," and, "It's uncomfortable for me to know that everyone knows since we're not totally accepting as a community, and I can imagine parents calling my principal and asking about me."

These are legitimate concerns. Many LGBTQ+ teachers have worries that their sexual orientation can lead to their being fired for some fabricated reason, so why do teacher education programs not offer LGBTQ+ pre-service teachers some sort of guidance beforehand? One participant who taught in a district with a highly esteemed reputation told me that he was forced to resign on day six of his second year teaching. He explained, "There was a huge incident at the school I was at… This would have been my second year teaching. My principal passed away last April, so one of our assistant principals stepped up to principal, and I knew things would be crazy once he got it… He just pulled me in his office one day and said [that] … a parent had an issue with my homosexuality… They pulled me out of the class three times that week. The final time, they told me I would have a meeting at the board office and to pack my things. Soooo, I kind of knew. I packed some of my stuff until the sub came in. Then I went to the meeting, and the director of human resources pretty much yelled in my face at how 'unprofessional' I had been. I'm a little flamboyant, so my students could tell I was gay. *They* knew… On the sixth day of school this year, the principal asked me to resign… They basically were going to try to fire me if I didn't opt to resign, so I did… Now, I may be losing my teaching certificate because I was essentially forced into breaking my contract. My attorney is still fighting for me, but I doubt it's going to work out… It's crazy because everything I've worked for was literally snatched right out of my hands… But honestly… all that went on made me absolutely hate the profession. I never want to teach again, honestly."

This was the most harrowing response that I received from any of my participants. It's scary to think that one's livelihood and progress up to a certain point can all be revoked by homophobia, which some LGBTQ+ teachers don't even feel comfortable addressing. One participant told me, "I've never been great at articulating why phobias like those are not correct in the school environment; I just get angry… I get angry and fire off, 'Don't say that like an insult!' but it's hard for me to logically expand that argument." So what can teacher education programs do to help combat this issue?

Obviously, an all-inclusive mandatory course on LGBTQ+ sensitivity would be beneficial in an ideal world. But it's not necessarily practical. There's not an entire college course devoted to racism in the workplace or sexism in the workplace either, after all. But perhaps a required class on diversity in general could be added to the curriculum of teacher education programs. If my instructional technology class—which loosely taught me copyright laws and how to make a brochure using Microsoft Publisher, at its high points—can be a requirement to address changing times, why not this?

I asked my participants for their suggestions on what teacher education programs could add, and one said, "Teaching LGBTQ history, integrating issues of 'identity' in all classes, eliminating hetero-normative vocabulary and language/assumptions." Another said, "There should be workshops on how to communicate effectively about the 'issue.' I think a huge issue is that people who are unaware or uncomfortable speak out without knowing the damage of their words." I know that I would surely benefit from some instruction on how to appropriately react when I don't let a student go to the office during class and she calls me an "ugly bitch" and a "gay fucker." Most other participants didn't have any answers; I don't even have too strong of an answer, but it's clear that a problem exists. Another participant said, "It's about dealing with issues—not taking things personally," but I'm not exactly sure about how that deals with improvements to teacher education programs…

One of the last questions that I asked was "How do you feel that teachers should address questions about the topic of their own sexual orientation or gender identity, if at all?" Someone said, "Professional and personal life should be kept separate." Another: "I keep my personal life separate." Someone else: "I just said that they didn't need to know who I dated!" Strangely, I also got this answer: "I think it should be a personal decision, and if a student feels like a teacher's sexual orientation is hindering their performance in the classroom, then it should be addressed, but luckily none of my students have asked me yet." I can't imagine that a teacher's heterosexuality would be a "hindrance," though.

Someone else noted, "I think educators should be able to share whatever aspects of their personal lives that they feel are appropriate and would share if they were straight. I openly talk about my partner and our son." Similarly, a participant said, "Not any more than any other teacher would address it… I have a picture of my partner and myself in my office, and students will routinely ask, 'Who's that?' I reply: 'That's my partner.' I have not received any negative reactions about this." On the flip side, someone responded, "As far as I'm aware, we have no anti-discrimination clause in effect. It is entirely possible that exposing our identities/orientations could create backlash, especially in rural areas, that leads us to losing our jobs. 'Don't ask, don't tell' is likely the easiest course to take."

I liked this response the best, though: "I always try to be as honest as possible with my students. My policy has always been, if a student asks me directly, 'Are you gay?' to answer them truthfully. One, because you never know if that student is questioning their own sexuality and looking for role models like them. And two, I don't want to convey the message that being gay is something to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. Because if the student thinks they are gay, that is a terrible message to send. And if the student is homophobic, conveying the idea that 'gay is bad' reinforces their view."

There's no blanket answer for all situations. Any improvement to teacher education programs isn't going to apply to every single LGBTQ+ teacher. But clearly, something has got to change on the front end—not just from my own experiences but also from the testimonies of my participants and, doubtless, from the perspectives of other LGBTQ+ teachers. Bringing these matters up once someone is in the field can be extremely risky, so some sort of formal guidance prior to taking the plunge seems appropriate.

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