

Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research

American Educational Research Association
Special Interest Group
Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research

Volume 7, 2011

Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

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*“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.” -
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

In preparation for the upcoming 2012 American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Annual Meeting, with the noteworthy theme “Non Satis Scire: To Know Is Not Enough,” Volume 7 of the *Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research (JULTR)* presents articles highlighting knowledge gained through educational research at various junctures in the comprehensive teaching and learning arena. Through such efforts, this *JULTR* volume demonstrates vigilant support for AERA's mission—namely, “to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.”

Section One focuses on research related to teacher preparation. The section begins with an article by Saffold and Bales entitled “Radical Initiatives in the Preparation of Multicultural Teachers,” in which the authors describe their innovative approach to implementing a pedagogy lab-based experiment as a method of teaching multicultural education to primarily white teacher candidates inexperienced with the sociocultural aspects of urban education. Next, Borrero's article “Entering Teaching for and with Love: Visions of pre-service urban teachers” introduces us to candidates who built relationships with urban youth early in their teacher education program. Meanwhile, Pirbhai-Illich, Paugh, and Farina reflect upon their own experiences as teacher educators, using the lens of critical race theory in their article entitled “Responding to ‘Innocent’ Racism: Educating teachers in politically reflexive and dialogic engagement in local communities. Austin's and Bangou's article “Revisiting Collaborative Boundaries—Pioneering change in perspectives and relations of power” also adopts a teacher education stance utilizing the lens of critical race theory, although its focus is on racial tensions in collaborative teaching situations.

Simply having knowledge is not enough. Teacher educators, teacher candidates, and teachers, must be able to put this knowledge into practice and demonstrate that learning—

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including self-learning, student learning, and community learning—is taking place. Thus, Section Two examines the learning that takes place in K-12 environments. Chen presents research on the benefits of the use of social networking in urban classrooms in “From CMS to SNS: Educational networking for urban teachers.” In addition, in “‘Martin Luther King Stopped Discrimination’: Intergenerational Latino elementary students’ perceptions of social issues,” Saucedo Curwen uses her qualitative study to answer how inter-generational, middle-class fifth graders from Latino families respond to discussions of social issues—particularly discrimination—in their classroom. Finally, Barber’s article “‘These Are Our Babies’: University student tutors, urban learners, public school and university staff crafting community through service learning” discusses the multiple learning outcomes of a long-term university tutoring program on a historically black southern campus that involves not only university tutors and fifth-grade students, but also site directors, teachers from the students’ schools, faculty volunteers, and student research assistants.

Finally, supervision and evaluation of school personnel and students are key to determining whether knowledge is indeed being put into practice. Section Three therefore focuses on supervision and evaluation. Marcos, Witmer, Foland, Vouga, and Wise begin this section with their article “The Principal’s Academy: A collaborative California university initiative on congruence of principal training to urban school leadership practice.” Their survey of California superintendents yielded insightful quantitative and qualitative data and recommendations about principals trained at Tier I schools. In the final article, entitled “What Did the Teachers Think? Policy implications on the use of value-added modeling as a tool for evaluating teacher effectiveness,” Linda Lee discusses the use of value-added modeling and teacher evaluation.

The nine articles in this volume, situated in different contexts, address critical issues related to research about teaching and learning in urban schools. Collectively they consider practices, challenges, and promising practices that attempt to respond to questions that address ways to improve *urban* education for the public good.

SECTION ON TEACHER PREPARATION

RADICAL INITIATIVES WITH CASE STUDIES IN THE PREPARATION OF MULTICULTURAL TEACHERS

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Abstract

Research points to particular problems in the experiences of White teachers teaching children of color and diverse backgrounds because often they are unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds and communities. Additionally, research points to the educational value of linking students' lived experiences to their classroom learning. This paper presents the research-based findings of faculty who implemented a field-based "pedagogy lab" in an urban teacher preparation program. The lab offered teacher candidates opportunities to develop a deeper and a broader understanding of content and pedagogy, which resulted in enhanced specific content-pedagogical knowledge. The findings suggest new ways of preparing urban teachers.

Keywords: Field-based studies; multicultural education; pedagogy

Introduction

Research suggests that teachers should use their knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to inform their pedagogical and curricular decisions so disciplinary-based learning opportunities are accessible to everyone in the classroom (Banks et al., 2001; Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Sleeter, 2005; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000). Yet Hollins and Guzman (2005) reported that "barriers to [teacher] candidates' increased knowledge growth about cultural differences and ways of providing appropriate and responsive pedagogy to students from cultures other than their own included positivistic thinking, dualistic thinking, a belief in one right answer, and relying on personal biographies as guides to how to teach others" (p. 512). Given this situation, what if teacher educators used those barriers as points of departure for radically different pedagogical experiences so education-intended students could unpack the complexities of teaching children different from themselves? This paper shares research supported by the Teachers for a New Era project that explored a unique and radical intervention in how we prepare teachers for children

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historically underserved in public schools.¹ The findings direct teacher educators to the notion of a “pedagogy lab” where students of teaching can (a) unpack beliefs about children unlike themselves and (b) grapple with ways to integrate culturally-relevant pedagogy into disciplinary-based instructional activities.

Context of the Study

Preparing Multicultural Teachers at the University of Lake City

As teacher educators at the University of Lake City (ULC), our mission as an urban institution of higher education permeates our work with, and our expectations for, teacher candidates. The mission’s core guiding principle forefronts our commitment that educators licensed through our ULC certification programs “will demonstrate an understanding of the unique characteristics of diverse urban contexts, and issues of race, class, culture and language are kept at the forefront of equity considerations” (ULC - School of Education, 2003). This means that candidates completing our learning-to-teach programs “will have substantive knowledge about the varieties of urban cultures, the forces that maintain poverty, and the powerful historic and contemporary beliefs and traditions that support discrimination in society. They must understand how poverty, racism, and cultural traditions affect learning” (Section 1, para. 1).

Given these principles, our Learning-to-Teach Professional Sequence should offer teacher candidates bold experiences that provide opportunities to learn about, and push on, the structures that limit children’s learning. But the majority of teacher candidates are “White and middle-class, female, from suburban or rural backgrounds...[and] enter preparation programs with negative or deficit attitudes and beliefs about those different from themselves” (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 511). In our state, like other states that require teacher candidates engage in some form of multicultural education coursework prior to licensure, the critical attributes of that knowledge-base are not specified (Akiba, Cockrell, Simmons, & Han, 2007). As a result, “many public school teachers who enter urban districts with more students of color, tell stories about their negative experiences with such students and also express sincere frustration about their teaching ineffectiveness” (Gibson, 2004, p. 1).

At ULC, all education-intended students must complete a 3-credit, field-based, course titled, "Introduction to Teaching" before they are admitted to the School of Education and their selected certification program. In that course, students explore teaching and learning in an urban context. They attend weekly class seminars and have a 50 hour, school-based experience in a Lake City Public School classroom. Three guiding questions shape the Introduction to Teaching course design: What does it mean to be a teacher for all students in urban schools? How do the multiple and often-conflicting purposes of schooling affect what teachers do and what students learn? What assumptions do I hold about urban schools, students, teachers and communities? We use this design because “exemplary teaching is more than a list of skills and methods [and] much of a teacher’s own personality goes into the lesson as well as her/his beliefs about the students, and beliefs about her/his ability to teach” (Ellison, 2007, p. 12). Journal writing, discussions,

¹ This study was made possible in part by a *Teachers for a New Era* grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

simulations, video tape analysis, and field assignments, help students unpack their future roles as teachers in urban schools. We assumed this curricular and pedagogical arrangement in our preparation program supported our mission.

Erroneous Assumptions about What Students Learn in the Introduction to Teaching Course

Students applying to the School of Education have to complete an admissions essay, which we thought revealed dispositions about how they perceived their role as a teacher in urban schools. We discovered, however, that students' admissions essays, regardless of the certification program they were applying to, offered pedestrian views of teaching and learning in urban schools. More often than not, their essays failed to reveal any awareness of the social and political structures that bear down on the children attending urban schools, any interrogation of their privilege within those same structures, or any insights on how their roles as teachers might re(shape) children's opportunities to learn. In fact, their exit portfolios often confirmed the tenuous relationship between teacher preparation programs and one's ability to teach in urban school; a situation well, documented in the literature (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Grant & Gillette, 2006; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Clearly, creating cogent links between preparation theories and teaching practices continued to challenge us as ULC.

As Valli (1992) warned, "All too often images of good teachers and knowledge about good teaching are left unarticulated, presumed to be part of a shared, but tacit, understanding" (p. xi). As such, preparation programs should offer candidates opportunities to reflect upon theoretical issues and examine their relationship to practical classroom application. More importantly, teacher educators must be mindful of how these opportunities to learn are presented because teacher candidates are active participants in the learning process and mediate the transfer of new knowledge through their past experiences (Lortie, 1975; Sikula, 1996; Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

At the same time, Hollins and Guzman (2005) have noted, students of teaching continue to seek "expert" answers. This was particularly true with the Introduction to Teaching students, who often essentialized every classroom observation and used their own schooling experiences to frame a 'correct' response to every pedagogical debate and discussion. They had difficulty contextualizing any given situation and struggled to understand both the developmental nature of learning to teach and the process of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987). Given their entrenched understandings about teaching and learning in urban schools, we needed to create a safe space where education-intended students could work through the knowledge and dispositional barriers that kept them from becoming the pedagogues we wanted for the city's children.

At the same time, we needed to work through our own programmatic barriers. Like most teacher preparation programs, ULC candidates traditionally acquire discipline-specific content knowledge and the historical and cultural foundations of diverse groups during their liberal arts and general education course experiences. Then they focus on attaining pedagogical expertise through their professional preparation experiences. The gap in this learning-to-teach structure forces pre-service teachers to bridge the two, more often than not without support from faculty in either arena. This gap in the learning-to-teach professional sequence is commonplace in most teacher-preparing institutions and has a long-standing history.

Two goals of the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project address this learning to teach disjuncture. The first goal puts forward the need to explore how programs help candidates learn to engage with families and develop a repertoire of teaching strategies so children with a range of learning styles, abilities, and cultural backgrounds have effective access to schooling. The second goal addresses helping program faculty re-conceptualize the relationship between Letters and Science and School of Education course work and experiences so teacher candidates gain an integrative knowledge of the nature of a discipline (its premises, modes of inquiry, and limits of understanding) and how candidates can translate this knowledge and ways of thinking into learning opportunities for K-12 pupils (TNE, 2004).

With these conditions as context – the ULC mission, our teacher candidate population, and our position as a TNE site –we asked the question: What if students interrogated their ethnicity, gender, and social class then used their new ways of knowing to explore how culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogy could be used in the teaching and learning of history, mathematics, science, and English? Our response was to design and implement a 1-credit pedagogy lab, where students could make earlier and deeper connections between their Introduction to Teaching coursework and the disciplinary-based learning opportunities they would eventually offer children in the city’s schools.

The Intervention

The Pedagogy Lab: The Theoretical Foundations for a Radical Intervention

Banks et al., (2001) suggests that teacher educators provide learning opportunities that help students of teaching:

- (1) uncover and identify their personal attitudes toward racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups;
- (2) acquire knowledge about the histories and cultures of the diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and language groups within the nation and within their schools;
- (3) become acquainted with the diverse perspectives that exist within different ethnic and cultural communities; and
- (4) understand the ways in which institutionalized knowledge within schools, universities, and popular culture can perpetuate stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups. (p. 6).

Thus, the first purpose of the Pedagogy Lab (henceforth referred to as ‘Ped Lab’) was to help students unpack their beliefs about children unlike themselves. Then we needed to provide opportunities for them to use what they were learning about culturally-relevant and responsive pedagogy in Introduction to Teaching to rethink disciplinary-based, instructional activities. Given the powerful influence of teacher candidates’ socialized beliefs about children of color and the need to fundamentally alter their teaching trajectory, we drew upon the theory of conceptual change to ground their pedagogy lab learning.

Conceptual change learning theory in the Pedagogy Lab.

Conceptual change learning theory puts forward the idea that people hold to their beliefs and understandings until they recognize discrepancies with new ideas and must reconcile any dissonance between the two. Learning then, “involves an interaction between new and existing

conceptions with the outcome being dependent on the nature of the interaction” (Hewson, Beeth, & Thorley, 1998, p. 251). In teacher education, this means candidates must: (1) have an opportunity to consider why new practices and their associated values and beliefs are better than more conventional approaches; (2) see examples of these practices, preferably under realistic conditions; (3) experience such practices firsthand as learners; and (4) incorporate new ideas with ongoing support and guidance (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, p. 23-24). This theoretical framework supports the use of case-based instruction.

Case-based instruction in the Pedagogy Lab.

Drawing from the students’ understanding that a ‘lab’ offers space to experiment and practice a field of study, we used teaching cases to frame our instruction in the 1-credit course. Research supports using cases to solve problems in education (Lundenberg, Levin, & Harrington, 1999). Case-based instruction asserts that a teacher’s pedagogical knowledge is contextual, interactive, and speculative (Clark & Lampert, 1986). In other words, a teacher’s pedagogy is situation specific, is informed by and informs their interactions with students, and, as a result, involves uncertainty. Cases then are a powerful pedagogical tool. In other words, case methods “help candidates bridge the gap between theory and practice and develop skills of reflection and close analysis by engaging them in the process” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 103).

Teacher educators use teaching cases to bring the complexities of a classroom into focus and offer students an opportunity to connect theory with practice in a supportive environment. According to McDade (1995) the most important purpose of a teaching case is to create ‘realistic laboratories’ in a classroom so candidates can apply research techniques, participate in a critical analysis of the cases, and utilize their problem-solving skills. Cases that involve realistic classroom events and focus on issues of gender, ethnicity, race, special needs, and language provide students with opportunities to identify and analyze the hazards and potential instructional benefits of whitewashing students’ ethnic, gender, and social class. Applied to these types of cases, students of teaching can (1) develop critical problem solving skills, (2) engage in reflective practice, (3) analyze and make decisions in complex situations, (4) participate in active learning, and (5) develop as a community of learners (Merseeth, 1991).

Cases become a more powerful pedagogical tool when coupled with an online learning environment like BlackBoard, Desire 2 Learn, or WebCT. In these environments, instructors can offer video or online cases then create resources so students can “access relevant information as [they] need it and apply it to solving conceptual and theoretical problems” (Stenaas, 1999, p. 12). An online environment also allows highly verbal students as well as those less prone to speak, an opportunity to engage in a threaded, asynchronous discussion about particular scenes. Students’ responses, because they are posted and recorded, are now open to scrutiny by their peers.

Studying the Pedagogy Lab

The Participants

Nine students from the Introduction to Teaching class volunteered to participate in the Pedagogy Lab during the Spring 2008 semester. The 1-credit Lab met every other Friday

morning from 8:00-10:40am. The eight females and one male represented typical students of teaching – white, middle-class individuals from suburban or rural backgrounds. Two were parents of children; seven were under 25 years of age.

The Research Design, Data Sources, and Analysis

Our investigation of this pedagogical innovation was mixed-methods research. We examined how and what education-intended students experienced through the pedagogy lab course and how it affected their ability to develop culturally-relevant content and pedagogy. Data were generated through a document analysis of the newly created course syllabi, student and instructor interviews, and participant-observations during the lab. Data were also generated from students' work samples – their responses to each teaching cases in the course and their reflective writings about what they observed in their classroom-based field experiences. Interviews were digitally-recorded. Interview data and the participant-observer's field notes were entered into NVivo and then coded. In addition, students also engaged in a pre- and post-lab case analysis. Here students were asked to examine a particular teaching case and generate a pedagogically-based response at the beginning of the course. During the last lab meeting, these same students were asked to respond to the same case. Pre- and post-lab scores were compared.

Data from these multiple sources came together in patterns that allowed us to analyze what the students of teaching learned and experienced because of their involvement with the pedagogy lab. We used the analytic process of abduction (Agar, 1996) to structure our coding and analysis of the data. We started coding with broad sweeps across the generated data drawing on the theoretical tenets of this particular pedagogy lab model – the four foundational beliefs regarding teacher preparation put forward by Banks et al., (2001), conceptual change, and case-based instruction. Preliminary patterns emerged. A secondary analysis of these data revealed additional patterns tied to the students' learning and development as teachers. Three themes emerged from this process: (1) students' pedagogical content knowledge was strengthened through a deeper understanding of culturally relevant course content; (2) case based teaching and learning strategies enhanced preservice teachers' clinical reasoning skills; and (3) an increase in student pedagogical confidence. Themes were resituated in the data where we looked for connections, similarities, and negative examples. This process revealed three, radically new levels of teacher candidate learning.

The Findings

Three findings emerged from our analysis of the data. First, students made cogent links between the Introduction to Teaching course content and their fledgling pedagogical content knowledge across a variety of disciplines. Second, the value of case based teaching, noted in the literature, was confirmed; students developed more complex, clinical reasoning skills and, as a result, made more thoughtful and culturally-relevant responses to the cases. The third finding addresses the new levels confidence students experienced in their ability to think like a teacher because they were able to make connections among their Introduction to Teaching course, the cases used in the Ped Lab, and what they observed in their field experiences.

Radically-New Levels of Candidate Learning

The first finding addresses teacher candidates' richer and more contextualized links between their pedagogy and the diverse needs of pupils and how they used these links to develop science, mathematics, social studies, or English/language arts pedagogical content knowledge. In other words, this particular group of teacher candidates came to know the disciplinary-based content more broadly because they had a concurrent eye on how they might translate it in ways that drew upon children's ethnicity, gender, language, and social class. Students noted, for example, that reflection went beyond a cursory review of 'the lesson'. They began to ask questions like:

How are my actions in the classroom linked to my deep-seeded beliefs about a child's ethnicity? As their teacher, have I been a cultural anthropologist? (Student AB, CRLab Field Notes, 3/07)

Am I being fair? Are students struggling with the lesson because I haven't made connections to their lives? (Student QR, CRLab Field Notes, 4/07).

Because students had different disciplinary-based majors, our discussions about teaching helped them see how they could adapt and expand a lesson to include multiple subject areas. Two students commented on this during an online, asynchronous posting:

I really liked the apartment hunting case that we looked at in class today. I could easily see how the project could be a great math lesson but I never even thought about how it also could lend itself to talking about issues of social justice. (Student NW, CRLab Online Posting, 4/07)

I agree with you. When we talk in CURRINS 100 about integrating subject areas, I always thought that was something that would be easier in a Language arts classroom. In the lesson that we did today, I could easily see how talking about where students decided to live based on the budget that they were given could go into a discussion about poverty or inequities that exist in our society. (Student LB, CRLab Online Posting, 4/07)

The academic importance having teachers draw on students' lived experiences and make connections with disciplinary-based knowledge is well documented (see for example, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002; Greeno, 1997; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Ladson Billings, 1995; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; National Research Council, 2004, 2005; Sleeter, 2005). Thus, this finding suggests that students' pedagogical content knowledge was strengthened through a deeper understanding of culturally relevant, subject-specific, course content.

The Power of Case-Based Instruction to Foster Culturally-Relevant Teaching Practices

The second finding affirms the powerful pedagogical tool of case-based instruction. Each case helped students bring the complexities of a classroom into focus and helped each student connect theory with practice in a supportive environment. At the same time, each case had a

different intended learning outcome and each scaffold students to more complex thinking. The following passage highlights the instructor's careful selection of the cases:

The first teaching case was designed to explore teacher candidates' beliefs about children who live in poverty. Written using the guidelines put forward by Wasserman (1994), (1) Drawing the reader into the story during the opening; (2) Building the case around an event of consequence; (3) Elevating the tension between conflicting points of view; (4) Writing the story so readers grow to care; and (5) Making sure the case is believable, the first case asked students to evaluate a classroom and determine whether a white teacher was justified in preventing her class of African American and Latino students from presenting creative speeches in their own voice, which included swear and slang words not usually appropriate in public spaces. The intended goal was to have the all white group of ped-lab students engage in rich dialogue about teaching students from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds and to explore boundaries and standards in teaching. The instructor kept the discussion on track with focus questions and made sure students attended to pertinent urban issues. During their online discussion, students demonstrated high levels of complex thinking as they integrated course content and their field experiences with their current thinking about being multicultural educators. A sample of this discussion is presented below:

When I think about nonstandard English in the classroom, I don't think it should be a practice that is used without guidance toward correct English. In our book by Pugach, there is a story about a teacher named Ms. Secret from Oakland, California. "Ms. Secret seems comfortable addressing issues of language use in a direct, upfront, and consistent manner with her students. She has set clear expectations for the use of AAVE and for the use of Standard English, and she expects her students to learn and use Standard English well so that they have the skills they need to be successful in the cultural world of education and work. At all times she is respectful of the students' first language." (Pugach, 2009, 228). I think that Miss. Secret has a great way of structuring her classroom with respecting other languages and embracing them, but also being honest with the students and teaching them that the language that is used in the working world is standard English, but to still embrace AAVE because that is an important part of who they are. There is a lot of controversy about accepting AAVE in the classroom, and you have heard my stance on it, what is your stance on the issue? (Student CD, Online Posting, 4/07)

This post elicited several responses. One student posted:

Before my field work, I would have said absolutely no slang or ebonics only standardized English in my classroom. But, when I was volunteering at a school there was a paraprofessional in our kindergarten class, she was your typical intimidating teacher from you know where. She would punish the children when they used any language other than what she called "proper English" she would tell the 4 year olds that they sounded like "thugs". I clearly remember one of the 4 year old boys asking her "Can I go use it?" which meant "can I use the bathroom", the teacher would not allow the student to go to the bathroom until he spoke "proper English", the child was near tears after repeating the same phrase

time after time, until the lead teacher overheard and stepped in and allowed the student to use the bathroom. That paraprofessional is no longer employed at that school. Understandably AAVE is not accepted in the “business world”, because Standard English is the primary language spoken, but there is a time and a place to use it, and it needs to be preserved and valued as any other language. (Student JM, Online Posting, 4/07)

Another student added to the conversation:

I see both of your points in this topic, AAVE is going to be present always, and we shouldn't discourage our students from abandoning their cultures. I like the way Miss Secret went about it in her classroom. Culture is to be respected and present. It needs to be welcomed and incorporated into the culture of the classroom. Like Miss Secret's classroom, there is a time and a place for home culture, and a time and place for classroom culture, and going right along with her example AAVE is accepted in the classroom and on rough drafts, but when it came to the final paper--well formed English needed to be used. This is an awesome way of including both cultures. We need to look at it like two different languages. If Susie speaks Spanish, it will probably help her to write in Spanish on the rough drafts and work out things in her head in Spanish, which is what she knows well. That's comfortable for her, but the teacher's goal is for the child to write a well formed English paper--to better prepare her for the world she will one day be out in. And that's a great teaching opportunity--to connect that home culture, what she knows, to the classroom culture, what she's aspiring to know. We are trying to teach, and we're trying to teach well. In order to do that, we need to respect our children. I haven't had categorically "tough" experiences as far as children and their home culture, but I have had instances. I don't want them, to completely throw away any part of their culture to the wayside in order to fit in better with society, as a whole. That's their roots--what has been instilled in them and they should cherish that, and furthermore they should be taught to celebrate that, and right along with that celebration we need to discuss with them the time and the place it should be used. (Student AB, Online Posting, 4/07)

The second case was a video case in which ped-lab students learned how to draw upon students' assets to better support their academic progress. The video, “What to do about Raymond,” was part of a comprehensive multimedia kit produced by teacher-development.com specifically designed for schools who face the challenges of students at-risk. The *Becoming a Star Teacher* series is designed to provoke discussion and analysis of Haberman's (1995) star teacher qualities. In this case, the star teacher quality that was being observed and evaluated was persistence in problem solving. Throughout the case, ped-lab students followed a teacher as he struggled to understand the nature of Raymond's behavior and find a workable solution. Ped-lab students got an opportunity to react to the teacher's actions or the actions the teacher failed to take and were able to make suggestions about what they thought should be done in the situation.

I pushed them to think about the classroom situation more critically as we viewed the video together. For example, in the first scene, the social studies teacher is giving a lecture on the prohibition era. Raymond has his head on his desk and appears to be asleep. At this point, I

paused the tape and asked the preservice students to talk about what was happening in the video. Immediately, students started to give responses that would explain why Raymond was sleeping in class. “*Raymond might have lots of responsibilities at night and he may be very tired when he gets to school,*” one student responded. “*Social studies could be a hard subject for him and he doesn’t like it,*” said another student. No one even considered the fact that the teacher’s instructional style could have been a factor in Raymond being disengaged.

I had the students step away from the video for a moment and we talked about our favorite classes while we were in school. After this discussion, we went back to the video and talked about the teacher’s lecture on the prohibition era as an instructional strategy. I had the students come up with alternative ways that same lesson could be taught and if that might make a difference in how students respond to it. The students came up with some very interesting, interactive ideas for the lesson. By the time we finished watching the video, students were able to look at student and teacher interactions and understand how both contribute to the learning environment.

The third scenario was an interactive case. Students seemed to like that case best, perhaps because it had internet hyperlinks, where they could tap additional information. As they read about this young, first grade, Hispanic student and his struggles in school, they made predications about what they would do if they were the classroom teacher. Then they could click on these links and access information about his home life and his background so they were better prepared when they talked with the parents. Other links let them talk with his other teachers. As they progressed through the case, you could see them saying, “Oh, well that kind of changes things.” It was a way for them to uncover their assumptions about this student, and his home life, and the school; assumptions they don’t necessarily know they have. (Ped Lab Instructor, CRLab Interview 5/2007)

The instructor went on to explain her pedagogical decisions using this particular case:

Unpacking these assumptions is critical in their development as multicultural teachers. Only then, could they make predictions about the outcome of the case. At each step, they wrote down what they were thinking. So when they talked to the parents and found out that neither spoke English, they changed their initial thinking and took a very different approach to the case. And because the focus teacher doesn’t have a link, and therefore can’t share the reasons surrounding her decision-making, it leaves a pedagogical space for the Ped Lab students to reconcile their original beliefs with their new thinking. (Ped Lab Instructor, CRLab Interview 5/2007)

The online environment allowed students to compare their thinking about the case with their classmates’ and school-based professionals’. It was as though students had superficial and temporal understandings of the concepts in their Introduction to Teaching course but their simultaneous participation in the Lab and their fieldwork brought their learning experiences together. One student highlighted these connections during the group interview,

I always got more out of the lab than just our Introduction course. In class, it was like, ‘here is the chapter’ and in lab we had really deep conversations about what

it means to be an effective teacher. Now I have an example for everything we covered in Intro. You really get a chance to see how the theory we are learning works in the classroom. (Student CD, CRLab Student Interview, 5/07)

This metacognitive thinking about these connections points to the third finding – new levels of confidence in learning to think like a teacher.

Developing Confidence and Learning to Think like a Teacher

Students developed a noticeable degree of confidence in their ability to think like a teacher because the vignettes mirrored what is observed in their classroom-based field experiences and underscored the application of the theories they were learning in the Introduction to Teaching course. As one student shared, “*It was eye-opening to realize how little some teachers do to try and level the playing field for all of their students. That realization made me feel much more confident in my own newly acquired skills*” (Student JM, CRLab Field Notes, 5/07). Students’ confidence levels became clear through their online discussion as they worked through the interactive case study. Their postings revealed high levels of complex thinking as they challenged each other’s postings and defended their own responses.

Unlike earlier class sessions, where students were anxious to find out the ‘correct’ answer, this last case provided them with opportunities to be confident in their own analysis and response. In their analysis, they determined that school personnel had failed the student. More importantly, they detailed their reasoning for that decision. For example, one student commented:

*I think my partner and I seemed to do a better job assessing Andres than the actual school officials. They took a 'wait and see' approach in order to take care of the situation. This approach will probably end up working as well as the “if you ignore the problem it will go away” approach that Andres classroom teacher seemed to be using. Everyone that was involved in Andres case just needed to be involved. I mean really involved. The parents were never fully-brought into the loop and they should have been. Just because they did not speak English was not an excuse. **Get a translator already** (emphasis in speech). (Student AB, CRLab Online Posting, 3/07)*

When asked to share thoughts about what they were learning, one student used his classroom-based field observations to highlight both his increased confidence but also the complexities in teachers’ pedagogical decisions:

Now when we are looking at a case and I’m asked to think like a teacher. I think, ‘yeah I know what I would do.’ But then I think, ‘I don’t know. Because when I was in Mr. Joe’s classroom and you have 35 kids, it is a little different.’ Or in Intro, we’re talking about our role with parents and at this site I am not even seeing where the parents are welcomed in the school and now, in this case, you are asking what I would do? (Student FB, CRLab Student Interview, 5/07)

This type of thinking highlights what they experienced in the case-based Ped Lab and suggests an increased depth in their learning to teach reasoning skills. Through their Introduction

to Teaching coursework, their participation in the Lab, and their field-based classroom experiences students developed the confidence needed to interrogate their beliefs, consider why new practices and their associated values and beliefs are better, experience such practices as learners, and develop new ideas with ongoing support and guidance (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). As such, in this study, linking a pedagogy lab to the foundational Introduction to Teaching Course, with its concurrent field experience, offers the potential to radically transform the way we prepare teachers at ULC.

Conclusions and Contribution to the Teacher Education Knowledge-base

This collaboratively designed pedagogy lab takes what we know about effective teaching practices for diverse learners and works backward to the learning-to-teach professional sequence (Sleeter, 2001). The findings from this project suggest that a pedagogy lab course structure develops a teacher candidate's awareness about the complexities of teaching and the need to use culturally-relevant practices. Institutionalizing the Pedagogy Lab structure provides a safe, pedagogical space to help students of teaching move beyond essentializing their own experiences with diverse students and offers them opportunities to develop the skills needed to work with multicultural learners.

The Pedagogy Lab, as a radical innovation in learning to teach, addresses many of the well-documented barriers in the preparation of multicultural teachers. The study's findings challenge us to (re)view teaching and learning across our programs and explore better ways of helping teacher candidates gain an understanding that there are cultural and worldview differences and commonalities between themselves and *other students*. Having this knowledge of others "can surely facilitate communication between teachers and students of other cultures, which might lead to healthy relationships, student satisfaction, and positive learning climates for both teachers and students (Gibson, 2004, p. 2). In doing so, we better prepare teachers who reflect our mission and uphold our commitment to the children attending Lake City's public schools.

Documenting the effects of Pedagogy Labs and these changes in teacher candidate learning informs the development of future labs and contributes to the knowledge base on how best to prepare teachers for today's children. The findings also extend our understandings of "the conditions under which different conceptual and structural arrangements within programs are connected to various outcomes" (Zeichner, 2005, p. 748). By continuing this project in the coming academic year, and linking it with our TNE colleagues' work at other sites, we strengthen the teacher education research- and knowledge-base. These types of dialogues are particularly salient given the very public focus on preparing teachers who can offer culturally-relevant learning opportunities that support each child's academic achievement.

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ENTERING TEACHING FOR AND WITH LOVE: VISIONS OF PRE-SERVICE URBAN TEACHERS

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Abstract

Using a social justice orientation to teacher education and a sociocultural approach to learning, this exploratory study presents data from twenty pre-service urban teachers about their perceptions of and visions for teaching in urban schools. Findings reveal candidates' desires to care for and build relationships with urban youth as a foundation for their interests in teaching and also portray participants' visions of teaching as a way to promote positive social change in their communities. Findings are discussed in the context of future directions for urban teacher education.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers; social justice; sociocultural contexts of teaching

Introduction

An important challenge facing public urban education is the lack of new teachers of Color teaching in their community schools. In fact, White females continue to dominate the teaching force—even in urban communities where youth of Color dominate student populations. This “demographic divide” (Gay & Howard, 2000, p. 1) represents barriers between students' and teachers' cultural worlds and realities, and because of the institutional power dynamics at play in school (e.g. Delpit, 1995; Deschenes, Tyack, & Cuban, 2001), it proliferates the “othering” (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz & Suda, 2010; Kumashiro, 2000) and cultural discontinuity (Tyler, Udqah, et al., 2007) that can define much of the school experience for youth. In urban teacher education research, this demographic divide is the subject of theoretical and pedagogical inquiry about how to best prepare teachers to meet the needs and honor the strengths of their students.

While research and practice need to continue to explore the impact and effect of the demographic divide, it is also important that we as urban education researchers push the conversation forward and talk about future directions in the field. One such direction involves empirical investigation of pre-service teachers of Color who do enter the profession to teach in their community schools. While the percentages of these teachers in the national averages may not be significant, the impact of these pre-service teachers' visions and experiences are vital for the development of enhanced theory and pedagogy in urban education (e.g. Camangian, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2007). Without them, we, as urban educators, run the risk of only teaching to the demographic divide, and becoming stagnant.

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The current study reports on findings from a group of pre-service teachers enrolled in an urban education program at a university in California. Their reflections on their reasons for teaching and their thoughts about what makes for effective teaching reveal core beliefs about relationship-building and a love for working with youth. Additionally, their comments reveal a level of community-involvement for social change and a critical analysis of the structures in place within the institution that is school, and make for important considerations in the future of urban teacher education.

Conceptual Framework

Theoretically, this research is framed within a social justice orientation that prioritizes the contextual and sociopolitical importance of teaching and learning. Especially in urban contexts, this approach values the ecological and sociocultural learning of youth (and pre-service teachers) from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teacher Education for Social Justice

Teaching for social justice embraces the significance and urgency of creating equitable, empowering, humanizing learning contexts for all youth (Camangian, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; James-Wilson, 2007; Nieto, 2005). Specifically, the current study positions social justice as a foundation in teacher education—especially those programs preparing new teachers to teach in urban schools (Borrero, 2009; McNeal & Salika, 2009; Owens & Song, 2009). This social justice framework involves critical analysis of the systems and power structures in place at school (e.g. Delpit, 1995), and acknowledges the generative involvement of students' (and student teachers') voices (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Mitra, 2006; Solomon & Sekayi, 2007) in the development of pedagogy for social justice.

This critical analysis involves investigation of the cultural experience of school and the distinctions between the cultural lives of teachers and their students. Banks and colleagues (2005) discuss the importance of new teachers learning about their craft, their students, and themselves during their teacher education, and in this sense, the role of reflection and community involvement are vital in discussions of social justice as a part of teacher education. As noted above, the demographic divide (Gay & Howard, 2000) that characterizes a majority of student-teacher backgrounds is important in this analysis, as it highlights the importance of new teachers learning about their students as a part of their training (Banks, Cochran-Smith et al., 2005; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996). This is vital in teacher education, as many teachers enter the profession because of the impact that a special teacher had on them in school. This incentive is important for new teachers, but it cannot define their pedagogy—they must learn about their students, their students' families, and their students' cultural and academic lives.

Ecological and Sociocultural Learning

This social justice orientation includes a theoretical approach to learning that acknowledges the multiple cultural contexts that we all navigate as a part of our development. Ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) and sociocultural (Nieto, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978) theories frame this approach and set the foundation for an understanding of urban education that honors

the cultural assets that youth utilize in their learning across contexts (Borrero & Yeh, 2010; Paris, 2010). These approaches combat traditional “banking models” of education (Freire, 1970) and set the stage for humanizing, strength-based pedagogy (Akom, 2003; Camangian, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Tan, 2009).

Culturally relevant pedagogy adds an important layer to this work, as the need for teachers to acknowledge and promote students’ cultural identities and strengths as a part of their learning as teachers and their classroom instruction (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999). However, we as urban educators cannot stop here. We must continue to push theoretical and practical understandings of teacher education, student learning, and community involvement. The current study utilizes the theories above to frame an understanding of learning and teaching as a complex, multidimensional, fluid undertaking.

Method

Participants in the study were twenty pre-service teachers enrolled in an Urban Education program at a private university in California. These aspiring teachers were surveyed at the start of their first class on the first day of their graduate program in which they earn a Master of Arts in Teaching degree and a California teaching credential. The program they are enrolled in is specifically designed for teachers seeking training in urban education and is not government assisted—all students paid tuition to enter the program. Of the twenty participants six were male and fourteen were female (mean age of 25.6 years), six were Asian/Pacific Islander, four were biracial, six were Caucasian, and four were Latino/a. This demographic represents the general makeup of the local district, and ninety percent of the participants came from local communities.

These twenty pre-service teachers were administered a survey at the start of the semester to gauge their initial impressions and expectations about teaching. The survey and asked students to comment on three questions: Why do you want to be a teacher? Why do you want to teach in urban schools? What makes a good teacher? These questions were generated as relevant baseline information for new teachers entering the urban education program (see Borrero, 2009). Students completed the survey in writing, anonymously, on the first day of class. The responses were analyzed by the author and one research assistant who was not involved in the data collection. Before coding, each researcher read surveys independently (Merriam, 1988). Next, each researcher began to underline recurring units (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) from the data. Each researcher then began generating categories of meaning based on different units of data. These emergent categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) included responses like relationship-building, social change, and mutual learning. The researchers used this type of open coding to generate as many codes as possible.

The author and research assistant then met to share their codes and discuss themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in an attempt to group responses based on commonalities about these pre-service teachers’ motivations for teaching urban youth. Both researchers then re-read the surveys, writing down possible themes. The researchers then discussed these themes and did one final read through, identifying specific responses that spoke directly to the agreed upon themes for each question. The responses that are presented were selected for inclusion in the findings because they expose the nature of a given theme (Glesne, 1999), not because they necessarily represent the perspectives of all participants.

Findings

The themes that emerged from students' responses are presented in Table 1 along with the frequency of responses as coded for each theme. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the details of each theme are not fully explicated below. Instead, themes are discussed (and representative responses are reported) for the different survey questions—Why do you want to be a teacher? Why do you want to teach in urban schools? What makes a good teacher?

Table 1
Emergent themes from pre-service teachers' survey responses

Theme	Frequency of code
1. Why do you want to be a teacher?	
a. To work with youth.	18
b. To create social change.	14
c. To learn from/with youth	8
d. To give back/To impact students like teachers impacted me.	8
2. Why do you want to teach in urban schools?	
a. To create positive change in communities.	14
b. To be a role model/To give back to my community.	12
c. To address society's needs.	7
3. What makes a good teacher?	
a. Care/Love for students.	16
b. Empathy.	12
c. Community/Social awareness and a desire to make change.	9
d. Reflection.	8
e. Hard work.	6

Desires for Being a Teacher

Four themes emerged in response to the question “Why do you want to be a teacher”: *to work with youth, to create social change, to learn from/with youth, and to give back/to impact students like teachers impacted me*. This group of pre-service teachers strongly reflected a desire to work with youth as core motivation for entering the teaching profession. Their responses expressed a passion and vision for teaching as a way to connect with youth. Participants expressed this theme with quotes like, “I want to work with and learn from youth” to “I am passionate about working with youth...because teaching has deep social importance.” Fourteen of the participants pushed this aspect of their motivation further, and talked about teaching as a social change agent. For example, one new teacher wrote, “I want to teach to engage in radical change.” Another wrote, “I want to serve youth who are oppressed, marginalized, and disempowered to take back their power and build alongside them in solidarity an educational framework, practice, and system that genuinely serves their needs and pushes them forward in the struggle for social justice.”

Alongside these core desires, participants shared that they wanted to learn from and with their youth. One candidate wrote, “I want to engage in a learning process that is a mutual dialogue between teacher and student.” Further, these new teachers talked about making the classroom a space for open dialogue: “I want to be a teacher in order to help facilitate spaces that enable students to realize their potential as agents of change.” Some participants wrote about their own experiences as students, and being inspired to teach because of the significant impact a teacher(s) had on them. For example, one candidate wrote: “I have had many teachers in my life that have made a positive and profound impact on me. They have changed my life for the better. I would like to make a positive impact on others—especially young people.”

The Desire to Teach in Urban Schools

As an extension of the findings above, three themes emerged from participants’ responses to the question “Why do you want to teach in urban schools”: *to create positive change in communities, to be a role model/to give back to my community, and to address society’s needs*. These pre-service teachers expressed personal connection with the need for teachers in urban contexts. One candidate wrote, “I want to teach in an environment where I can make the most impact and urban schools are that environment. As a male of color, I feel it is important to serve as a positive example for urban students.” Another participant wrote, “I want to teach in urban schools because I believe it is a potent form of working towards social justice. I think it is the first step in forming consciousness and creating social change.”

This group of new teachers also reflected on their own experiences in urban communities, and their desires to give back and make change in their own neighborhoods through their teaching. One participant wrote, “I want to teach in urban schools because in my experience, growing up in [this city], I did not have positive role models who considered my emotional and academic well being in their pedagogy.” Others reflected a passion and a connection to youth in their own neighborhoods: “I want to teach in urban schools because it is my passion. It is all I think about all day, every day. I want to help youth who come from the same place I come from live extraordinary lives—to not escape the ‘hood, but reclaim the ‘hood.” Some participants reflected this same passion and urgency, but instead of making connections to their own neighborhoods, framed their desires in a larger social need. One new teacher stated, “I want to teach in urban schools to become part of the solution to the current problem I see in education which is the indoctrination and perpetuation of a middle-class, white, male-dominant belief system.”

Qualities of a Good Teacher

The following themes arose when participants were asked, “What makes a good teacher”: *care/love for students, empathy, community/social awareness and desire to make change, reflection, and hard work*. For this question, many participants listed attributes for good teaching. One list was: “love, courage, passion, empathy, reflection, fearlessness.” Another list was, “critical hope (Duncan-Andrade), authentic caring (Valenzuela), dialogue (Freire), humanization (Freire), love (hooks).” Other students wrote more about these traits. For example, one candidate wrote, “A good teacher uses love as their currency...and does not affirm the assertion that there is only one superior way, narrative, history, or language.”

In writing about the importance of caring for students, participants reflected on the need for good teachers to reflect and create space for critique in the classroom. One candidate wrote: “A good teacher is someone who authentically cares and advocates for students to help them achieve their goals in school and in life.” Another new teacher echoed this statement: “a teacher needs self-reflection, love, and a commitment to students’ right to their own self-determination.” Again the theme of teaching as a social change agent came up in participants’ responses to this question. For example, one candidate stated, “A good teacher brings skills rooted in social investigation and class analysis in order to draw from the experiences of the community they serve to create a curriculum that empowers and can bring about change.”

Discussion

Taken together the findings above reveal both common and novel beliefs about teaching by pre-service teachers (e.g. Banks, Cochran-Smith et al., 2005; Camangian, 2010; Nieto, 2002). It is not surprising, for example, that these teachers are entering the profession because they care about and want to work with youth. Nor is it surprising that they highlight caring/love as the most important attribute of a good teacher. What is unique about these new teachers’ responses comes from their experiences as community members and advocates for social change in their own communities. Participants’ responses to all three questions reveal a level of social awareness and activism that highlights the political nature of teaching and the need for urban teachers to engage youth not only in academic content, but in community involvement (Akorn, 2003; Borrero, 2009; Butin, 2007; Duncan-Andrade, 2007).

These participants’ responses to the three (potentially benign) survey questions reveal a level of critical self- and community-awareness that cannot be overlooked. When participants write about the oppression and marginalization of youth, they reveal some of their own experiences in urban schools. When they write about creating “humanizing” classroom spaces to combat these conditions, they reveal a level of social and theoretical awareness that goes beyond personal experience (e.g. Tan, 2009). For example, when the pre-service teacher listed “critical hope (Duncan-Andrade), authentic caring (Valenzuela), dialogue (Freire), humanization (Freire), love (hooks)” as attributes of a good teacher, he/she displayed a heightened understanding of critical pedagogy (Camangian, 2010; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996). It is this level of understanding and awareness that makes these participants’ responses significant in urban teacher education pedagogy and worthy of further investigation in urban education research.

Conclusions

There are many limitations to this study. These twenty pre-service teachers are not representative of those entering the profession (Gay & Howard, 2000) nor can they be essentialized because of their backgrounds or desires to teach in urban schools. The three survey questions that they responded to, and the fact that responses were anonymous are also limiting factors—participants’ cultural backgrounds are not analyzed alongside their quotes, nor are their goals as teachers or prior experiences working with youth. In this way, the findings are exploratory in nature and certainly cannot be assumed applicable in other contexts. These were teacher candidates who entered a specific degree program wanting to study urban education and social justice. Future studies need to examine how participants’ perceptions change/develop over time and how different cohorts of student responses differ from one another. However, the

uniqueness of this sample and the candor of their responses must be accepted as strengths of the study, and their attention to the urgency and transformation needed in urban education must be embraced.

The precision with which these new teachers write about teaching in urban schools and the promotion of social justice is inspiring. They are entering the first day of formal teacher training, yet they possess social and pedagogical awareness about the inequities in urban schools and the need for teachers to combat them (Akom, 2003; Delpit, 2005; Deschenes, et al., 2001; Nieto, 2002, 2005; Tan, 2009). In so doing, they bring critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) to the study of urban teacher education, as they represent progress from discussions about the demographic divide that separates youth from their teachers (Gay & Howard, 2000). This divide will certainly continue as the populations of communities of Color grow in urban areas and the teaching force remains largely White. However, this does not negate the need for us, as urban educators and researchers, to move the field forward and engage in discourse about pre-service urban teachers who are entering the profession with knowledge and vision to succeed in their community schools. This group of aspiring teachers shows that teaching is all about caring and love, and the love that they bring to the classroom is rooted in the community.

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RESPONDING TO “INNOCENT” RACISM: EDUCATING TEACHERS IN POLITICALLY REFLEXIVE AND DIALOGIC ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

This article develops the construct of “innocent racism” and argues for keeping questions of race central in teacher education. The authors report three cases in which they, teacher educators working within a school/university alliance, identified and addressed racism in their courses. We situate our analyses within antiracist research informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) where the teacher education students and ourselves struggled to recognize and address racism. Critical episodes are reflectively analyzed to challenge both teacher educators’ and teachers’ beliefs. We demonstrate how race still matters because of the ways in which it intersects with our practices. Examples of struggles that address emerging positions on race, language, and educational processes inform teacher and faculty learning with important local and global implications.

Keywords: Critical race theory; teacher education; university/school partnerships

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Context and Background

The preponderance of White teacher education candidates presents major challenges in preparing them to not only teach students from diverse backgrounds but also in engaging them with critical multiculturalism. Furthermore, there is a high probability that reform-minded programs will need to confront newer subtler forms of “White” racial superiority and privilege (Frankenberg, 1997; McLaren, 1997 b). Given little change in who becomes a teacher (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005), it is important to acknowledge that subtler forms of racism may have escaped the overt inoculation that teachers may receive in their professional development. We understand that the ability to act in ways that address oppression only develops out of prolonged engagement with these ideas. Thus in programs where multicultural education is limited to one course, teachers may at best acquire a discourse of anti-oppression but not a profound understanding of what to do to continuously intervene. Certainly this is revealed through their very nascent understandings of how oppression works through institutions. The concepts used to discuss racism are important to consider in preparing teachers for diverse student populations. We discuss a new concept, “innocent racism” that has an unyielding presence in education.

To define the concept of “innocent racism” and use this construct, this article reports on three different cases in which teacher educators within the Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition (ACCELA) alliance, a struggle to recognize and address racism within in-service teacher education. One goal was to forge partnerships between the University of Massachusetts Amherst, three local school districts, and several community organizations in Western Massachusetts. Our reflections include: 1) descriptions of three courses, some activities in the curriculum that illustrate how teacher educators’ ideological positions intersect with those of the teachers; and 2) our struggles with racism, linguisticism, and cultural diversity that emerged. Examples of critical episodes that challenged both teacher educators’ and teachers’ beliefs are analyzed through reflective inquiry. We demonstrate how race still matters because of the ways in which it intersects with our practices.

Theoretical framework

Un-learning racism is a conscious ideological choice. Therefore we situate our projects within the antiracist research informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and theorists who question the relationship between human agency and institutional practices (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995). CRT analysts point to the “importance of experiential knowledge and the use of narratives as a way in which to more accurately tell the stories of oppressed people of color” (Lynn, 2004, p.131). Rooted in legal studies, Delgado (1990) argued that a framework in which “people of color in our society speak from experience framed by racism” gives “voice” to creating a common structure to a social reality that is currently invisible (as cited in Tate, 1997, p. 211). We take up race and anti-racist teacher education with a stance that: (a) we are bound together in living in a racist society and, (b) using dialogic inquiry, we need to undo shackles that create asymmetrical race relations. We problematize institutional rules, regulations and norms that continue to exclude certain groups regardless of expressed intentions to do otherwise. Moreover, when these inequities are exposed, there can be no stronger ethical imperative than to transform them. We also take a critical position on our memberships within various social communities that are not immune to racism. Even “good” intentions can provide a space for reinscribing certain racist discourses (Marx, 2004). Hence, departing from the convergence tenet of

CRT, which holds that if convergence with the dominant interests prevails, the marginalized groups' interests are compromised and will not be addressed, we envision the teachers' agency to shape the values, knowledge, and skills of the institution.

As ethnographers of color and allied faculty, we also draw on an understanding that as agents of an institution, we are doubly bound to uphold, contest, and transform discourses to build on more equitable and socially just educational practices. As critical ethnographers, we center our interactions with teachers as the site of dialectical struggle to "write" race into professional development. Consequently, responding to overt racism and covert daily racism needs to be tailored to specific contexts and actors. We also seek to legitimize our subjectivities and claim agency in our reflexive critique as we answer these questions: *In what ways does race make a difference in teacher education students' professional development? When and why?*

Racism cannot be limited to one definition. One perspective holds that any particular experience can only be understood as racist when it is compared to another identical experience with differences in outcomes solely attributable to race. This means that it is necessary to both establish when racialization is occurring and to determine whether or not a differential effect in terms of power is involved (Carson, Dunbar, Chenhall & Bailie, 2007). Another perspective is to examine the processes of inferiorization (Murphy & Choi, 1997). This perspective addresses the constant reconfiguring of racism that sets up privilege through human actors' circulation of discourses and then traces the consequences. A third perspective sees racism primarily exercised through the dominant group's influence on others regardless of intentions (Gillborn, 1990). We align ourselves with an understanding of race as privileging one race over the other and interrogate its role in privileging members of one race over another in a system inherently hierarchical and institutionally shaped.

In an attempt to explain how members of dominant groups perpetuate racism, King (1991) coins the term "dysconscious" racism as "a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant white norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race. This view of racial inequity accepts certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages white people have as a result of subordinating others" (King, 1991, p. 128). This statement implies that those who have "dysconscious racism" have deficits in their thinking which need to be rectified indicating an assumption of a quick fix or an inoculation. However we argue that many teachers are indeed socialized to recognize the oppressive effects of discrimination. Rather than "dysconscious racism" we posit that there is a consciousness about race and racism however these concepts are often understood by many White teachers and teacher educators alike as irrelevant to teaching. So race and racism are both consciously made invisible. We coin the term "innocent racism" as it addresses a situation that we have often seen. This "innocence" allows educators to act as if race does not matter and racism does not exist, relieving them of having to take a role in responding to it. Acts of micro aggression are not viewed as institutional issues to monitor racism but rather are perceived as outcomes of an individual nature. However these acts reinforce similar practices that exclude certain racial groups, allowing their absence to be perceived as a result of their lack of qualifications and/or their lack of interest in teaching or the teacher education profession. Consequently the lack of recognition of race can lead to an "innocent racism" a racism that perpetuates privileged forms of communication, ways of being

and acting, and more importantly, identities, knowledge production and knowledge consumption. Our struggles to deal with this are found in the case studies presented here.

Connection to the Teacher Education Literature

Ladson Billings (1999) on educating teachers for multicultural society states, “Even at schools, colleges, and departments of education with well-regarded teacher preparation programs, students talk of “getting through the diversity requirement” (p. 240). Her comments illustrate the difficulty of having one mandated multicultural course ensure that students entering teaching have the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences to work in diverse schools and communities. Importantly, even if the teachers were inclined to implement what they have learned to transform their understandings, persistent inequities and deeply engrained language practices often challenge them.

Ahlquist (1991) identifies two extreme characteristics found in populations in mainstream teacher preparation in multiculturalism: small specialized groups of ideologically similar prospective teachers or more often than not, hostile and resistant prospective teachers. Having teachers construct knowledge about the technical aspects of teaching and content mastery of their disciplines are not sufficient to tackle the ideological load that often goes undetected in curriculum, teaching practices, innovation and assessment. Addressing this systematically requires that courses in teacher education programs involve teachers actively in theory construction as antiracist cultural workers and intellectuals in both their reflective practices and teaching apprenticeships. However, equity is an ongoing complex struggle that cannot be easily established by recipes (Goodwin, 1997). Efforts in teacher education need to view struggle as part and parcel of educating students for building a democratic and civil society (Giroux, 1997). We take an anti-racist stance that Thompson (2003) explains as, “...struggling against racism is an emergent, relational undertaking without a clear-cut, happily-ever-after ending” (p. 390). We offer potential examples of our struggles in a curriculum that addresses emerging positions on race, language, and educational processes in our teacher education project. As more of these types of local struggles are made public and analyzed, we can contribute further theories about the nature of these struggles locally and more globally.

Mode of inquiry

Our qualitative approach is primarily narrative and personal. Each of the cases draws on our lived experiences as teacher educators to identify critical moments in analyzing and addressing issues of race and racism. We collaborated in the ACCELA Alliance between 2003-2007, “to support the academic literacy development of linguistically and culturally diverse students attending public schools in the region by providing sustained, data-driven professional development to local teachers, administrators, community leaders, teacher educators, researchers, and policymakers” (Online: <http://www.umass.edu/accela/>). We worked with in-service teachers who were earning advanced professional licensure. Of the four cohorts of teachers who participated from 2003-2007 in each cohort, Latinos ranged between 4% - 30%, Whites 70-96%. Only 1 African-American teacher participated in each of 2 of the 4 cohorts. Also in these cohorts only one had three males and the others had only women.

We concentrate on “telling” moments that shifted our instruction and prompted reflection on race and racism as we interacted with teachers at different phases in this program. We reflected on our growing awareness of how racism manifested itself. Fatima, using her journal entries, teachers’ written reflections, and in-class written assignments reflects on how responding to overtly bigoted comments in her first course changed not only interactions and the content, but also outcomes for both teachers and herself. Next, Theresa and Yvonne identify how innocent racism through linguisticism emerged subtly through their interactions with teachers learning Spanish as a second language. Their reflections on teacher interviews and teacher written reflections indicate possibilities to reconfigure the course to address explicitly this racism. Lastly, Pat shares her self-questioning, and reflection on her instructional practice. Data collected through action research reveals instances of racism in her classes that were not publicly acknowledged by her or her students. She argues that a central focus on issues of race, power, and privilege in teacher education pedagogy is necessary to interrupt tendencies to ignore and continue to contribute to institutionalized oppression.

A Visiting Scholar Responds to Racism: New Challenges for Teacher Educators

In 2005, Fatima moved from Singapore to Massachusetts to teach in the Masters program within the ACCELA Alliance. The main objective of the course she was teaching was to provide teachers a forum for researching classroom practices that may affect English language learners’ opportunities to acquire academic literacy. She designed the course to critically engage teachers in issues of privilege and equity at both the micro-and macro-level. However, she noted as the course progressed several teachers made racist and discriminatory remarks. She continues the narrative in her voice:

We had been discussing Gutierrez, Larson, and Kreuter’s (1995) article “Cultural Tensions in the Classroom: The Value of the Subjugated Perspective” when one of the teachers, Maritza, blurted aloud,

If Blacks and Hispanic kids don’t do well in school, it’s their fault. They are just lazy because they all have brains. I tell this to my son all the time. He has to work hard to succeed and that’s that. There is no excuse for low marks. They are lazy.

No one challenged this comment and we continued discussing the article. This was not the only incidence of racism; several teachers’ in-class anecdotes and in-class responses to our readings included other blatant discriminatory remarks. I was not sure how to deal with these. I was scared and didn’t want to engage the teachers in these disturbing incidences of racism. Furthermore, I did not know my institutional rights and whether as a visiting scholar I would have any support for my responses. My ineffectual reactions to these situations caused me to reflect on my various social identities and how these intersected with certain teachers’ world-views. Initially as proof for addressing potentially negative course evaluations, I started documenting in a journal our classroom dialogues, reflecting on our discussions, my reactions to the teachers’ responses, and the content of the course.

I am a female, person of color, and was born in Tanganyika to Asian Muslim parents. I immigrated to Canada as an adolescent a few years after Tanganyika (Tanzania today) came under a socialist government. In reviewing my journal, I could see entries which exemplified the

fear of negative institutional repercussions. In the post 9/11 context media have represented the entire Muslim population as terrorists, ignoramuses, religious fanatics, and extremists. Similar to refugees who had been persecuted in their countries for their religious beliefs, I felt that my religion put me in a precarious and vulnerable position; I could be investigated, deported, and/or fired from my position for negative student evaluations in my classrooms. Remaining on good terms with the teachers was important to me as I was hoping to continue working in the United States.

However, the catalyst for my change in direction occurred when one of the teachers, in response to a newly arrived Somali refugee student enrolled in her class who wetted his pants on his first day at school, as “f..king savages.” No one challenged this statement. Although I was very disturbed by this comment I remained silent. The other teachers instead recounted their woes of increased workloads, being treated like babysitters, doing parents’ jobs, delays in their contract settlements, and the threats of punitive measures of if they disobeyed the scripted curriculum. I listened, took notes, and continued discussions of the written teacher reflections.

Thereafter, I engaged in discussion with two faculty of color to deepen my understanding of this new community, its stereotypes and most of all my social responsibility. How could I change my ineffectual responses to this critical situation grounded in my own history? I started reading texts to understand the political and historical forces that led to institutionalized racism in the United States. I came to some understanding of my teachers’ social identities; as having been formed through *socialization* by the discourses of national ideology. I realized that several teachers were not aware of how language implicated their subjectivities and their appropriation of racist stances. These particular teachers were conscious of the implications of their statements at an individual level but had little understanding of the institutional, national, and global implications of their remarks.

I invited the teachers to reflect on racism and its effects on theirs and their English language learners’ lives and how power, structural, and individual instances of racism could perpetuate the long-standing legacy of European imperialism. I used these understandings to center my teaching and research. I introduced the teachers to the concepts of critical literacy, critical discourse analysis and social constructs. Using dialogic pedagogy and inquiry, we learned about the creation and maintenance of institutional structures of domination and oppression through instructional practices. We revisited all our course readings to investigate discourses of white privilege, power, race, racism, discrimination, gender, and classism.

When I discovered King’s (1991) notion of “dysconscious racism” I thought that this is what the teachers were displaying. Until one day, in response to my prompt, “Have you ever acted in a racist way?” I found that most of the teachers were aware of what they were saying but only at the personal level. One teacher wrote in her journal:

Speaking of racism in a way that I have discriminated against people. I know (emphasis in original text) I have both inadvertently and consciously acted that way. I was raised by 2 white parents who have tried not to be racist but still are at some points. I have been angry and said derogatory things out of anger, out of fear, sometimes I even say things or act certain ways without thinking about being discriminating. I certainly don't usually (emphasis in original

text) do those things on purpose but when your [sic] angry and frustrated sometimes its [sic] easy to discriminate. Its not something I am proud of but I do it, and I think a lot of people do. (Shirley, 03/08/06)

My readings of several of the teachers' written responses, class discussions, and my classroom and journal notes indicated that not only were they were confronting the information as "interested onlookers" (hooks, 1992) but also they were still not able to see how systemic forces or macro-level discourses composed their subjectivities and positionalities. Racism was so much part of their identity that they were blind to various institutions' role in perpetuating racism and discrimination.

I had several options including: 1) reporting my findings to the project director and, 2) ignoring those teachers who were resistant to developing antiracist world views and return to the original course plans. The question then became, *How does one foster this self-questioning of "innocent racism"?* I used their school ratings, inequitable distribution of educational resources, their curriculums, state education mandates, and the national agenda, to investigate spaces that were painful, uncomfortable, and controversial. I positioned the White teachers in situations where they could see how their identities were perceived and created by the state and nationally as being unknowledgeable, ineffectual, and not able to teach or think independently (in relation to the enforcement of the scripted curriculum). Using school ratings, local and national newspaper articles, and magazine articles, we further unpacked the concepts of race, institutional racism, and discrimination in relation to our identities and how similar prejudices and stereotypes filtered down to their students. We understood that the innocence was a convention that needed to be addressed because of insidious and far-reaching effects of institutional racism filtering down into the core of our existence. Together we reached some understanding of how subjectivities, positionalities, and discourse are intertwined to produce institutional racism and how our roles and attitudes are implicated in perpetuating racism.

Nested Context of Reforms and Persistent Racism through Linguicism

Yvonne and Theresa intended to prepare all teachers to experientially understand the process of learning an additional language through academic content via three program models, immersion, sheltered instruction, and dual immersion; learning about linguistically and ethnically diverse students; and learning about available community resources. Sixty-seven teachers participated over five years (2003-2007) in their Intensive Spanish for Teachers courses. The dominant English-speaking group would learn Spanish and the bilingual teachers would document their scaffolding process with their learners. All would submit their entries in portfolios, which would count as evidence of their learning. The teachers represented heterogeneous levels of proficiency in Spanish ranging from novice to advanced and included native Spanish speakers (NSS).

During this time frame, Yvonne and Theresa met regularly before and after classes to plan and reflect on the teachers' progress. After interviewing teachers and observing closely their interactions, we reflected on two significant issues: 1) the high emotional cost of learning through a second language, and 2) how issues of language and race produced ideologies through interactions between dominant and Latino Spanish-speaking teachers.

In their entries, White monolingual English speaking teachers for whom learning Spanish through content was a new experience, periodically felt at a loss, marginalized, and frustrated. Although they gratefully received support from their Spanish-speaking peers, we detected a subtle influence of racism emerging in the teachers' interactions with us, with each other, as well as in their references to students. In several entries, while empathizing with their own bilingual students' struggles and emotions in a class where the medium of instruction was not always understood, the notion of class management, absences, and disciplinary actions were identified as challenges for the learners but not given much more subsequent follow through on how this realization would affect their roles as teachers. "I can understand now why some of our students want to go to the bathroom so often when they encounter difficulty in a lesson" (MW). For example, rather than seeing these and other disruptions as potentially caused by the lack of communication with peers or with their teacher, often the student was solely blamed for comprehension problems. When teachers focused on class management as the issue rather than the instruction that hides the linguisticism, the underlying causes of disruptions to learning were not visible. Typically learners who fail to comply with assignments in English are viewed as the culprits; the teacher becomes the enforcer of English only and the medium of instruction is invisible as having shaped this difficulty. Teachers who did not use Spanish with their students or did not try to understand the impact of English in silencing them viewed the disruption as solely the students' fault. Additionally, we reflected on how the over emphasis on class management rather than on understanding the causes of emotional responses to this learning context renders invisible non-responsive instruction and pushes limited-English proficient students, primarily Puerto Rican, out of the school system. Teachers do not see themselves as responsible for this institutional effect; they are innocently managing students.

We discovered how conflicting emotions toward the process of language learning became mobilized in racial terms. The English dominant teachers' perspective on their bilingual peers, mostly Puerto Rican, shifted the latter's status and value as necessary for the former's survival in the Spanish immersion experience class. Furthermore most White teachers realized the connection to their own students' second language development and recognized the value of bilingual teachers. As a consequence, the White teachers started crossing racial and ethnolinguistic boundaries by building cross-racial and ethnic connections to the communities, particularly those who started investing in their Spanish learning. Many White teachers also felt that immersion techniques used in the first part of the course made them aware of the large burden Puerto Rican second language learners of English carried in the aftermath of Question 2 to learn both English and content matter with little support in Spanish.

In discussing how our course could better serve Puerto Rican teachers, we read and reflected on their entries. As we examined the entries, we were not aware of another salient racial issue. The English dominant teachers had started to make unreasonable demands for translation and interpretation. Bilingualism was seen as a property that could be demanded as if it were an expected service, a sort of tax on those who were bilinguals. In fact, districts started firing bilingual teachers who had accented English and who were considered not proficient in English. In our course when the English dominant teachers excessively complained about their struggles to use Spanish, several native speakers of Spanish and advanced learners felt unduly pressed into service to do their work. Consequently, the bilinguals began to feel less inclined to display their bilingual identities and linguistic abilities in Spanish. The effect was humbling for us as instructors. We had wanted to create a setting where bilingualism was seen as a resource for all

to cultivate. However because we positioned the native speakers of Spanish and advanced learners as the mediators without clearly establishing the responsibilities of the beginning learners, all of whom were White, several mediators became over taxed and exploited by some of the White teachers. The dynamics of who is seen as knower became a cultural capital that was exploited and not negotiated. Several White teachers became more demanding of their Spanish speaking peers. In these interactions, impositions were being placed on the Spanish speakers to translate documents. This was parallel to what was happening in the school district. School administrators had obligated bilingual paraprofessionals and teachers to intervene in communicating with Spanish-speaking parents, often pulling them out of classes to do so. Thus in our course we saw a growing need arise to dedicate more time for bilingual teachers to discuss issues affecting them at their schools. In a sense, the invisibility of their increased responsibilities was taking an extra toll. The valued resources were now their responsibility to access and use and not a shared responsibility with their English dominant peers and their administrators, who were primarily White.

As interactions provided more mutual benefits, several cross-racial and ethnolinguistic collaborations were formed in each cohort. A Puerto Rican teacher expressed a widely shared sentiment: *Estoy seguro que estos maestros ya no serán los mismos después de esta clase y estarán más conscientes de lo difícil que es para nuestros estudiantes aprender un segundo idioma* [I am sure that these teachers now will never be the same after this class and will be more conscious of how difficult it is for our students to learn a second language] (HS, Reflections, Summer 2003). Another reported: *En esta clase rompimos las barreras al necesitarnos el uno al otro y estar todos en un mismo bote y nos compenetramos como un solo grupo* [in this class we broke down barriers by needing one another and by being in the same boat and we integrated to form a single group] (MS, Reflection, Summer 2003). This change in participation also made racism through linguisticism no longer overtly manifested. The shared knowledge of the second language experience and the formal understanding of the development process was manifested in subsequent ACCELA courses. While we cannot claim that linguisticism was eradicated, we recognize that teachers finished courses with insights on linguisticism that were gained through experiential and cognitive struggles. These also served to help them build their identities as experts in their districts.

Reflecting Backward to Transform the Present

Wondering about teacher education and the role race plays in everyday practices, Pat draws on CRT and Critical Literacy as she examines her own power and cultural practices as a White teacher educator. She reflects on the effects of that power as she aligns herself with an agenda to end all forms of marginalization, in particular by race. Her self-questioning makes visible institutional practices that potentially perpetuate racism.

I am a White middle-class professor. In my courses, I draw on a Participatory Action Research/Critical Literacy framework that demands my ongoing reflexivity about participant relationships (Paugh & Robinson, 2009), especially in examination of complex relationships that are challenging to “critical praxis.” A pressing question emerged when as a practicing elementary school teacher, I continually witnessed students who did not fit normative definitions of school success “othered” and removed from mainstream classrooms or placed within “low ability” groups with oversimplified curriculum. Race and identity play a role in such practices.

Now as a professor, I examine my lived experiences as an ally to those who are marginalized by race and question institutional practices that uphold racial inequities passed off as “natural.” Committed to the learning opportunities to be gained through CRT, I began the exploration described below.

After reviewing literature on CRT (Tate, 1997; van Dijk, 1992; Duesterberg, 1999; Lynn, 2004) and reflecting on the role of critical literacy conceptions of “reading the word and the world” (Freire, 1993/1970), I remembered an exercise developed by Foss (2002) who created an “intersection of identity” chart which enabled her students to see themselves as multiple “selves” rather than as essentialized members of a race or culture. Creating my own chart provided a rough estimation of identities that influence my narratives. For example, my race, educational background, gender, family, and religious upbringing influence my language and actions as I negotiate my position as a faculty member.

Next, I located events from my participation where I was challenged by racial and linguistic diversity. These contexts included two overlapping communities: the research community of graduate students and faculty and the practitioner community that included public school teachers in the district-based master’s program. I identified certain events across these as “critical moments.” I listed language related to racial and linguistic diversity from these events. Some examples from my list include:

- “You may be too white to be effective here.” (comment to me from a White colleague)
- “My race positions me incorrectly as a model minority.” (comment made by an Asian doctoral student during a course)
- “What does that show – that White teachers are White?” (comment by a doctoral student of color after a scholarly presentation by an invited speaker of color)
- “The international student was silenced in that group.” (comment by a colleague of color about tensions in a master’s course)

Why did this racial language in these statements make an impact on me? I realized that my identities as a White, doctoral faculty member, and a scholar theoretically focused on “teachers as researchers” positioned me in ways that were both powerful and vulnerable. To understand what these meant and to address tensions, I wrote narratives. Composing these narratives was an opportunity to reflect on my own identities in relation to identities of other participants. I used critical discourse analysis, guided by questions from van Dijk (1992, pp. 92 – 93) that included:

- What was the local context?
- How did identities of race, class, education, language, and gender participate in construction of this context and within the context?
- What contextual structures and strategies were reproduced and which were challenged by the interactions during this event?
- What learning did I take away as a teacher educator and researcher from this event and from analyzing this narrative?

One narrative entitled “Narrative Reflection: Questioning Racism Towards a Latina Teacher” is shared below.

This narrative speaks to my ongoing challenges meeting my goals of socially just pedagogy. It emerged as a result of specific events in a course. During one class, a cohort of teachers prepared practitioner research to present publicly to district administrators. The participants included 25 teachers (White monolingual, Latina bilingual, White bilingual), 2 instructors (Colombian doctoral instructor, White monolingual professor), and 8 doctoral project assistants (Colombian, Haitian, European-American, Korean-American, Filipino-American).

During our workshops where teachers revised Powerpoint presentations, two teachers in this group, one White teacher and one Latina teacher had been particularly involved emailing, seeking feedback from instructors and project assistants, and developing innovations during this revision cycle. The two were invited to present their revisions during a subsequent workshop. During the presentations, I noted that the White teacher was attended to completely by all teachers. In contrast, during the Latina teacher’s presentation, side conversations developed and fewer teachers paid attention. From the instructors’ perspectives, both presenters had strong voices, good ideas, and a lot to contribute. I questioned myself whether racism was implicated, especially when a White teacher approached me afterwards and asked me to “speak to” the Latina teacher about her direct critique of the district’s science program, despite clear evidence to support the critique.

My next thought was whether this episode should be pursued and if so, how? What tools should I use as a White teacher educator to pursue gut feelings about discrimination? This “critical moment” led me to review videotapes of other class discussions. I noticed another class member, Laura, a Latina administrator, often had her hand in the air. When recognized, she effectively mediated issues of racism. She would not assert herself directly but was always ready to productively challenge her colleagues, both White and Latina. She named race and language discrimination directly, and in one case disrupted a classmate, Aralisa’s deficit language in ways that led Aralisa to take decisive new action as a teacher researcher. This called me to reconsider my role and power as an instructor. Although I have power to control the discourse, I don’t always use that power effectively. More often, as a White middle-class woman, the “habitus” developed in classroom settings (Bourdieu, 1977), and in most of my social interactions, privilege me to control the discourse. In doing so, I was prevented from recognizing and tapping expertise in the group to name and confront discrimination. Increased ability to identify and create allies within my classes calls me to greater praxis in developing more strategic distribution of leadership. Teacher educators from dominant groups can often be jolted by incidents with racial overtones. Yet rather than examine the jarring feeling, we opt for silence. In my case, my own cultural inclination to “direct” made it easier to ignore the resources in front of me. Without remaining vigilant and interrogating these

dynamics, it is all too easy to collude with existing and invisible assumptions that recreate inequity within our educational programs.

Conclusions

As we develop critical race conscientization in our practice, teachers too cannot help but be influenced through their preparation. The potential to dismantle the injurious effects that institutionalized racism helps protect and disguise as individual deficiencies characterized by the flaws in the “Other” is realized by persistent application of critical race awareness to audits of the teacher education program’s curriculum, community outreach research, research on mentoring teacher collaboration with racially impacted schools, and education of future researchers in teacher education. Our narratives demonstrate how “innocent” racism is not initially easily recognized as such. With evidence from teacher educators and teacher reflections and projects, we document how new understandings are produced about privilege and its differential consequences that give rise to this “innocence.” More importantly we struggle for a more hopeful agenda to addressing the dynamic nature of racial privilege. It is our contention that this struggle is vital to any teacher education program with the mission of preparing teachers to succeed with the diverse populations of the U.S. and our expanding interconnectedness with the world’s ecology of diversity. We, in the US, can be potential leaders here and for those countries that have historically limited the rights of Others by overt statutes against language and or ethnically diverse populations such as the Roma in Europe, Tutsies in Zaire, Chinese and Koreans in Japan, or the Uighurs in China. Our narratives and their discussion will serve as honest, pragmatic ways guided by theory to deal with race and racism in preparing teachers for diverse student populations.

Contribution to Teacher Education

An examination of interactions within our local contexts and our critical reflection, reveal that we are implicated in hegemonic practices when we remain silent in the face of racialized interactions. Fatima’s response to her initial silence in the classroom provided her with the impetus to reflect on her identity as a Muslim woman within the context of US racism. She faced difficult options in risking a loss of employment if she had not proceeded with curriculum, and risking uncertainty by addressing issues on race. She decided to interact with the teachers to get them to focus on their socially constructed identities, socialization of young language minority children, and challenged teachers’ thought about White hegemony. Theresa’s and Yvonne’s narrative attends to how racialized language inequities exacerbate the extra burdens of bilingual teachers that were produced in a context of English-only policies. Linguicism against the use of Spanish allowed several of the White teachers to distance themselves from its use leaving the communicative burden on Latina teachers. Several of the White teachers claimed White privilege by withholding their labor to negotiate understanding Spanish. Theresa and Yvonne shifted course assignments so that responsibilities to use Spanish became more equitable in labor and benefits. They addressed racial consequences that emerged through the differential use of Spanish. Pat’s conscious articulation of several instructional practices provided us with an opportunity to reflect on how her own identity intersected with the identities of teachers in her program. Her awareness about the intersections of racism, power, and identity that emerged using critical review of her practice argues for the need for questions of race and language to remain central to teacher education. In Pat’s case such a lens opened space for her recognition

and inclusion of previously untapped funds of knowledge available to teacher educators as they learn along with their students about equity and social justice in education practices.

In each narrative, issues of race were addressed within curricular responses to our interpretations of emergent racism. We never anticipated facing racism in our courses thus, none of our actions were pre-determined. In our roles as critical multicultural educators and advocates of social justice, our values and beliefs provided the impetus to reflect, learn, and undertake the issues that were unfolding as injustices attributed to racism.

As we reflect on our practices within and outside this context, we understand more clearly that no single response to racism can be prepared or distributed in a cookie-cutter lesson. Each context has particularities and teacher educators' responses will be based on their repertoires of tools to address racism, discursive, material, and cognitive. However, breaking the silence of innocent racism can open up possibilities to respond to racism in all its changing forms. Like Horton & Freire's (1991) emergent and contextualized social change, we build antiracist practices to address innocent racism through this public examination. We suggest that because of the unpredictability of the contexts of racism in teacher education that educators must believe that race is endemic and that it is important to look for where inequities show up, to be aware of consequential subtleties, and to act to address these.

Our theoretical contributions combine the critical examination of individuals and social realms of teacher education with how they both contribute to the local economies of production and consumption of ideological practices in schools and communities. By using CRT to guide our activity, we continue in the struggle to meet the ever-changing face and discourse of racist practices in schools that impede the progress of diverse learners. We strive to build from these tentative efforts to privilege fairness and inclusion of diverse populations' contribution and participation in the benefits of U.S. society.

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REVISITING COLLABORATIVE BOUNDARIES-PIONEERING CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVES AND RELATIONS OF POWER

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Abstract

In this article, we examine collaboration as a situated practice that defies a prescriptive definition mainly located in the interpersonal relations of professionals. We argue that collaboration does not merely depend upon “good” will or professionalism, rather interacts complexly with racial expectations that have been cultivated in institutions where racism is manifested in subtle ways. We use Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) to examine how we as 2 different pairs of teacher educators in innovative programs in different sites faced racial tensions through our co-teaching experiences. Each racially diverse pair consisted of a more senior faculty member and an international teaching assistant. Hence we discuss the tensions that are inevitable as we professionals collaborate across relations of power and race. We argue for a more complex understanding of what it means to collaborate from these different social positions.

Keywords: Critical Race Theory; Teacher Education; Co-Teaching

Learning happens in and through relationships, by ways of ‘instructional conversation’ where teachers and students alike are engaged and mutually influenced. Understanding collaborative teaching means understanding these relationships and their contexts geographies both human and institutional.

DiPardo (1999, p. 153)

Introduction

Dewey (1939/1991) linked the improvement of our social environment to a democratic process that required freedom, equality, and cooperativeness. However, very few research studies have examined closely how learning takes place in the context of hierarchical relations of power, specifically between collaborative professors and their teaching assistants. We take up this space in our inquiry to problematize collaborative teaching and learning by analyzing two case studies that initiated innovative practices in second language teaching. More specifically, in

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this paper we will show that collaboration does not merely depend upon the instructors' good will or professionalism, but rather interacts complexly with racial expectations that have been cultivated in institutions where racism is manifested in subtle ways. Indeed, similar to many other situations today where unequal relations exist, within collaborative learning and teaching relationships race tends to be ignored in an attempt to create harmony, which in turn leads to viewing conflicts as personal rather than a confluence of expectations that are racialized. We recognize that these attitudes permeate an institution's educational practices so much so, that they become invisible, hence they go further unchecked, even by those who stand most to lose by the lack of collaboration.

Theoretical framework

Mutually critical dialogues were an essential part of the re-conceptualization of our understanding, both as parts of our research about the lived experiences as well as sources for generating new understanding of these lived experiences. Therefore, this research drew from phenomenological perspectives where complex understandings are formed through interactions from which we create our standpoint (Gadamer, 1979; Denzin & Lincoln, 1995).

We used Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) as a way to theorize race beyond the interpersonal, and provide another layer of understanding of how our experiences together unfolded. This theory built from legal studies of the 1970s sought to denaturalize norms that, on the surface, might seem neutral and fair. Since then, interdisciplinary work has been undertaken to investigate persistent social inequity in serving populations of color in public schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Delgado & Stefani, 2001). Such work highlighted the need to challenge the use of "color blindness" and meritocracy myths as "camouflages for the self-interest of dominant groups in American society" (Ladson Billings, 1998, p. 6). Often non-dominant participants in studies using critical race theory employ a discourse of "naming one's own reality" or using one's "voice" to heal the wounds caused by racial oppression. These authentic stories help communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed and serve as the first steps taken toward addressing these inequities (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Inherent assumptions in this line of thinking are first, that there is a dominant culture and that all others are non-dominant. A second important assumption is that race is recognized clearly as a stable identity marker by the participants. In our study, we saw race as a complex and unstable social construction, one that shifted over time and political circumstances.

Two Contexts and Participants

Massachusetts

In 2002 a series of legislations affected the provision of public education. The No Child Left Behind federal policy dictated the indicators of quality teachers and also provided grants to promote teacher education. Another was local to Massachusetts Question 2, beginning in 2002; teachers were required to comply with another law that restricted provisions of bilingual education services. The University of Massachusetts was one of the recipients of a Title III and VII grants aimed to raise achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) who were both

learning English and academic content by preparing teachers to work more effectively with this population.

In attempting to integrate current efforts being made at the School of Education, the Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition (ACCELA) Alliance was born with the purpose of collaborating with school districts and communities in western Massachusetts to find more effective ways to support these learners. This program leads, among other things, to a Master of Education (M.Ed.) and Licensure in English as A Second Language (ESL).

In-service teachers, waived teachers and paraprofessionals involved in the program had the opportunity to learn how to better work with ELLs in the mainstream classroom partly through inquiry projects based in their own classrooms. Courses were taught by faculty from the Bilingual/ESL/Multicultural (BEM) Practitioner Program together with Teaching Assistants (TAs) who worked with teachers on their projects. Theresa, a biracial Afro-Okinawan, was the faculty and Andrés, a Columbian was the TA.

This course was part of a series of four courses designed to both promote the learning of Spanish and to provide professional development for teachers. Some of the expected outcomes of the course were (1) to familiarize teachers with the language development challenge through first-hand experience as learners of another language trying to learn a language while learning content (2) To familiarize teachers with types of language programs and content that were potentially available in the state. This meant that teachers as students were to be taught in Spanish during the Immersion section of the course, Sheltered Spanish during the second phase of the course and finally, in both Spanish and English for the last phase of the course.

Ohio

In 2000, the College of Education was the recipient of a three year Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to use Technology (PT3) grant to integrate the use of technology into the different Master of Education (M.Ed.) programs available at the Midwestern university where part of this research took place. This grant was the result of the government efforts to ensure that every student in the United States would be technologically literate (e.g., Goals 2000).

Consequently, the College of Education created systemic changes in the university's teacher education programs so that all graduates were able to make appropriate use of technology to improve teaching practices and student learning (Bangou, 2003). Several Graduate Assistants were hired to infuse the use of technology into specific graduate programs and Francis, a French-Caribbean, was the PT3 graduate assistant for the Foreign/Second Language Education (FSLED) program and started working in January 2001 (Bangou, 2003).

The previous academic year, the College of Education hired a visiting professor named Rose (pseudonym) for the fall 2001 to teach the FSLED Methods of Teaching courses. Rose, a White woman, was an experienced foreign language teacher who had taught in a suburban high school for 24 years, but she had never taught at a university before. The main goal of these courses was to help students develop their teaching skills. However, Rose and Francis agreed that the course expectations related to technology would be to: (1) create a two-week web-based

unit plan; and (2) start building their professional electronic portfolio. Moreover, six technological workshops were provided to students to help them with their final project (Bangou, 2003).

Methodology

We arrived at a more complex understanding of race and collaboration through sustained discussions and interactions between Theresa, Francis (the two authors of this paper), and Andrés. Rose, politely declined an invitation to participate in the discussions. However, her perspective was included in the conversations through interviews and field notes that Francis collected when working with her (Bangou, 2003). Moreover, we reconstructed the history of our collaborations through four separate personal narratives and Rose had the opportunity to write her own narrative. The next step to add more depth to our representation occurred through dialogues about our texts. In conjunction with our narratives and dialogues we used other data sources collected in the process of carrying out our normal duties as instructors in the two different teacher education programs. These sources included our field notes, interviews, lesson plans, memos, student work and informal communication with students. Unlike other narrative inquiries, we also analyzed our narrative together for further identify assumptions and negotiations that have produced our current understandings. In this way we reflected analyzed, and portrayed our discussion of the inherent racial tensions and negotiations involved in institutional innovations and their impact on our collaborative relationships in teaching.

Findings

Raising the Issue of Race

Initially when we wrote out narratives, our gender and status as professionals figured in our discussions. However, what did not surface were our racial/ ethnic and class affiliations. Francis admitted at first that for him race seemed unrelated and Andrés expressed reluctance to talk about how race may have figured in the conflicts that unfolded. He began to question whether he could be perceived as the “oppressor,” a perspective that provoked his fear as he holds very strong notions of social justice. Contrary to Andrés and Francis, Theresa was open to discussing how race could be tangled into the events and wanted to begin a discussion on the matter. As mentioned earlier, Rose politely refused to discuss this issue.

The invisibility of race in the narratives, Rose’s refusal to talk about it, Andres’ fear of one’s judgment, and Francis’ perception of race as unrelated could well be part of the culture of “contrived collegiality” that Fullan & Hargreaves (1991) reported on between school administrators and teachers that impede teacher empowerment because of limited commitment to building collaborative cultures. It could also be part of the silence that Tatum and Brown (1998) describe as a major barrier to speaking openly because of fear “that talking about such sensitive topics will create rather than avert racial tensions” (p. 12). In any case, it was clear that within the contexts of our collaborations talking about race did not make the majority of us feel comfortable. To break the wall of uneasiness Theresa had to take the lead and as the discussion progressed about her experience both Francis and Andrés began to agree that race could figure into their understandings of their interactions.

Negotiating tensions

As mentioned earlier, one of the goals of the course taught by Theresa and Andrés was to provide teacher-participants with an immersion experience in Spanish. Andrés admitted that their comfort in the class was a primary concern to him and he would sometimes switch to English when he felt that the communication with the students started to suffer. Contrary to Andrés, Theresa made a point to seek as many opportunities to speak primarily in Spanish with props and cognates as scaffolds. Because of Question 2, a legislation that restricted the use of non-English instruction in the classroom, several teachers did not perceive learning Spanish as important. Symbolically Andrés became the mainstream representative and Theresa became a bilingual “other”, at times viewed as a “threat.” Andrés’ decision to use English was even more powerful since he was a native speaker of Spanish. Theresa and Andrés were not on the same page pedagogically and it allowed for resistance from students who already disagreed with Spanish as medium of instruction in the class. Moreover, Andrés characterized his alliance with the students as an issue of “fairness” and was effective in shaping several students’ perception of Theresa as the dominant authority, which created an unusual rift between students who actually saw the course as being meaningful and those who dismissed its importance to their formation as teachers of ELLs.

Race here is implicated through the use of language and through the symbolism. For several participants, Theresa was an outsider by physical traits, as she was the only Asian-looking and only African American in the program. However, this *outsiderness* was linguistically constructed by her persistent use of Spanish and her liminal interactions with participants in the class. For others, Theresa was seen as a professor attempting to have some understand deeply through their own experience what ELL students actually undergo in the schooling process through a second language. Andrés became positioned as one of them, an English dominant participant who disagreed with the authority in using Spanish and in having to meet state standards. The fact that the populations that were directly impacted by these language policies were Puerto Rican and that the majority of the teachers in the schools were White and monolingual provides an symbolic juxtaposition of realities of Spanish and English in the classroom implicating racial bias. Mey (1985) states that when people are denied the right to language, the legitimacy and value use of their own language is oppressed linguistically. Schools become sites of unequal social relations whereby upholding dominant language choices is seen as “natural.”

Collaboration, Race and Power Relationships

In his narrative Andrés highlighted that his understanding of hierarchical relationships between faculty and students/TA were based on his experiences in Columbia. He commented that in Columbia “students might be able to express their opinion but the faculty’s opinion was the one that always mattered.” He later admitted that his cultural background impacted the way that he negotiated the content of the class with Theresa. Interestingly enough, such understanding of hierarchical relationships also impacted the way that Andrés wrote his narrative and interacted with Theresa during this research project. At first, Andrés did not want to appear to be disrespectful towards Theresa and be perceived as ungrateful. The information that he decided to include in his narrative and his investment into the dialogues were impacted by such concerns.

Although Francis had a better cultural understanding of racial relationships in the US, as an international student he felt quite vulnerable. Andrés shared similar feelings. An international student cannot be legally hired outside of campus and tuition fees are often twice as high for international students. In such context, a TA position is usually a coveted means for international students to afford university costs and stay in this country. Francis and Andrés admitted that they would avoid anything that could potentially jeopardize their chance to be hired as TA's. Rose's opinion about his work and his professionalism was one of the factors that could endanger Francis' status in this country. At first, Rose resisted Francis' vision and he confessed that when negotiating with Rose, he often felt that he had to comply to her requests because he did not want to upset her and potentially lose the dreams and goals he had been working so hard to achieve.

As a Black man, Francis admitted to being socialized to rarely trust a White person and to only trust people from his own race. These values are often part of the survival apparatus developed by the Atlantic Black Diaspora and its roots in slavery and centuries of discrimination. These values are usually transmitted from parents to children. Francis admitted that the collaboration would have been different if Rose had been a person of color. For instance, when Rose returned students' first draft of their unit plans she did not include any feedback about the technological aspect of the unit. Consequently some students believed that creating an online unit plan was not required. Instead of confronting Rose about it, each group sought out Francis after class. He helped redirect their focus and clarified any confusion about the assignment to construct a unit plan.

For Theresa, as a biracial professor whose race is often not clearly identified by people who first look at her, particularly those unaccustomed to multiracial peoples. Her interactional practices are a composite of her Latin American, Louisianan, and Okinawan socialization, and form a hybrid resource whose roots are not clearly singled out. Often she is mistaken for Chinese or Filipina. In the Northeast, even though her speech is sprinkled with "ya'll" or other southern tokens from time-to-time, she is often complimented on how well she speaks English (for a foreigner). In her narrative, Theresa's insights into differences between second and foreign language settings shaped how she interpreted Andrés' eagerness to downplay Spanish and use more English even in their co-taught Spanish course. She saw his minimal use of Spanish and the reluctance to explain underlying Spanish linguistic rules as a lack of knowledge about the differences between foreign and second language development, which needed to be scaffolded through his performance as instructor in the class. By taking on these tasks, she positioned him as learner and not co-teacher. She stepped in where and when she saw him experiencing difficulty or needing additional support. Her expertise as non-native, professor conflicted with the image of native speaker as expert. Again, the conflict is racial and related to language, in this case metalinguistic knowledge. The normative ideology operating in the background is that Theresa cannot be perceived as the authority because Andrés is the native speaker. Thus for several students, it became clear that Theresa was an expert and Andrés was in an apprenticeship position. For others, Andrés was positioned as a subordinate, and unfairly so.

Discussion

In the previous sections, we developed several insights about the nature of collaborating across race and power relations. Indeed, we were able to show that collaboration is indeed affected by institutionalized racial expectations grounded in power relations. For instance,

Theresa and Andres collaboration was affected by local racial expectations associated with native/non-native speakers; and dominant/minority languages. In both institutions, collaborations were complexly affected by participants' status as professor, TA, International students, White, Columbian, bi-racial African-Okinawa, and French-Caribbean. Moreover, through our experiences we were able to illustrate how difficult it is to talk about race even when one is willing to do so. At first, for a majority of us race seemed irrelevant, and it was clear that there was an uneasiness to address such issue. One of the participants even decided to leave the project. However, through our discussions we were able to create a space where race could be unbarred. We were then able to reveal that race was rendered invisible mainly to protect ourselves and our collaborations. For instance, As TA and international student, for Francis and Andrés raising race was perceived as a threat to the success of the collaboration and by extension a threat to their success in our institutions.

This study has implications for educators interested in issues of power and race and who are teaching collaboratively. Like DiPardo (1999) we do believe that understanding collaborative teaching is institutionally and humanly contextualized. To understand such collaborations is to understand their complex interplays with power relations and race within institutions. When assessing collaborative relations a question we might always want to ask is: What is missing, invisible or silent here? While inequities that are located in interpersonal relations can be addressed through dialog and analysis between two willing people, our study reveals that it is not necessarily an easy process in part because of the subtle inner-workings of racism, what makes it even more necessary to address.

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SECTION ON K-12 TEACHING AND LEARNING

FROM CMS TO SNS: EDUCATIONAL NETWORKING FOR URBAN TEACHERS

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Abstract

A complex view of the socioeconomic digital divide in urban schools requires us to address not only the gaps in access to technology, but also inequities in access to human support, digital content, and *effective pedagogical* approaches to technology integration. This study explored the use of social networking site (SNS) as a platform to provide a supportive human and social infrastructure in an urban educational context. The use of SNS was compared with the mainstream course management system (CMS) by urban teachers in terms of the *education, esthetic, escapist, and entertainment* aspects of their learning experience. The study results suggested a high degree of learner engagement in all four aspects of participants' use of SNS, whereas the esthetic and entertainment realms of experience were found to be the weakest components of the mainstream CMS. These findings contribute to current understanding of repurposing popular open source technologies for teaching and learning in socioeconomically disadvantaged urban schools.

Keywords: Course management system (CMS), social networking site (SNS), urban teachers, digital divide, experience design.

With the increasing globalization and digitalization of higher education, we have a tremendous responsibility to open up broader education options for our students and the communities we serve. Effective implementation of e-learning plays a critical role in this regard. There are many significant advantages of e-learning, such as flexible self-paced learning, 24/7 on-demand accessibility, reduction of travel time and costs, etc. These advantages are important during the current time of decreased funding faced by educational institutions, especially for those in urban settings that have limited resources.

To date, most institutions of higher education have implemented a course management system (CMS) as the vehicle for online delivery. With the rising cost of CMS and several recent reports (e.g., OECD, 2005; Morgan, 2003) questioning its pedagogical impact, many institutions have begun to explore affordable and pedagogically effective alternatives. At the same time, the emergence of new Internet applications, known as Web 2.0, has provided a major impetus for innovative e-learning solutions. Collectively, Web 2.0 reflects a new trend of using the Web as a

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platform for participation (user-generated content), harnessing collective intelligence, and rich user experiences (Jaokar, 2007; O'Reilly, 2005). This trend supports a social constructivist approach to e-learning and thus is different from the traditional use of CMS primarily for administrative and course management purposes.

This study explored the use of a popular type of Web 2.0 platform, known as social networking site (SNS), as an educational networking tool by urban teachers. Most of these teachers work in the inner-city schools of Los Angeles, where the challenges of first-order barriers (access to technology, infrastructure support) and second-order barriers (perceptions and attitudes toward technology, motivation to integrate technology) that impede successful technology integration in an urban classroom have been reported (Javeri & Chen, 2006). Gorski (2005) pointed out that the problem of the digital divide must not only be seen in terms of access to technology. It must also be understood in terms of inequities in access to progressive pedagogy, encourage and support, digital resources, and a welcoming cyberculture. For these reasons, this study explored the use of SNS as a way to provide a supportive human and social infrastructure in an urban educational context.

Theoretical Framework and Related Research

CMS vs. SNS

A large-scale survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) to investigate how faculty members use CMSs reported that they use them primarily as an administrative tool, and there is little evidence found to support the impact of CMSs on pedagogy (Morgan, 2003). Milligan (2006) described the traditional CMS as "a conservative technology" whose primary function is to support content delivery and class management, while the needs of students are secondary to its purpose. Mott (2010) cautioned that the traditional CMS has become "a symbol of the higher learning status quo" and noted that many students and teachers have turned to the Web "for tools that support their everyday communication, productivity, and collaboration needs." These findings are disappointing given the high cost of CMS implementation.

As the traditional CMSs are not well suited for social constructivist learning activities, Dalsgaard (2006) urged educators to engage students in active use of new "social software." Web 2.0 platforms like blogs, wikis, and social networks appeared to fit well into the social constructivist paradigm due to their *collaborative, interactive, and participatory nature*. A notable new trend is the creation of a *Personal Learning Environment* (PLE), in which the learners use a set of Web 2.0 tools customized to their individual needs and preferences within a single learning environment (Milligan, 2006). In comparison with CMS, PLE provides greater flexibility and adaptability to the learners. Yet, the integration of multiple tools can be complex and difficult for inexperienced students and faculty members (Mott, 2010). Moreover, such integration does not typically offer rich media integration as seen in some social network sites (Annetta, 2008). As an evolving technology, many SNSs are increasingly sophisticated and have been used innovatively by educational institutions as a teaching and learning tool.

Social Constructivist E-Learning Environments

Based on the theories of situated cognition, community of practice, and cognitive apprenticeship (e.g., Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Collins, Brown, & Holum, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1992; Brown & Duguid, 2000), design principles for social constructivist e-learning environments can be summarized as (1) learning is demand driven and an identify formation, (2) learning is a social act, (3) learning is embedded in rich cultural and social contexts, (4) learning is reflective and metacognitive, internalizing from social to the individual, and (5) learning is to transfer knowledge from one situation to another, discovering relational and associated meanings in concepts (Hung, 2001). Studies related to social constructivist e-learning environments suggest that social interaction is essential to provide a sense of belonging in online learning communities (e.g. Thurston 2005; Rovai 2000; Rovai & Wighting 2005). According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), the need to belong is an innate human desire to establish and maintain social bonds with others.

Two related concepts, *social presence* and *social space*, have been studied and linked to sociologist Ray Oldenburg's (1997) concept of a *third place* such as coffee house and community center where people actively connect, converse, and form communities. Digital communities, especially formed through participatory social media, are analogous to a physical third place as they tend to be highly interactive and enable participants to "experience emotional connections and intellectual engagement that are quite real" (Ohler, 2011, p. 42). Webster's Online Dictionary defines participation as "the state of being related to a larger whole." This definition fits well with the fundamental concept behind modern SNSs and how they have been used.

Experience Design for an Urban Context

Recent studies have explored the feasibility of integrating SNSs into higher education courses (e.g., Holcomb, Brady, & Smith, 2010; Ophus & Abbitt, 2009). This study builds on this line of research by taking a specific look at urban teachers' perceptions of using the social networking platform as a learning tool. Most teacher participants in this study worked in low-income urban schools. Gorski (2005) cautioned that attempts to address the digital divide often replicate existing inequities in education. Thus, a complex view of the socioeconomic digital divide requires us to address at least three gaps: (1) access to technology, (2) access to pedagogically sound ways to incorporate technology, and (3) access to relevant digital content. This understanding is important as teachers in low-income schools tend to have less resources, training, and support to develop skills and confidence with the technology and use it in pedagogically sophisticated ways. Moreover, because most teacher participants in this study worked full-time while pursuing a master's degree in education, they were limited in their time and energy to engage in intensive graduate-level coursework. Hence, the use of SNS in this context was intended to: (1) provide academic and social support to urban teachers, (2) encourage sharing of digital resources, and (3) model *effective* uses of readily available Web 2.0 technology that can be integrated into urban schools.

To understand participants' experiences, this study draws upon Pine and Gilmore's (1999) experiential framework, which encompasses four experience realms (1) *esthetic* – design that provides an inviting, interesting, and comfortable environment, (2) *escapist* – design that

focuses on immersive, highly participatory activities, (3) *educational* – design that promotes active learning and exploration, and (4) *entertainment* – design that allows fun and enjoyment for sustaining learner attention and motivation (see Chen, 2010, for a comprehensive review of the theory and practice of experience design). This study was guided by the following two research questions: 1) In comparison with the mainstream CMS, how is the nature of learning experience within the realms of education, esthetic, escapist, and entertainment affected by the use of social networking technology in an urban academic setting? and 2) What specific features or tools that appear to harnesses the educational value of social networking as perceived by urban teachers?

Methods

Instructional Context

This study was conducted in a state university located in the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles. Participants of this study were enrolled in two graduate-level courses focusing on instructional media and technology. The courses were delivered in a blended format over 11 weeks (6 online and 5 on-campus). Blackboard was used as the CMS in conjunction with a networking platform called Ning. Ning was chosen due to its user friendly interface and “e-safe” features, which enable the creation of a private network. It has many similar features found in other SNSs such as comment walls, friends, photo and video sharing, and yet it provides a smaller and more private group setting (Holcomb, Brady, & Smith, 2010). At the time of the study, Ning was free but it phased out its free services since the summer of 2010.

The Blackboard CMS was used for the overall course structure so the weekly modules, assignment descriptions, and course materials were housed in it. Communications such as e-mail, discussions, chat, and sharing of student papers and projects were conducted both in Ning and Blackboard (see Figure 1). The weekly course modules were carefully structured to make it easier for students to alternate between Ning and Blackboard.

Figure 1.

Features used in Blackboard and Ning

Blackboard	Ning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly course modules • Announcements • Forum • Email • Chat • Project examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum • Email • Chat • Blog • Personal space • Photo and video sharing • Group • Recent activities • Comment wall

Participants

Twenty-six students (14 males and 12 females) voluntarily participated in this study. Their ages ranged from 20 to 54; most (62%) were between the ages of 25 and 34. There were 11 Hispanics, 8 Asian Americans, 5 Caucasians, and 2 African Americans. Their years of work experience ranged from 30 -0 years, including 15 in-service teachers, 9 pre-service teachers, one Liberian, and one college professor. Except the college professor, all of them were pursuing a master's degree in *Computer Education and Technology Leadership* and planning to become technology leaders in their schools or school districts.

All participants were experienced Blackboard users and eight of them had used a different CMS such as *Moodle*. Sixty-two percent of the participants rated themselves high in technology skills; the rest of participants rated themselves as having average skills. Most of the participants (85%) were a member of one or more social networks, e.g., *Facebook*, but only 27% used their favorite social network on a daily basis. Forty-six percent of the participants used their favorite social network weekly; 15% of them used it less than once a week; and 15% reported not belonging to any social networks at all.

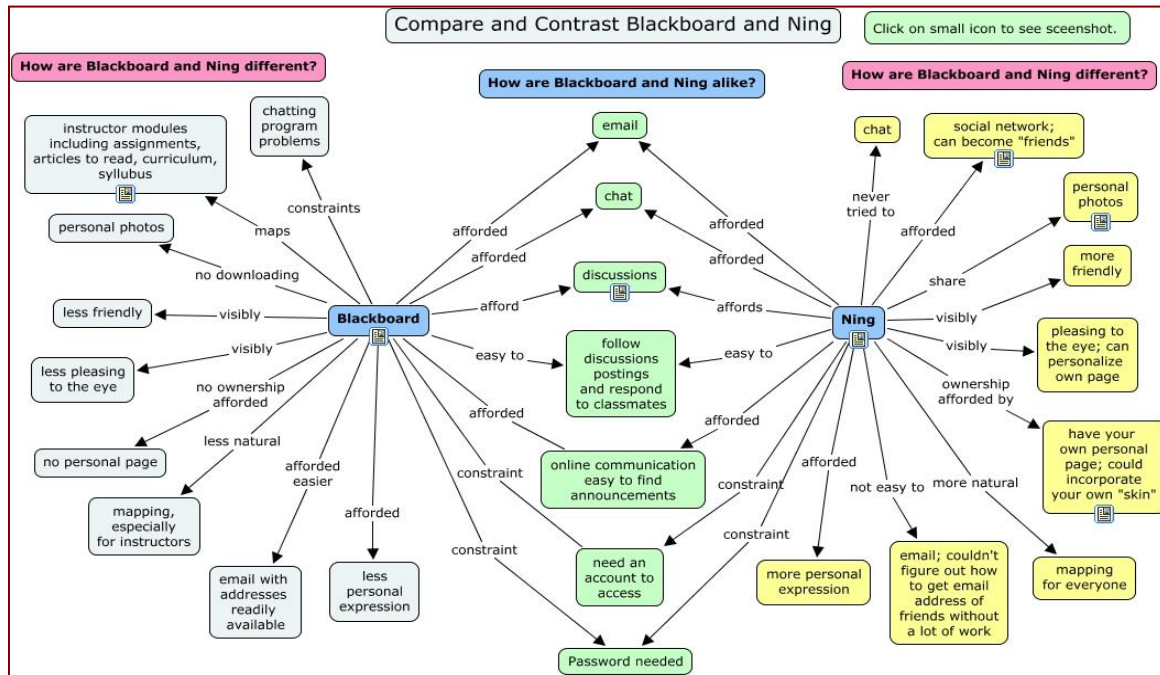
Data Sources and Analysis

This study is a descriptive case study (Yin, 2003). Based on the sources of evidence recommended by Yin, this study collected various data sources, including (1) archival records: e.g., discussion board messages, chatroom histories, email records, comment wall messages, and student profiles/personal pages, (2) interviews and observations, (3) survey, and (4) artifacts (reflections and visual representations). Observations of online dynamics along with informal discussions with the participants were carried out throughout the research period by the researcher, who is also the course instructor. At the end of the course, participants completed a CMS vs. Ning survey. Based on Pine and Gilmore's experiential framework (1999) and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of optimal flow, the survey was modified from Yuen (2008) and was administrated electronically. In-depth interviews with a sample of participants (n=6) were conducted to verify data and interpretations obtained from other methods. Finally, participants were asked to submit a written reflection accompanied by a visual representation to express their viewpoints (see Figure 2 for an example).

Data were analyzed to identify common themes, patterns, similarities and differences among participants' viewpoints. Participants' experiences were analyzed in terms of their *perceived enjoyment, concentration, control, exploration, and challenge* in relation to the four realms of experience, *education, esthetic, escapist, and entertainment*. Various data sources allowed the researcher (also the instructor) to triangulate observations and interpretations of findings. Member checking was employed in the form of ongoing email discussions and clarifications between the researcher and research participants.

Figure 2.

An Example of Visual Representation of Blackboard vs. Ning Created by a Participant.



Results

A majority of the participants (81%) responded positively (4 and above) to Ning while 38% also responded favorably to Blackboard. Most of the participants (74%) affirmed the value of Ning in promoting peer interaction and knowledge sharing; 81% indicated that they will become more actively involved in courses that use social networking; 85% indicated that they like to see more social networking class sites used in other classes.

To understand the salient aspects of participants' perceptions within the four experience realms (esthetic, escapist, educational, entertainment), the median responses to related items were calculated and then positively (4 and above) as well as negatively (2 and below) rated items were examined (see Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, participants had a higher median rating for Ning on all items related to the four realms of experience. Their responses toward Blackboard were more moderate. The lowest rated items (median score = 2) reflected participants' perceived low enjoyment in the escapist and entertainment realms of Blackboard. Student comments confirmed these findings, as shown in Figure 3.

Table 2.

Median Responses of Participant Perceptions toward Ning and Blackboard

	<u>Median</u>	
	Ning	Blackboard
<i>Esthetic</i>		
• provides an inviting, interesting, and comfortable environment	4	3
• allows me to personalize pages to express individuality and creativity	4	2
• gives me a sense of belonging	4	3
<i>Escapist /Motivation</i>		
• allows immersive, highly participatory activities or interactions	4	3
• sustains my motivation and attention in learning	4	3
• gives me greater control and flexibility over my learning	4	3
<i>Educational</i>		
• promotes active learning and exploration	4	3
• fits into my learning style	4	3
<i>Entertainment</i>		
• allows fun and enjoyment in learning	4	2

High ratings: ≥ 4 ; low ratings: ≤ 2 (1=Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree).

Questions regarding specific utilities that appear to harness the educational value of social networking, participants largely favored the use of blog (89%), following by chat (63%), group (63%), forum (59%), photo (48%), video (44%), and members' pages (44%).

Discussion

The study results suggested a high degree of learner engagement in all four realms of experience in urban teachers' use of social networking technology as an educational tool. The esthetic and entertainment realms of experience were perceived by the teacher participants as the weakest aspects of the mainstream CMS. The findings are consistent with those of previous research on human-computer interaction (e.g., Webster, Trevino, & Ryan, 1993), suggesting that learner engagement is positively correlated with the computer users' perceived flexibility and modifiability of the software. Participants felt more engaged in Ning as the system allowed them to express their individuality and creativity through modifying their online space. This contributed to a stronger sense of belonging in the Ning environment.

Figure 3.

Examples of Participant Comments Pertaining to the Four Experience Realms.

Esthetic – design that provides an inviting, interesting, and comfortable environment

- Ning afford a friendly atmosphere giving opportunities to upload photos, videos, build a personal page in which you may choose your own design.
- Ning rates very high on esthetics as compared to the more sterile environment of Blackboard.
- For Ning, I've seen peers upload photos that always make me smile and get to know them better.
- Blackboard is more of a one size fits all model.
- Ning allows you to modify it and make changes to fit each individual style. These processes are what give each person a sense of belonging within a network or group.

Escapist – design that focuses on immersive, highly participatory activities

- I feel Ning users can immerse themselves and participate in activities more easily than they would in Blackboard.
- Ning is geared for users to post text or pictures.
- Blackboard does its job if all you want to do is inform, but it doesn't "invite" the user in.
- Blackboard is more of a simple tool that allows for communication without much interaction.
- Ning has features that allow users to respond to each other quickly and visibly. Responses and updates by time on the home page and personal page.
- With using Ning, collaboration is possible. We can become highly involved in discussions whether they are synchronous or asynchronous.
- Ning was meant to be more of an inviting social network...which invites more users to post.

Educational – design that promotes active learning and exploration

- Ning was like a learning community and every student can contribute.
- Member of a Ning site often leave interesting and valuable ideas and web links in which to explore and extend my own learning on a topic.
- Ning provides more opportunities for ongoing and continuous collaboration.
- Ning can serve as a powerful learning community... allows students to interact with each other academically while freeing from the constraints of typical "boring" learning situation.
- [Ning] allows you to become friends with other members and make interest groups where group member can share ideas and resources with one another.

Entertainment – design that allows fun and enjoyment for sustaining learner attention and motivation.

- There is nothing enjoyable or immersive when accessing a course in Blackboard since the bland interface looks like it is from the 90's.
- Ning provides a much more fun way to interact and get to know peers.
- I feel that by the simple fact of allowing the user to make profile changes and being able to modify some setting [in Ning] the experience becomes more enjoyable.
- With fast internet connections available...it makes navigating to and accessing Ning much more fun and easy.

- Ning is more entertaining than Blackboard since it is geared for users' input...

The demand to provide alternative platforms to support the social process of learning in online environments is increasingly higher as today's students are accustomed to the use of social media. From an esthetic point of view, Ning was perceived as "artistic, inviting, fun, colorful and personal," whereas Blackboard was seen as "plain, structured, and organized." From an escapist point of view, Ning encompassed many features of a rich digital ecology where "learning, working, and playing co-mingle" (Brown, 2000). From an entertainment point of view, the rich environment allowed participants to infuse "playfulness" into the learning process, as evident in this comment: "Ning is definitely a more entertaining learning tool. The fun layouts and pictures move away from the traditional learning standards and more into the popular social site trend." From an educational point of view, the participatory nature of Ning made it easy for participants to form digital communities and to maintain "an ongoing scrapbook of resources" (Ohler, 2010, p. 42) that were consistently updated by all participants. As a result, it provided both academic and social support for the learners.

It is important to note that students will not engage in using CMS for coursework if they perceive using CMS to be less effective than using other means to communicate with classmates and instructors (Korchmaros & Gump, 2009). The four kinds of virtual space described by Hall (1966) have important implications for the design of next generation CMS: intimate, personal, social, and public. The sense of space is important in participants' online encounters, as indicated by the following excerpt:

If Ning invited me to dinner ... I would take one look at the design of his "house" (site), and readily feel comfortable. Ning has lots of roommates and opportunities to chill out, look at photos and videos, chat or discuss the latest in the news in a casual relaxed feeling setting.

If Blackboard invited me to dinner ... I would again peek inside his "house" site, and 2nd guess if I really wanted to join him. His house seems a bit cold and sterile, nothing that says it's his. Basically the same colors in every room. So I'd wonder if he has an imagination or if he has friends that come over. I end up going to dinner and end up feeling a general sense of disinterest ... but it's a new friend, so I make an effort and learn more about him.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) suggested that the richest experiences should include some aspects of all four realms, and one challenge would be to find the balance for each type of experience. It should be noted that the goal of experience design is to engage rather than entertain. While the escapist and entertainment aspects of SNS may be desirable to sustain learner motivation, they may also lead to over-involvement and counterproductive outcomes for some learners. For some participants, the standard Blackboard CMS "works for its purpose, education" and the integration of multiple platforms could be potentially overwhelming. Thus, the learning environments and activities must be carefully structured in the integration of CMS and SNS.

Conclusions

This study contributes to current understanding of repurposing a popular social networking technology for teaching and learning (Ophus & Abbitt, 2009). It *builds on previous* findings by focusing more specifically on urban teachers' experiences. The inequity in technological resources has a significant effect on urban students' future lives (Javeri & Chen 2006). Any attempts to address digital inequities must simultaneously address inequitable pedagogical approaches to technology integration in urban contexts (Gorski, 2005). At the same time, we need to explore creatively and demonstrate effectively the use of open source digital tools and resources as we prepare urban teachers to take on the leadership role in their professional community.

The integration of interactive social software in this study provided a welcoming platform to support urban teachers both socially and intellectually. While the generalization of this study is limited due to the sample size, the results of this study help us better understand the needs of urban teachers and their perceived value of educational networking in urban contexts. Future research is needed to explore how we might harness the power of new media to effectively engage urban learners in each realm of experience (education, esthetic, escapist, and entertainment), especially in relation to the four kinds of virtual space (intimate, personal, social, and public).

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“MARTIN LUTHER KING STOPPED DISCRIMINATION”: MULTI-GENERATIONAL LATINO ELEMENTARY STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how multi-generational, middle-class, fifth-graders from Latino families responded to classroom discussions of social issues—particularly discrimination—and draws upon sociocultural views of culture, educational theory, and sociological perspectives of immigration to provide insight into the learning experiences of one group of children of the Mexican diaspora. Findings include students: 1) perceived discrimination as historical; 2) maintained a distance from personal experiences; 3) understood social conflict through popular culture; and 4) promulgated American values of equity, fairness, and justice. Children’s perceptions reveal complexities in negotiating their ways of knowing gleaned from varied in-school and out-of-school experiences.

Keywords: Sociocultural perspectives; social conflict; personal experiences

Latinos are the majority minority in the United States (Darder & Torres, 2004), and despite advancements in their socioeconomic status (Catanzarite, 2003), ethnic and racialized identities still persist in this country (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Frederick Erickson contends that classroom pedagogy can play a role in opening a space for educators to “acknowledge that experiences of oppression exists” (2004, p. 49), and many classroom teachers try to address issues of domination and power. But how do children from first, second, and third generation Latino immigrant families perceive the historic and on-going reality of discrimination in their lives?

This study looks at the experiences of multi-generational, middle-class, fifth-graders from Latino families as they respond to discussions of social issues—particularly discrimination—in their classroom. The research is part of a larger case study on Latino students’ interactions during reading and writing engagement and draws upon anthropological and sociocultural views of culture, educational theory and sociological perspectives of immigration.

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Perspectives

Sociocultural theory in which an individual is shaped by the community and situated within particular historical, social, and political contexts (Rogoff, 2003) provided the overarching framework. Two complementary perspectives included: multicultural educational theory (Banks, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004); and a sociological perspective of ethnic diaspora's affiliation with American creed (Shain, 1999).

Cross-disciplinary Perspectives of Culture

Culture, once considered as static and essentializing of particular groups, has been broadened by more current transdisciplinary views. Anthropological perspectives conceive of unbounded and deterritorialized ethnoscaples (Appadurai, 1996) and a permeable product of political, economic, and historical relations of power (Merry, 2006); the field of education notes culture's fluidity (Erickson, 2004); and cultural historical views recognize dynamic cultural communities (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). These orientations have bearing on what constitutes "culture" in multicultural pedagogy and in educational research with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Multicultural Education

Since the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, multicultural pedagogy in schools has sought to meaningfully incorporate the history, perspectives, and contributions of diverse groups previously underrepresented (Banks, 2004; Olneck, 2004). The recent 2003 position statement of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) calls for schools to prepare children to become active participants in a democracy and advocate for a socially just society through a curriculum that addresses individual differences including race, ethnicity, language, class, gender, ableness, ageism, religion/spirituality, and sexual orientation.

Critical multicultural pedagogists have sought to move beyond educational formulations such as additive approaches (e.g., a focus on an ethnic group's language, food, and traditions) towards a critical perspective examining hegemony and dominant discourse (McLaren, 1994). The NAME position statement supports children's questioning, critique, and interpretation of historical and contemporary oppression and inequitable power relations to consider how cultural differences are sociopolitical and historically constructed (c.f., Janks, 2010).

Interestingly, the research into classroom's usage of texts with strong social themes has revealed a complexity of elementary-age students' response. A curriculum that focuses on ethnic and racial discrimination can create a degree of student discomfort (Möller & Allen, 2000) and not necessarily compel all students to be politicized (Dauite & Jones, 2003). Sipe and Maguire (2006) presented read alouds in primary grade classrooms and identified six aspects of student resistance. One response, "engaged resistance," described young children's paradoxical involvement in texts yet disconnection from difficult themes and experiences too close to their own reality. It is worthwhile to note in the extant research the nuance of children's agency in their response to socially themed texts and multicultural texts.

Ethnic Diasporas and the American Creed

In light of this recent research and in an attempt to understand this study's Latino multi-generational children participants, an additional framework of an ethnic diaspora's adoption of the American creed, i.e., values of democracy, equity, and fairness was incorporated. This framework, as proposed by Shain (1999), notes the dynamically shifting adaptation of ethnic diasporas, such as Latinos and other immigrant groups, to the United States. For example, ethnic diasporas are transnational citizens simultaneously maintaining an affinity for their homeland and their newly adopted country. Their adaptation varies with individual and within group orientations. This perspective is congruent with assertions that Latinos, and other ethnic or racial groups, are not monolithic groups but have within group differences representing varied interests, histories, experiences, generational status, linguistic abilities, and economic status (Orellana & Bowman, 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Pérez, 2002).

Methods, Data Sources, and Analysis

A qualitative case study of a fifth-grade classroom was used for intrinsic and instrumental purposes (Yin, 2003). The public school, recently recognized by the state for academic excellence was in a primarily Latino populated middle-class suburb of a large metropolitan city in Southern California. The school's demographics of 83% Latino, 12% White, 3% African American, 1% Filipino, and 1% American Indian were reflected of the overall district. Through peer collaboration, student choice, and frequent class discussions, the teacher encouraged each of his 32 students to tap into their background knowledge, personal history, and cultural resources during class engagement.

Over a nine-week period, I positioned myself as a visitor while I used ethnographic data collection methods of participant observation, field notes, interviews, and document analysis. Although children initially attempted to view me as a second teacher, I repeatedly reiterated my observer role. Data analysis incorporated a constant comparative method, facilitated through HyperRESEARCH™ qualitative software, to categorize themes and patterns (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researcher reflexivity from a Chicana feminist epistemology (Bernal, 1998) allowed me to be aware of the strength in using my own cultural background yet acutely mindful that merely being of the same ethnicity and a second-generation immigrant did not privilege my understanding of these research participants.

Findings/Discussion

The classroom teacher, Mr. Harris, was a 10-year veteran who integrated social issues such as poverty, immigration rights, and ecology in classroom conversations, as the topics arose in the school's literature, basal readers, and content area texts. Discrimination, he noted, was an "ongoing theme in [students] American history." While the teacher encouraged students to problematize school texts and to consider silenced voices, these students perceived discrimination as historical; maintained a distance from personal experiences; understood social conflict through popular culture; and promulgated American values of equity.

Perceiving Discrimination as Historical

To these students, discrimination seemed to be an historical event culminating during the 1960s civil rights movement and erased through the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks who as several students declared, “saved our lives and stopped discrimination” (Figure 1). When asked why they felt that the teacher included discussions about discrimination, Geraldo observed, “[*It exists*] in Africa...[and] in different parts of the world.” Another student Michael rationalized, “So you can know about things that happened back then.” Their responses indicated a geographic and temporal distance.

Figure 1

Students’ Perceptions of Discrimination as Historical

PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AS HISTORICAL	
1	<i>It means people treat others unfair. Like white people used to treat black people. Like slaves. (Eddie)</i>
2	<i>It’s good since we’re knowing history and how the people were treated. That’s sad. And we go like, “Why did they do that?” He wants to make us think like why’d they do that.</i>
3	<i>They have freedom now thanks to Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King stopped discrimination.” (Anthony)</i>
4	<i>So you can know about things that happened back then. (Michael)</i>
5	<i>[The teacher] wants us to know how people were treated in the old days. (Eddie)</i>
6	<i>White people treat colored people bad. I took my history book home and read the whole thing on history. I’m glad it happened [because now things are better]; you want to know about what happened. (Tarry & Alexis)</i>
7	<i>Most of the people in this classroom are Spanish people and we wouldn’t be playing with them. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks are like a team and now everyone is equal. (Tarry & Alexis)</i>
8	<i>People who don’t like other people’s culture. For example, a white person doesn’t like the black people. And the black people was really mad.” And some people from other countries that come to the U.S. don’t have freedom. They have freedom now thanks to Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King stopped discrimination.” (Anthony)</i>
9	<i>It means the blacks and whites getting separated. The colored always had dirty bathrooms. When I was watching the movie, <u>Our Friend Martin</u>, I saw a part, where the colored were on strike. The police had the dogs on them. They sprayed them with a water hose.</i>
10	<i>If Martin Luther King hadn’t spoken up, we [as White students] would be in good classrooms and we wouldn’t have broken chairs [like Latino peers would have]. (Tarry & Alexis)</i>

Further, Eddie, a Latino, revealed his understanding of discrimination as primarily a binary concern:

For example, a White person doesn't like the black people. And the black people was [sic] really mad. And some people from other countries that come to the U.S. don't have freedom. They have freedom now thanks to Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King stopped discrimination.

Several explanatory reasons may account for this perception. First, conceiving of discrimination in terms of blacks and whites expunged its relevancy to these Latino students' lives. Secondly, in the ethnic homogeneity of their neighborhood and school environment, students perhaps did not encounter nor could they imagine discriminatory interactions. Another explanatory reason was the school's sanctioned texts including basal readers, social studies text, and multicultural literature typically included historical—not contemporary—stories. Even a literature selection about Mexican-American migrant farm worker's experience such as *Esperanza Rising* (Munoz-Ryan, 2000) had little relevance to these students' contemporary middle-class neighborhood. Furthermore, these texts often had narrative closures for social and racial conflicts. Inadvertently such positive accounts may have helped shape a perception that racism and discrimination were archival events.

Maintaining Personal Distance from Discrimination

Although students distanced themselves from discussions about current discrimination (Figure 2), during individual conversations they recounted specific personal episodes.

Figure 2

Maintaining a Distance from Discrimination

DISCRIMINATION KEPT AT A DISTANCE	
1	In Long Beach, there was always discrimination in my neighborhood. Not to us because we didn't play outside there were colored people upstairs and there were white people downstairs. Colored people's kids were downstairs playing and the white adults would say, "we're selling chocolates." Adults would tell their kids not to play. I thought, "How sad, we're all human beings." (Virginia)
2	I used to live in Compton. I went to school called ____ Elementary and there were a lot of African Americans there. I was there nine months and I was this thing called Safety Monitor, the whole school had. There was this one kid. I was monitoring on the street and he would tell people that I was stupid. His mom was a teacher and she was mean. (Victor)
3	[Incident occurring in a neighborhood where he used to live] "The manager had a sink. The kid pushed me [and the sink broke]. His mom started to tell her son, 'You don't want to be like Michael.' Made me look bad." (Michael)
4	"I know Governor Schwarzenegger doesn't like Mexicans. He wants to send them back." (Natasha)
5	"...My friends used to talk bad about Mexico. Here in [____ School's suburb], the kids don't know anything about Mexico, they don't talk about it 'cause they've never been there." (Corina)
6	I was at my nana's house. My cousin was riding her bike. These black people said to her, "You don't belong to me." She cried and told her mother. (Brenda)

Virginia, a Latina, recalled overhearing adults using weakly disguised racial remarks and derogatory ethnic slurs:

...[T]here was always discrimination in my [previous] neighborhood. Not to us because we didn't play outside. There were colored people upstairs and there were White people downstairs. Colored people's kids were downstairs playing and the White adults would say, "We're selling 'chocolates'." Adults would tell their kids not to play.

The physical geographic distance used in retelling this incident seemed to reassure her that discrimination although part of adult discourse was not directed at "us." Corina, a Latina, contrasted her prior neighborhood of newly arrived Latin American immigrants to her current middle-class suburb, "...My friends in [previous neighborhood] used to talk bad about Mexico. Here in [her current suburb] ... they don't talk about [Mexico] 'cause they've never been there." Corina considered the relatively infrequent movement back and forth across the California-Mexico border as a factor in keeping her peers from forming derogatory opinions.

Natasha, a Latina, adamantly stated, "[Discrimination] doesn't happen here" yet a short while later remarked, "I know [California] Governor Schwarzenegger doesn't like Mexicans. He wants to send them back." Natasha held paradoxical beliefs about the existence of discrimination and tenuous residency for immigrants. In her own youthful understanding, political leaders wielded power to transport people back across the border.

While the comments made during these individual conversations, reveal students' racial awareness, it does not explain what held students back from bringing up these examples during their whole class discussions. Dauite and Jones (2003) noted that not all young students were politicized when reading texts with ethnic and racial discrimination.

Students may have been avoiding discussions that would trigger anxieties about what it means to be a person of color in this country if revealing differences means exclusion (Joppke, 1999). This alternative explanation resonates with López and Stanton-Salazar's (2001) study with second-generation Mexican American adolescents who, although acknowledging discrimination, elected to "downplay their personal vulnerability" (p. 75-76). Also, the students' disinclination to connect to discrimination issues may have been shadowed by a negative societal sentiment towards Mexican immigration. These multi-generational children had parents and grandparents who had lived through a series of anti-immigrant and anti-bilingual legislation in the 1990s that all but outlawed bilingual education. As Halcón has noted, the negative societal sentiment of the media filters into the collective consciousness of individuals (2001). For these fifth-graders, personal stories had the potential to be personally humiliating rather than educational illuminating.

Understanding Discrimination through Popular Culture

Some students gleaned knowledge about racial and ethnic discrimination from popular culture Brenda recalled portrayals of inter-group tensions in the Walt Disney movie *Remember the Titans* (2000) about forced high school integration. Virginia, a Latina, recounted an episode of the teen television show *That's So Raven*, when a black character was denied an opportunity

to apply for a job. Michael recalled the movie *Mississippi Burning* with racial tensions. The contemporary Disney animated film, *Madagascar* reminded Kenny, a Latino, how newcomers to a country struggle for acceptance. These repeated media exposures and personal experiences shaped children's notions of how the social world operates (Cortes, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004) and draw attention to the need for educators to be aware of students' multiple and out-of-school knowledge sources and the discomfiting depiction that discrimination can be neatly contained and resolved within the time-frame of a feature film or television show.

Promulgating the American Creed

During the classroom's language arts and social studies' reading, students empathized with the historically negative treatment of African Americans, injustice towards Native Americans, and atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust. During a read aloud of a biography of the African American, Matthew Henson in *Arctic Explorer* (Ferris, 1989), students discussed how although Henson had proved to be an indispensable member of Admiral Robert Peary's team, his status upon returning home was contextually dependent:

Mr. Harris: *[Matthew Henson's] doing all these things for Mr. Peary but when he returned to the United States, he is just a Black man.*

Geraldo: *Maybe he should have stayed there [exploring Greenland].*

In one history lesson, the teacher purposely problematized the lack of an explanatory text for loss of Native American land. Students keyed into the injustice with indignation:

Teacher: (Reading from school text) *"After the American Revolution, the United States claimed all land from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. This land had been inhabited for generations by Native Americans. It included an area called the Northwest Territory."*

Teacher: (interrupts) *There's something that happened there.*

Jessica: *They forgot to say that the people who came stole the land.*

Ray: *They kicked them off.*

It was not surprising that these students inculcated in the American creed of equity and justice would be empathetic to the unwarranted plights of others. Students empathized with unfair treatment; however, pressed for time the lesson moved on without further elaboration. In studying elementary students' responses to texts dealing with racial and ethnic discrimination, critical race theorists Dauite and Jones (2003) assert that empathy is a typical American value.

Shain contends that ethnic diaspora groups with unwavering convictions in American creed, that is, beliefs and values serve a vital role as a "moral compass" (1999) in nurturing, and promoting the American value of justice. Pluralistic views, espoused through multicultural pedagogy, portray an American society eager to accept the cultural, intellectual, and artistic

contributions from varied groups (Banks, 2004). Such an optimistic rhetoric of American values may have unintentionally made it difficult for these fifth-graders from upwardly mobile families to conceive of ongoing discriminatory practices in this country.

Conclusion

Children are active constructors of their world and navigators of their current experiences. For these Latino children, their negotiations and understandings are nuanced as first, second, and third generational immigrant status. These students wove in views and beliefs stemming from their modern world interests, concerns, and their social adaptation process. They were developing perceptions of discrimination and ways of knowing are shaped by their school texts and out-of-school experiences from their neighborhoods and media exposure. Popular culture and political currents influenced them. While some chose to keep personal experiences at bay, they were collectively indignant over injustice and unfairness towards others. Such awareness and expressed sensitivity towards others' plights can be transformed in developing student agency for bringing about social change.

Educators support children in making sense of their world through engagement with quality literature selections and historical accounts. Children's perceptions and misunderstandings (i.e., Martin Luther King ended discrimination) provide insight for an educator's next steps. Based on the guiding feedback from children, teachers can provide opportunities for quality discussions to tease out misunderstandings and refine critical thinking. Educators can link history to the present and lead individuals to compassionate, tolerant, and viable social insights.

Scholarly Significance

Banks (2004) suggests that educators must start early to help students "acquire the attitudes needed to survive in a multicultural and diverse world" (2004, p. 23; c.f. NAME, 2003). Understanding the complexity of responses that students may have to multicultural education can lead educators to developing methods and supports in guiding students' deep awareness of historical, social, political, and institutional power and pressures and equip them with necessary tools to transform society.

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“These Are Our Babies:” University Student Tutors, Urban Learners, Public School and University Staff Crafting Community through Service Learning

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Abstract

For nine semesters approximately 100 third through fifth graders have come by bus from their urban impact schools (Anyon, 2005) only a few city blocks away, to the campus of an historic Black university for tutoring. Pairs of university student tutors—typically freshmen, sophomores and juniors from multiple disciplines across campus—accept responsibility for groups of four to six children for two hours, two days a week. Service learning and social justice pedagogy (Chapman & Hobbel, 2010) ground their interactions. Findings to date indicate that the project supports public school efforts to reach and maintain Annual Yearly Progress, scaffolds child and tutor development toward critical literacy (Freire, 2004) and civic action, nurtures tutor dispositions for future civic engagement and especially teaching in hard-to-staff urban schools, and promotes collaboration and a redistribution power across members of the learning community that has emerged.

Keywords: Social justice pedagogy; service learning; critical literacy

Introduction

Every term since spring 2007, third through fifth graders gather with their tutors for two hours twice a week after school in the Student Union Exhibition Hall on the campus of North Carolina A&T University. A teacher from each of their schools, six to eight experienced undergraduate site directors and student research assistants, and university faculty volunteers coach the 12-20 tutoring groups. Located within a student-owned and highly visible space on the campus of an historic Black university (HBCU), the program draws supporters like bees to honey.

Student Union staff, student passers-by, and others notice the program and become participants, and the program has been woven into the fabric of university life. The young men’s chorus Trick-or-Treated at Halloween, and came again to sing holiday carols. ROTC soldiers in uniforms and boots ducked their heads in to watch the children solving math problems with their bodies on a 10 X 60 foot runway, and signed up to tutor on the spot. During Greek Pledge Week, tutors took the children outside to observe the pageantry. At an end of the year celebration, Student Union housekeeping staff insisted on providing a giant sheet cake to celebrate the

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children's accomplishments. When a staff member was injured, one child wrote on his hand-made get well card, "You are like a dad to me." One tutor who plays classical violin took five minutes at the end one day to play for the children, a performance that led to a physics discussion when a child asked why the musician's fingers moved on the strings. Student Union staff members explain the program's nesting phenomenon best: "These are our babies."

One focus of the program is meeting children's needs, but equally important is providing experiences that foster the development of "generative teaching" ability in university tutors. Arneha Ball (2009) defines generative teaching as the

. . . ability to continually add to [one's] understanding by connecting . . . personal and professional knowledge with the knowledge that [teachers] gain from their students to produce . . . knowledge that is useful . . . in pedagogical problem solving (p. 47).

Ball (2009) argues that specific forms of "efficacy, agency and advocacy" for urban learners are required of teachers who elect to remain in urban schools. (cf. NEA Reviews of Research on Best Practices in Education, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Michie, 2005; Berry & Hirsch, 2005; Brown, 2002; Delpit & Dowdy, 2002).

From its inception through spring 2009 the program, known by the acronym SMART (Service, Mentoring, Achievement, Responsibility, Teamwork), was funded by a Learn and Serve America grant. In August 2009 university students and faculty met with the principal of the elementary school that had been a SMART partner for the program's entire history, to explore strategies for sustaining the project. The infrastructure provided by the Learn and Serve funds included a culturally congruent library (cf. Ladson-Billings, 2004; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004) of children's book sets that reinforce state objectives for third through fifth grade math, science, and social studies, and support service learning (cf. Westheimer, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004); a handbook for tutors; and both consumable (markers, pencils, paper) and non-consumable materials (tabletop easels, rolling book carts, scissors). Of greater value, however, was the learning community that had emerged from those years of collaboration across university and public school partners and children. As Hargreaves and Fink (2006) argue, "Sustainability is ultimately and inextricably about social justice" (p. 145).

A former tutor contacted the university's junior class to fund the children's snack, and the principal directed some school improvement funds to pay student site directors to run SMART at her school until we located funding to return the children to the program's nesting place on campus. University students and faculty joined with public school partners in grant-writing to re-fund the project at its original level, and have extended services to the children's feeder middle school through partnering with a campus student group, Young Men on the Move, that provides university mentors for all middle grade SMART children. We have hopes of developing a pipeline for urban children from third grade through high school, and providing university scholarships for SMART youth. We also hope to support graduating teachers who elect to teach in local urban schools.

Since spring 2009 through grants and other collaborative endeavors – school principals who value the program find ways to fund transportation to campus, university Black Greek

organizations fund the snack for the children – SMART has evolved into a collaboratively sustainable community that offers a safe space (Antrop-Gonzalez, 2003) where fictive kin (Chatters, Taylor & Jayakody, 1994) gather to co-construct transformative practice.

Conceptual Framework

To ground this work we draw on a conception of learning as taking place within “situated communities of practice” (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991), in our case held together by bonds of affection (Baker, 1999). Learning to teach in an urban setting similarly involves membership within a community. Coursework and student teaching, however, often fail to provide the grounding needed to sustain an urban teacher. Novices place their faith in the teaching practices they experienced as learners in school, and in what they see in practice in their placement classrooms, above what they are taught in university coursework (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990; Borko & Putnam, 1996; Brown, 1992; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Hunter-Quartz & The TEP Research Group, 2003; Thompson, 1992; Wallace, 2005; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996). Novices need an extensive series of *connected and connecting experiences* with urban learners, teachers, schools and communities (Hunter Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003). Studies of relationships among children and their teachers, the implications of these relationships for teaching and learning, and how these relationships are affected by teacher dispositions (Banks, 1981; Brown, 2002; Delpit, 1988; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Murrell, 2002; Oakes, 1985) point to a need for teachers who view urban learners as children *of promise* (Boykin, 2000), who develop the cultural competencies needed for work in diverse classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2001), and who view themselves as efficacious.

The instructional sequence employed in SMART scaffolds tutors, most of whom have not yet taken teaching methods courses, in guiding children’s development. Based on the research on best practices (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005), the literacy instructional sequence employs four components adapted from Reading Recovery (Clay, 1991):

Read alouds in which tutors model strategies that good readers use to get meaning from text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Miller, 2002; Parkes, 2000).

Word study based on screening and individualized to teach the specific word patterns children need at a given time in their learning careers (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton & Johnston, 2007).

Guided reading instruction to teach comprehension strategies (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Miller, 2002) while immersing children in affirming literature.

Writing workshop, to support children in crafting meanings on paper for others to read (Atwell, 2007; Calkins, 2006; Christensen, 2000; Raison & Rivalland, 1994).

In 2009 at the request of one partner school, Pathematics (Driver, 2009), which anchors children’s mathematical problem-solving in physical activity on a 10 x 60 foot runway, was added to the program, and SMART became SMART PATH. Runways are painted on school playgrounds, and two portable roll-out models can be used indoors. A similar instructional sequence was devised for Pathematics:

Math read alouds employing the finest in children’s literature to introduce a math skill or concept.

Math concept link, in which tutors use manipulatives to draw out children’s prior knowledge regarding the day’s learning objective. Then tutors make adjustments prior to taking the children to the Runway.

Runway time, during which the 10 x 60’ Runway serves as a giant game board for activities that engage children in concrete problem-solving.

Math on paper, in which tutors guide children in translating concrete understandings developed on the Runway into abstract representations that look more like the math activities in school contexts.

Childrens’ service learning projects integrate literacy and math. Children need to make personal connections to concepts and information, to organize new knowledge to facilitate retrieval and application, and to metacognitively reflect upon, own and control their learning (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000). Instruction embedded in service gives children chances to engage in authentic, discipline-based work (for example, opportunities to learn how authors compose); to help learners “uncover” difficult aspects of a topic or concept; and to engage learners affectively – to engage the heart as well as the mind -- in order to foster cognition (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Assessment strategies that support tutors in aligning learning challenges within a group’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and the development of relationships within groups and across diverse participants in the HBCU/public school nexus, provide a culture-centered safe space (Chapman, 2007) to ground identity development and foster transformative practice. Tutors strive to craft learning experiences that are educative, participatory, socially just and caring (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2002).

In this context tutors come to know children who’ve been labeled “at risk” in very different ways. Such experiences foster critical literacy—the ability to “read the world” as well as “the word” (Freire, 2004; McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004) – and a sense of self-efficacy in taking action. Service learning re-positions both tutors and urban learners as “experts” to positively affect their levels of engagement, self-confidence and self-esteem (Berman, 1997; Berman & LaFarge, 1993; Grant & Gillette, 2006; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Wade, 1997). The academic learning (Astin et al., 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Juhn et al., 1999; Strage, 2000; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000), leadership skills (Astin et al., 1999; Driscoll et al., 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Juhn et al., 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000), and mental health and well-being (Astin et al., 1999; Boykin, 2000; Driscoll et al., 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000) of children and tutors is supported through involvement in inquiry that provides service to others. Service projects focus on a variety of efforts such as getting out the vote for the 2008 presidential election, authoring books to help elementary classmates deal with stress, celebrating unsung local heroes, and becoming English language penpals for fellow schoolchildren in Malawian classrooms of 100 or more who struggle to pass their own sets of high stakes tests. Working side-by-side, urban children, their tutors, and school and university staff form bonds of affection (Noddings, 1992) instructive to all participants: children form positive identifications with their tutors that facilitate learning; tutors engage the potential of urban children, and of their own efficacy in working with them; public school and university staff coalesce in the scholarship of engagement.

Documenting Project Outcomes

We employ case study (McCall & Wittner, 1990; Mitchell, 1983) and participatory action research methods (Borkman & Schubert, 1994; McIntyre & Lykes, 2004; McTaggart, 1991; Wadsworth, 1998; Whyte, 1991) to collect data on each cohort of tutors, children and adults. Layered evidence forms “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the shaping of attitudes, actions and knowledge bases in all populations. Photo-ethnography; video-ethnography; and conventional ethnographic techniques including the use of field notes (Gergen, 1988; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), pre- and post- surveys, interviews (Briggs, 1986), and “power sensitive conversations” (Bhavnani, 1993; Haraway, 1988), along with other artifacts, and forms of institutional documentation, provide data for qualitative analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Participating elementary school populations are characterized as low income, approximately 88-90% free lunch, and scoring (on entrance to the program) at about the 25th percentile on state standards tests in reading or math. In 2008 partner schools performed at the 30.9th percentile on state tests, with 27.8% scoring on grade level. Elementary, middle and high school students from this sector who were retained in grade or dropped out totaled 1,764 for that year. Within the census tracts that feed into these schools, 91% to 97.1% of the population is Black and medically underserved. Based on data from 1990 and 2000, 33% live below the poverty line, with a nine percent decline across those years (CIGNA, 2005; Health Resources & Services Administration, 2009; Health Status of Guilford County Map DataBook, 2008).

University tutors identify their families as of low socioeconomic status (below \$20,000 annual income), and a significant number self-identify as first-time college attenders. Tutors report high levels of experience with diversity as children and in school, prior to coming to the university. They complete the *Multicultural Efficacy Scale* (2005), and the *Annual Survey of Teacher Novices* (Hunter Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003) pre- and post- each semester, participate in focus group exit interviews, and provide critical shaping feedback to each new iteration of the program. Experienced tutors returning semester after semester emerge as leaders who take on responsibility for administering the program and securing its future.

Child literacy evaluation measures include one formal inventory, and tools for authentic assessment of performance. The Elementary Spelling Inventory (Bear et al., 2007) provides for targeted word study. Tutors learn to notice reading performance that indicates frustration (more than 90% words missed), and administer running records (Fountas & Pinnell, 2000) to check child reading levels. The Writing Developmental Continuum (Raison & Rivalland, 1994) is used to evaluate child writing samples and select teaching objectives. “Books I’ve Read” lists in the children’s portfolios document reading levels, and reading and writing surveys are completed by them at the beginning and end of each term. Child portfolio self-evaluation, goal-setting and planning for the next term take place at the end of each semester. Achievement data from the children’s schools include state test scores, school-based benchmark scores, and report card grades.

Outcomes to Date

With tutoring taking place in the Student Union, volunteers are regularly attracted, and the number grows over time. Tutors are asked to give to 30 hours per term, but most give 45 or more. Tutors who initially participate for credit tend to return, selecting the program among multiple options for field placements. Tutors describe a gradual process of committing first to the children, and then to themselves as future teachers:

I might party the night before a test, but I would never party the night before tutoring. The kids need us to be ready (Group interview mid-semester).

I don't party the night before my tests anymore. Nothing is going to get between me and teaching career (Group interview end-of-term).

Pre- and post-semester *Multicultural Efficacy Scales* further indicate shifts in attitudes (see table 1). Pre- and post- *Annual Surveys of Teacher Novices* also note a shift in dispositions (see table 2).

Table 1

Pre- and Post-Semester Results from the Multicultural Efficacy Scales: Percent that Strongly Agree

Item	Pre	Post
Teachers should adapt lesson plans to reflect the different cultures represented in the classroom.	58%	82%
Teachers should provide opportunities for children to share cultural differences in foods, dress, family life and beliefs.	64%	89%
Curricula and textbooks should include the contributions of most, if not all, cultural groups in our society.	48%	83%
I can adapt instructional methods to meet the needs of learners from diverse groups.”	23%	68%

Pre- and Post-Semester Results from the Annual Survey of Teacher Novices: Percent that Strongly Agree

Item	Pre	Post
I want to teach so that I can help to change the world and further social justice.	32%	78%
I have the skills and dispositions to be a good teacher.	37%	76%
I am prepared to design appropriate, challenging lesson plans.	18%	68%
I am confident in my ability to enact socially just practices in the classroom.	22%	89%

Tutor understandings also emerge in coursework, as one pair wrote:

Content alone is not enough Good educators should practice things like advocacy, service-learning, student empowerment, and integrity . . . Of these four,

the service learning aspect has probably been the most misunderstood. When we were in high school . . . a lot of the work we did was simply volunteer work, doing good deeds or helping out around the school . . . we didn't learn anything from the service that we didn't already know. The penpal project really revolutionized our idea of service learning because it was exactly what it was supposed to be: Service LEARNING. The students performed an act of service by writing letters to children in Africa but also learned about Africa and enhanced their writing skills in the process.

Another also reflected on his understanding of the negotiated nature of teaching and learning:

You learn to think on your feet, respond in the moment when you see what the kids need. Teaching is not, as I used to think, a yes-no right answer phenomenon, that it was up to the child and if he didn't learn he'd suffer the consequences. It takes time to know the kids, you have to learn them, they have to learn you, and then you figure out your way together.

Data from child portfolios document growth in word knowledge, reading levels and writing. Average year growth in word knowledge is one level (as measured by the Elementary Spelling Inventory across a continuum of 4 levels from basic sound-letter relationships to Greek and Latin roots), in reading 1.5 levels (one and one-half years), and in writing one level (as measured by the Writing Developmental Continuum across 6 levels from beginner to advanced).

After time in the program children begin to recognize authors of informational texts and historical fiction, and request books by those they know. A wave effect in books needed to accommodate the groups occurred, as well. In the first year half the groups needed books on levels 1-2. After a year more books on third grade level were needed, and in year three more than half of the groups read on levels 4 and 5. During the 2010-2011 year, two groups read all year on sixth grade level. The children tell family members and friends about their experiences at the university, and author texts about themselves as college attenders and graduates. The principal at one school characterizes SMART PATH as a major behavior incentive. For children having problems with self-control at school, a reminder about the need to trustworthy when they leave for campus is often sufficient to encourage needed changes.

To date all school partners have achieved Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) at the end of their first year. When the state test was re-normed, one school fell back that year, but with careful calibration of tutoring activities, regained AYP status the year after.

Discussion

Children in urban impact schools move often, with up to one third of the population new each year in the schools participating in this program. Teachers leave, too, because they lack the preparation to sustain them in urban schools (Haberman & Rickards, 1990; Ingersoll 2001). Urban children possess rich funds of knowledge (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) but these can lack a match to school knowledge and ways with words (Heath, 1983). However, studies have shown that Athabaskan children's learning increased when their schools hired teacher aides from the children's communities as cultural interpreters (Ferdman, Weber & Ramirez, 1994).

Research further indicates that paraprofessionals with experience in urban schools, and teachers of color, are more likely to remain (Clewell & Villegas, 2001). Our research supports similar findings: tutored children appear to learn “school stuff” efficiently when they have regular opportunities to engage in meaningful projects with tutors *who look like them*. Tutors whose families are not affluent appear to develop empathy, understanding and belief in the potential of urban children when they have extended time to work with them in a setting in which they have a high level of autonomy, and support for affirming teaching practices.

Implications

Our public school partners view SMART PATH as part of their school improvement plan. Our side-by-side efforts have melded us into an extended family of mutual support. When a bus driver forgot to return to take the tutored children home, tutors and university faculty remained onsite until every child was delivered into family hands. Tutors staffed school phones, coaching children’s recall of phone numbers, while the principal and school staff drove others home. Tutors entertained children waiting for rides, or those whose lower lip quivered because they could not remember their phone number, or give directions on how to get home. Elementary teachers embraced the tutees’ Malawi penpal project and suggested a sister school relationship. Student Union staff insisted on linen tablecloths for the program’s spring “graduation,” and paid for the cake. Such a weaving of relationships within and across educational settings “increase[s] professional interaction and learning across schools, and for those who participate . . . , they generate excitement about teaching and learning” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 175).

As state-wide pressure builds to graduate more teachers, university data from previous years indicates that nearly 50% of students who enter as education majors fail to reach graduation and certification, and the future of the HBCU, itself, is in question (Nealy, 2009). While it is too soon to make definitive claims, it appears that early, freshman year participation in SMART PATH supports tutors in making the discoveries that retain urban teachers: they learn to build on the strengths of urban communities, see themselves as change agents, and identify with other urban teachers as members of a profession (Hunter Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003).

Conclusion

Research of this nature informs efforts to provide support for children in urban schools, and for the preparation of teachers who will choose to teach and stay in those schools. It is critical to document those strategies that increase the awareness, sensitivity, and leadership capabilities of tomorrow’s teachers so that they can advocate for urban learners and for methods that include service learning as an empowering pedagogy of hope. Our research holds promise to inform the growing knowledge base on urban education, teacher preparation and development, and literacy education. Outcomes like ours could include:

- Hands on experience for early program pre-service teachers, rather than just observing in classrooms that may or may not model best practices.
- Early program experience with service learning.
- Affective bonding between university students and urban learners that leads to advocacy for these children.

- Establishment of a community of learners among all program partners.
- Development of a sense of self-efficacy in teaching urban learners: tutors have been witness to success.
- University students who engage in critical discourse about urban learners and social justice.
- Leader development for university students.
- Pre-service teachers developing realistic goals for their learning in methods courses: they know what they want to learn.
- Likelihood of higher rates of retention in teacher education programs like ours, to graduation and certification.
- Higher rates of teacher retention in urban schools through the development of a cadre of new teachers armed with the skills, dispositions and self-efficacy to succeed and stay.

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SECTION ON SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

THE PRINCIPAL'S ACADEMY: A COLLABORATIVE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY INITIATIVE ON CONGRUENCE OF PRINCIPAL TRAINING TO URBAN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

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Abstract

Purposively selected urban California superintendents and assistant superintendents participated in surveys and interviews which examined their views about the impact California university Tier I school leadership preparation programs have on overall preparedness for the position, effectiveness of job performance, longevity, transference of skills gained to professional staff development within the school site, and student achievement within their districts. Superintendents reported that Tier I candidates are academically well prepared for overall school leadership and candidates emerge with strong instructional leadership and management skills. It was recommended by superintendents that The Principal's Academy teach aspiring administrators to be courageous, relational, and know self, to optimally meet the demands of urban school administration. Superintendents recommended field experience enhancement through collaboratively designed internships with real data and prescribed site-based experiences.

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Keyword: The Principal’s Academy—A multi-university overview of private, CSU, and UC school leadership preparation programs, which graduate current and future educational administrators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required of effective school leaders in California.

Introduction

This study addresses California urban school district administrators’ perceptions of university training programs for educational leaders. Research and literature examining administrative education programs historically express the tension between academic coursework in the universities and the practical experiences of on-the-job training. Thus, this study raised the question “How well are universities preparing the leaders of our schools?” and asked district urban school superintendents and assistant superintendents to respond.

Legislation at the national and state levels calls for highly qualified principals in all schools (CDE, 2001; The No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). Research supports this call with studies arguing for the critical need for effective site-based *leaders* in our schools (Darling-Hammond & Orphanos, 2007; Fullan 2006; Goodlad, 1999; Neuhaus, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2007; Nelson, 1989). “Schools can’t get better without better principals, and you can’t put a reform into place if the principal doesn’t promote it. Principals need to first be educators rather than business managers and administrators” (Grubb, 2000, as cited by Maclay, 2000, p. 2).

Across the United States, 31% of the U.S. student population attends schools in only 1.5% of the school districts (Ladd, 2007). These school districts may be described as highly populated, densely concentrated urban school districts. California corners a large share of the national concentration of students in urban school settings. Los Angeles County in Southern California is home to one-third the population of the state. This county includes Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) that commands the position as the second largest school district in the nation, enrolling 727,000 students, and Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), enrolling 98,000 students. Orange County, directly south of Los Angeles County, also contains several large urban school districts. Other large urban areas in California include San Francisco, San Diego, Fresno, and San Bernardino.

Within those districts designated as urban, certain challenges require unique knowledge and skills of a new site administrator. These challenges include higher than average proportions of students in poverty, students whose parents have acquired limited formal education, immigrants and other students with limited English skills, students from unstable or changing family structures, higher than the national average rate of student mobility, shortage of qualified teachers, more teachers with emergency credentials, teachers required to teach outside of their fields of expertise, aging facilities, and lower than state average of academic achievement (Weiss, 2004).

With such challenges facing entering principals, faculty of principal training programs across the state of California joined together for this research study. Their purpose was to examine urban district administrators’ perceptions of their product – namely Tier I program graduates. California requires that persons desiring to be certified as a principal enter a Tier I program. This program certifies that a graduate may apply for entering administrative positions,

such as Assistant Principal. This faculty asked: How well *are* California's university principal preparation programs producing the leading educators for the challenges of our urban districts? And what do top level district administrators perceive that faculty do or do not provide so that their future school leaders are graduating with the foundational mindset required to be successful in urban settings?

Supporting Literature

The extent to which principals exhibit leadership responsibilities correlates significantly to student academic achievement (Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005). Categorized into 21 identifiable behaviors, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty defined these responsibilities as: affirmation; change agent; contingent rewards; communication; culture; discipline; flexibility; focus; ideals/beliefs; input; intellectual stimulation; involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; monitoring and evaluating; optimizer; order; outreach; relationships; resources; situational awareness; and visibility. In their work, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty likened these responsibilities, as they related to accountability, to "transactional leadership" by Collins (2001) in his research findings on businesses that have gone from "good to great." If the enemy of greatness is a simple and formidable satisfaction with just being good at what we do (Collins, 2001), how good is good enough, when we examine our schools through the lens of accountability, and particularly, our principals who lead them?

In a summary of research on leadership accountability, Lashway (2001) frames the issue as, "For many, 'accountability' just means delivering results" (p.2). He adds, "In this era of standards, accountability should encompass consequences, both positive and negative, that are based on results" (as cited in Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005, p. 44). Can this delivery of results be aligned to effective traits exhibited by today's school leaders?

The study reported here examined urban executive school leaders' views about the effects of The Principal's Academy on improving the quality of education at the school level within their districts. The research team concentrated specifically on twelve of California's largest districts with 50,000 students or more enrolled, to address the unique challenges these districts face as they seek to positively impact and benefit learning for all children within their boundaries. In contrast to Hess & Kelly (2007), who examined the content of instruction through a stratified sample of the nation's principal-preparation programs, including the programs training the most candidates, the programs regarded as the most prestigious and more typical programs, and who found that just 2% of course weeks across 56 principal preparation programs addressed accountability, we focused our investigation on California as we sought to compare the findings within the literature, to the perceptions of inner city P-12 superintendents and assistant superintendents in twelve greater metropolitan school districts across the state.

Method

Participants and Settings

Participants in this study consisted of two purposively selected groups: 1) The research team of fifteen faculty participants, program directors, and/or department chairs across nine

public and private university administrative credential programs; and 2) twelve, P-12 urban California superintendents, and/or assistant superintendents, of public instruction who lead most of California's largest urban districts. "Purposive sampling is most often used in qualitative research to select individuals or behaviors that will better inform the researcher regarding the current focus of the investigation" (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 172). Faculty participants examined program data reported within their own respective institutional self-studies, reports prepared for accreditation purposes, and data collected within research studies conducted by faculty members within their institution's school leadership programs.

Faculty participants were then teamed into selected areas of interest for completion of tasks as outlined in the research project parameters. A task team for the design of an online questionnaire created and delivered an initial web-based questionnaire to superintendents of twelve urban California districts to sample their views regarding The Principal's Academy as aligned to the research questions. The survey instrument was designed to include categories aligned to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs).

Data from the online questionnaires were categorized into themes and coded to generate the creation of an interview protocol. Task team members were subsequently invited to conduct in-district interviews with superintendents, and/or their designees, of the twelve districts which were selected as the largest urban districts in California. The twelve purposively selected districts represent 100% of such districts in California, with over 50,000 enrolled average daily attendance (ADA), comprising 25% of the 6,252,031 total enrolled students in the state.

Urban superintendent and/or executive cabinet member views were analyzed for the impact university principal preparation programs have on overall preparedness for the position, effectiveness of job performance, longevity, transference of skills gained to professional staff development within the school site, and student achievement within their districts. Demographic information for the twelve participating districts represents the considerable variability of characteristics among and between California's largest urban school districts as shown in Table 1.

Procedures

A cover letter, the interview protocol, and a sample of the online survey instrument including the hyperlink address, were mailed to each respondent during the month of October 2008. The cover letter indicated that a faculty team across nine universities were conducting a survey to gather information on their views about the identified effects California university Tier I school leadership preparation programs have on overall preparedness for the position, effectiveness of job performance, longevity, transference of skills gained to professional staff development within the school site, and student achievement within their districts. Although a small number of principals from each district may not have attended a Tier I preparation program, the research team determined it would be impossible for the superintendent to know which principals had not attended such a program. A follow-up phone call to each superintendent was made to confirm their participation in the study. One-hundred percent of the twelve urban superintendents and/or their designees agreed to participate.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Position		
Superintendent	5	42
Assistant Superintendent	7	58
Gender		
Male	5	42
Female	7	58
Length of Service in Executive Leadership Position		
3-5 years	3	25
6-9 years	5	42
10-15 years	3	25
20+ years	1	8
Location		
Northern California	1	8
Central California	3	25
Southern California	8	68
Size of District (by student enrollment)		
50,000	6	50
50,000-75,000	3	25
75,000-100,000	1	8
100,000-500,000	1	8
500,000 or higher	1	8

Data Sources and Analyses

This study was conducted using a qualitative method approach. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research “implies a direct concern with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’ ” (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p.7).

The primary data analyzed for this study were: 1) program data reported within nine California university principal leadership program self-studies, institutional reports prepared for accreditation purposes, and data collected within research studies conducted by faculty members within each institution’s school leadership programs; 2) an online questionnaire, and 3) responses to open-ended, in-district interviews with superintendents of twelve large, urban California school districts.

Inductive analysis was utilized to examine participants’ responses to the interviews. Audiotapes were transcribed verbatim and reviewed several times to ensure completeness of data. Although content was analyzed qualitatively for themes and recurring patterns of meaning, content analysis was also used as a “quantitatively oriented technique by which standard

measurements are applied to metrically define units and these are used to characterize and compare documents” (Manning & Cullum-Swan 1994, p. 464). The units of measurement in this form of content analysis centered on communication, especially the frequency and variety of messages. In its adoption for use in this qualitative study, the communication of meaning was the focus. Analysis was inductive, although categories and variables initially guided the study, “Others are allowed and expected to emerge throughout the study” (Altheide, 1987, p. 68). The process involved the simultaneous coding of raw data and the construction of categories that captured relevant characteristics of the document’s content. As categories emerged they were coded through the constant comparative method of data analysis which captured recurring patterns that cut across “the preponderance” of data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 139). The coding and labeling of text according to content provided a means for theory building (Richards & Richards, 1994). This was repeated using the grounded theory approach until saturation was reached (Strauss & Corbin 1990). This method of analysis involved the identification of interpretive themes and categories that emerged from the data (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). The inductive analysis process began with the research team’s thorough reading of each interview transcript to gain a sense of the range of the responses and identify any reoccurring themes. Tentative themes were then refined after the research team collaboratively reread, reflected on, and discussed each of the participants’ responses. Validity and reliability was achieved through participation of at least two or more other members of the research team in the coding process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

This study was collaboratively undertaken across nine California State University, University of California, and private university Tier I programs. It was the desire of these fifteen faculty members, to better understand the congruence of what we say we do in producing the school leaders who administer our urban schools in California, to the views of twelve urban superintendents and/or their designees in California’s largest metropolitan districts.

Results

While many of the study respondents provided similar responses, this section provides some of the more specific responses to the research protocol. How prepared are the graduates of California’s private, State University, and University of California’s school leadership preparation programs with regard to: overall preparedness for the position; effectiveness of job performance; longevity; transference of knowledge and skills to school leadership; dispositions for school leadership; providing professional staff development within the school site; increasing student achievement within your district?

Superintendents and assistant superintendents reported five general areas of congruence between their current urban school leadership needs and the preparation of Tier I candidates in California. They included: (a) Tier I candidates are academically well prepared for overall school leadership, (b) The broad strokes of the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs) are being addressed, (c) Candidates emerge with strong instructional leadership skills, (d) Candidates are gaining good management skills, (e) Good basic policy procedures and detail protocols are being learned. Five identified missing elements reported by urban superintendents and/or their executive cabinet members for overall preparedness for the position of school leadership. They were: (a) Not necessarily prepared for urban settings, (b) “Thinking” about systems, (c) Know theory, but don’t understand application to systems, (d)

Lack of understanding of leadership influence, (e) Learned experiences are key before they actually enter the job. One superintendent noted:

New leaders come to us prepared with the necessary knowledge, but need to be immersed in the content of being an instructional leader. Most of our leaders were teacher leaders so they have experience working as leaders at their sites. It is critical that they have on-the-job leadership experiences not just theoretical knowledge.

Within effectiveness of job performance, superintendents and assistant superintendents reported quality school leadership is being taught in the university systems, and that effective leadership is about making people feel good about what they do everyday. It was noted from an HR standpoint, they need two basic understandings: the importance of staffing, and operating well within the collective bargaining unit agreement. One urban assistant superintendent of human resources reported:

From an HR point of view, what we see our new administrators need are two things: getting them to realize how important staffing is, and dealing with the contract. Not looking at the Collective Bargaining contract as a barrier but from the standpoint of how am I going to operate within that agreement to get done what I need to get done?

Superintendents and assistant superintendents reported that longevity has less to do with university preparation than it does with personality and/or traits of personal and professional character. “Longevity has to do with the calling to be both a teacher and a principal. Longevity is in response to that calling.” Participants noted that longevity also has to do with the school site. One respondent stated, “New principals who are in a challenging role, we predict, won’t last.” Another superintendent noted, “New principals can be overwhelmed by trying to perform in a role they don’t have control over. They romanticize the position. It’s not just about getting dressed up and attending a meeting or two.” Participants reported a clear theme: 1) that new principals remain longer in less challenging roles; and 2) longevity depends on how frustrating their particular leadership position is. “If they grow, they stay with you over time.” A missing element reported by urban superintendents and/or their executive cabinet members for longevity in school leadership was that they need mentors in the field.

For transference of knowledge and skills to school leadership, superintendents and assistant superintendents reported three areas of congruence between the preparation of Tier I candidates in California and their current urban school leadership needs. They included: (a) Knowledgeable about what to do, not always how to do it, (b) On-site experience is helpful for a deeper understanding of school leadership, (c) There is not an exact fit for all districts as they have varying needs. Three identified missing elements were noted: (a) Add a collaborative piece to the Tier I programs, (b) Need ability to assess culture and climate and know the difference, (c) Courses are broad and spend time on foundational content, when real life scenarios are needed. For example, one respondent noted:

It’s one thing to understand how school finance is done, but quite another to understand how to work within different budgets to make budget decisions that

affect site councils and leadership teams. It's one thing to understand how school finance is done from the state... it's another thing to make decisions for which your site councils and your leadership teams are impacted.

Addressing professional staff development within the school site, superintendents and assistant superintendents reported that although candidates emerge from California's Tier I programs prepared *overall* for school leadership, they are not necessarily prepared to tackle professional growth for their staff. One respondent noted, "*Professional staff development is very specific to the district and/or school site and can't be taught at the university.*" Another participant stated, "*Principals must understand they have different positions that help them move and implement a district initiative that may not be the one the staff wants to follow.*" Additionally, "*Principals can't lead and influence if they don't understand their role as an instructional leader.*"

Two identified missing elements were reported as: (a) Not prepared with knowledge and practice of facilitation skills, (b) Need to know how to prioritize.

One respondent noted:

Our schools have leadership teams to plan and implement PD for sites. However, new leaders do not have the facilitation skills, nor understand the capability they have to influence the group. They don't have to mandate or be autocratic. They need to know how to work with the group. This is a skill to be developed over time and they don't come out of programs with this ready to go.

For increasing student achievement, superintendents and assistant superintendents reported in general that they get the data piece, but one size does not fit all. A respondent stated, "*One type of intervention is far from the truth, in that our higher achieving students aren't being serviced either.*" Another noted:

It takes time to focus on increasing instructional strategies to increase student achievement and this can't be done in a university program. They come out of the programs with really good knowledge about data, but not necessarily how to collaborate with their staff on next steps.

Two identified missing elements were reported as: (a) Need on-site, hands-on learning, (b) Interventions should be aligned to issues.

Discussion, Summary, and Conclusions

In this study, we examined the congruence of Tier I school leadership preparation programs in California to the perceptions of superintendents and their cabinet members in twelve of California's largest urban school districts. Each of these executives lead organizations ranging in enrollments from fifty thousand to over seven hundred thousand students. Relying on their school level leaders to succeed in every area of their duties and responsibilities to the community is foremost on these executives' agendas, particularly as schools and school systems are under increasing pressure to perform (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

The personal, individual calling of teachers, school counselors, psychologists, and other school personnel to enter university principal leadership programs provides the impetus for these emerging leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to step outside of their classrooms and offices to begin to learn how to lead their schools with the ‘mindset’ of a school leader. This mindset is germane to the foundation of the school leader in every aspect of their position, particularly for executive decision making, planning, data analysis, understanding the groups they lead, conflict management and resolution, the legal landscape within which they are required to operate, the policies and politics of California’s legislative branch as related to local educational agencies, and of particular importance, the design of substantive change strategies which increase and sustain achievement for all students through the effective supervision of curriculum and instruction within their schools.

From the collaborative partnerships between urban districts and their local university school leadership faculty, comes a twofold benefit for local communities: 1) the reciprocity of universities understanding and valuing the most up-to-date current and emerging urban school district leadership needs; and 2) the research-based design, delivery and supervision of sound, conceptually well framed programs that measure through student learning outcomes, the most recent knowledge, skills, *and* dispositions that frame the ‘mindset’ required to lead schools effectively.

What would a university P-12 school leadership preparation program encompass if it maximized and empowered all of the best practices educational leadership faculty members, program directors, and department chairpersons collectively and collaboratively designed across all three university systems in California? Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) note, “Specific behaviors and characteristics associated with being a responsible leader are: consciously challenging the status-quo; being willing to lead change initiatives with uncertain outcomes; systematically considering new and better ways of doing things; and consistently attempting to operate at the edge versus the center of the school’s competence” (p. 45). These knowledge sets, skills, and dispositions are precisely what superintendents of public instruction are looking for in their principals. Determining the congruence of The Principal’s Academy to the perceptions of these superintendents appreciably strengthens educational leadership preparation programs within California to ensure we are preparing school leaders for the challenges of their positions, particularly in urban settings.

There exists a preponderance of literature (Fullan, 2006; Goodlad, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2007; Elmore, 2004; Terry, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Orphanos, 2007), that defends the view that there are, in fact, several common and overlapping characteristics in successful and effective principals. At no time in recent memory has the need for effective and inspired leadership been more pressing than it is today. “With increasing needs in our society and in the workplace for knowledgeable, skilled, responsible citizens, the pressure on schools intensifies. The expectation that no child be left behind in a world and in an economy that will require everyone’s best, is not likely to subside” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 123).

How well *are* California’s university principal preparation programs producing leading educators for the challenges of our urban districts. Although candidate data collection instruments vary from one university program to the next, reflective discussions among the participating researchers regarding program candidate data indicate strong candidate similarities.

Candidates generally have strong academic backgrounds upon entering principal preparation programs, and candidates tend to improve their measured leadership dispositions from the beginning of the programs to completion. The researchers for this study agree that the data are generally representative of candidates in each of the universities participating in the research for this study.

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WHAT DID THE TEACHERS THINK? TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE USE OF VALUE-ADDED MODELING AS A TOOL FOR EVALUATING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

The policy discourse on improving student achievement has shifted from student outcomes to focusing on evaluating teacher effectiveness using standardized test scores. A major urban newspaper released a public database that ranked teachers' effectiveness using Value-Added Modeling. Teachers, whom are generally marginalized, were given the opportunity to respond to their rankings. This research examines a subset of those teachers' perceptions about the use of standardized test scores in determining teacher effectiveness. It is important for policy makers to hear from those whom are the implementation level of such major policy shifts in education reform.

Keywords: Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Response; Teacher Evaluation; Evaluation Methods; Value-Added Models; Accountability; Educational Policy; Elementary Education

Introduction

In August 2010, a major urban newspaper, the Los Angeles Times (*L.A. Times*), published a study on teacher effectiveness using a statistical method, Value-Added Modeling (Buddin, 2010). The results of the study were published in an online database, which showed individual rankings of teacher effectiveness, based on the teacher's students' progress on standardized test scores in English and math. The "value" a teacher adds or subtracts is based on the difference between a student's expected growth and actual performance on the tests. The database included about 6000 Los Angeles Unified School District teachers that taught at least 60 students in the third, fourth and fifth grades, during the 2003 to 2009 school years. The newspaper's statement on the purpose of publishing the information was "...it bears on the performance of public employees who provide an important service, and in the belief that parents and the public have a right to judge it for themselves" (Felch, et al., 2010).

The public release caused a stir, because, for the first time, the public was able to see quantifiable differences amongst teachers. In tandem with the release of rankings, the newspaper

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gave teachers the opportunity to respond to the rankings and use of test scores in evaluating teacher effectiveness. In doing so, the L.A. Times provided the public with a rare opportunity to hear from the teachers, whom often when decisions on educational policy are made, are left out of the conversation. This is powerful in the sense that by “searching the margins...one finds the great potential of people expressing counter narratives and alternative proposals for policy” (Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, p. 152). In the responses posted, teacher gave opinions, arguments, and suggestions about the use of Value-added Modeling. The purpose of this study is to analyze these responses, so that we can better understand some of the challenges and nuances of trying to measure a process as dynamic as teaching and learning. Understanding the teachers, who are the negotiators of the transactions between teaching and learning, is essential to illustrate some of the challenges the nation faces as it moves to evaluating and rewarding effective teachers, and, ultimately, the implications for producing educated citizens.

Unfortunately, effective evaluation of teachers has been an elusive task, where we have lacked the ability to discern effective and ineffective teachers. Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling’s (2009) study of twelve districts in four states showed that, in districts with binary evaluation ratings (satisfactory/unsatisfactory), more than 99 percent of teachers received a satisfactory rating. In districts with a broader range of ratings, 94 percent of teachers received one of the top two ratings and less than one percent received an unsatisfactory rating. A study on statewide policies on teacher evaluation in the mid-west region (Brandt, Thomas, & Burke, 2008) found that most states provided guidance to districts on evaluating their teachers, which included criteria ranging from who is responsible, to frequency of evaluation. However, the criteria were general to the status of the teacher, rather than teaching and learning. Similarly, the No Child Left Behind Act provided the requirement of having Highly Qualified teachers, but the qualification only went so far as tracking credential status. Meeting the definition of Highly Qualified neither predicted nor ensured that a teacher would be successful at increasing student learning.

In addition to having ineffective evaluation tools, efforts to increase student learning have been challenging. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (Rooney et al., 2006), since the early 1990s, the achievement gaps between White and Black, and White and Hispanic, have shown little measurable change. The inability to close these gaps has resulted in looking beyond student achievement on standardized tests and is now sharply focused on teachers. The basic framework of logic, which is driving much of the nation’s current efforts in closing the achievement gap, is the notion that if you have good teachers, you will have good student achievement. Or, one can inversely infer: bad teachers are preventing our students from achieving. This notion of having teachers with different levels of effectiveness has become a major focal point in federal government’s plan to “fix” the problem of low student achievement. The Blueprint for Reform (US Department of Education, 2010) ties teacher effectiveness with student test scores:

“We will elevate the teaching profession to focus on recognizing, encouraging, and rewarding excellence. We are calling on states and districts to develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation and support, and to identify effective and highly effective teachers and principals on the basis of student growth and other factors.” (p. 4). This has led to a drive to find a way to measure teacher effectiveness using standardized test scores as the tool.

Value-Added Modeling

One statistical method that policymakers see as a tool for teacher evaluations is Value-added Modeling (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003), a statistical method that calculates individual student growth by comparing his/her previous year's test score to his/her current year's score, and comparing that growth in relation to other students in that grade level. Policymakers around the nation are embracing the idea of using a value-added measurement tool because it seems to provide an objective measure in evaluating teacher effectiveness. However, researchers have cautioned the use of Value-Added Models (VAM) due to limitations and unsolved problems. For instance, Schochet & Chiang (2010) found that more than 90 percent of the variation in student gain scores is due to the variation in *student-level* factors, and strongly suggests that policymakers carefully consider system error rates in designing and implementing teacher performance measurement systems that are based on value-added models. Another factor, is the issue of missing data (van de Grift, 2009), where the results are only valid for the detection of schools with the highest raw scores and the highest learning gains. In addition, Papay (2011) found that the different tests did not rank individual teachers consistently. Because of these and other limitations, Baker et. al. (2010) argue that VAM should only be one component, and a comprehensive evaluation should be standards-based and include evaluation by supervisors and peers. Thus far, the discourse on determining teacher effectiveness with the use of VAM has mainly been at the policy and research levels. We need to solicit teacher perspectives to understand the subtleties involved with evaluating teaching and student learning. However, there are few conduits of influence where teachers can have their opinions heard. Often times, their viewpoints are mediated through others (e.g. unions, administrators, associations) or not surfaced at all for the knowledge of the general public. Including teachers in the discourse is essential, as it can provide valuable information from those that are directly charged with increasing student achievement, information that would normally be missed when making policy decisions. Hence, this study will analyze the teachers' responses to the use of VAM in determining teacher effectiveness.

Research Question

What are the perceptions of teachers who are working in a large urban school district concerning the use of VAM in evaluating their effectiveness?

Sub questions: Do teachers differ in their opinions based upon their individual rankings? Is there a relationship between Overall Ranking and Years of Teaching Included?

Methodology

This is a mixed methods study that utilizes non-participant observation strategies through an unobtrusive research design due to the fact that the data set is publicly posted on the Internet. As of December 2010, 293 teachers posted responses. Only teachers who were part of the released rankings were allowed to post a response. Information collected from the database included: the submitting teacher's name, the time and date of the submission, teacher's VAM Overall Ranking, VAM ranking in English, VAM ranking in Math, number of years included in the ranking, the school they were employed at during the most recent standardized test administration, the schools where they were previously employed, and the teacher's response.

Each response was analyzed to determine whether the teacher was generally positive/agreed with the use of VAM, negative/disagreed, or neutral/mixed. For quantitative analysis, a frequency count determined the number of respondents at each of the five levels of rankings, ranging from least effective to most effective. Cross-tabulation was used to categorize the type of comment (Positive/Agree, Negative/Disagree, Neutral/Mixed) within each level of ranking. In addition, a correlation analysis examined teacher rankings in relation to the number of years teaching included in the study. Qualitatively, conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to allow for categories to emerge from the data. As the responses were being read through, open coding was used to select content by marking key words, phrases, sentences and paraphrases of the responses. Units of code, ranging from single words to sentences, were gathered and then sorted into related categories. Several common categories were determined from the patterns of the units (e.g. arguments, opinions, outcomes, alternatives, etc.). These were then grouped into three main categories to determine common elements in the responses: knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs.

Findings

Quantitatively, frequency counts of each type of respondent (i.e. least effective, less, average, more, most effective) demonstrated a range of 17.4% - 22.8%, which is approximate to the quintile breakdown used in VAM. Hence, there was a fair balance of responses from teachers at each of the five ranking levels. Upon analyzing the nature of the responses, it was found that the majority of the responses (221 of 293) were categorized as Negative/Disagree (see table 1). The level that had the most categorized as Positive/Agree was the “Most Effective” level, where many responses indicated that the teachers were appreciative of having recognition of their efforts. Notably, although this level had the most positive/agree responses, the majority of the responses were negative/disagree towards the use of VAM.

Table 1

Cross-tabulation of Overall Rank and Type of Comment

		Type of Comment			Total
		Negative/Disagree	Neutral/Mixed	Positive/Agree	
Overall Rank	Least	45	2	3	51
	Less	50	4	7	61
	Average	48	9	8	65
	More	42	6	4	52
	Most	35	4	25	64
Total		221	25	47	29

An evaluation was made of the relationship between Overall Rank and years of teaching within the 6-year window using Pearson's correlation. The analysis showed that the results were not statistically significant, $r = .100$, $p > .05$. Therefore, no relationship between the ranking of the teacher and the years of teaching that were included could be determined (see table 2).

Table 2

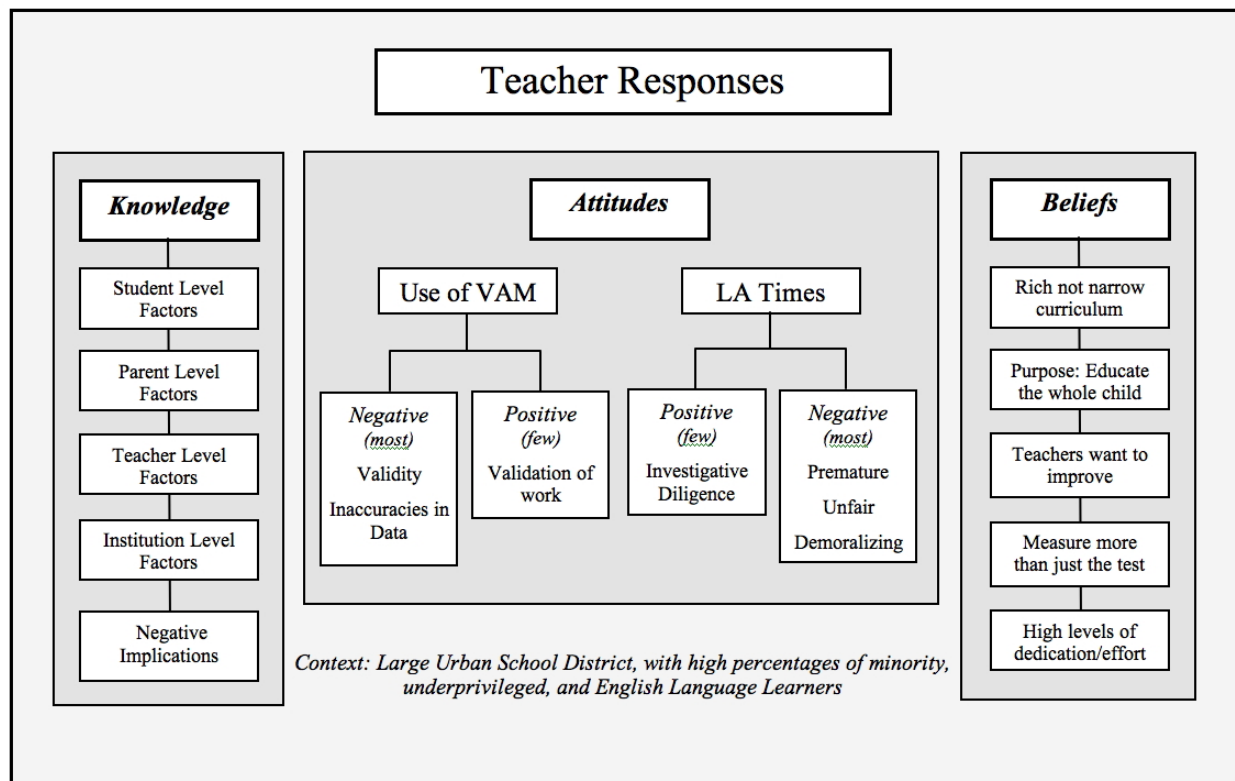
Correlation Analysis of Overall Rank and Years Included

		Overall Rank	Years Included
Overall Rank	Pearson Correlation	1	.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.088
	N	293	293
Years Included	Pearson Correlation	.100	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.088	
	N	293	293

In using conventional content analysis, initially, over 850 codes emerged through open coding. From the codes, more than 300 patterns of text were identified. These patterns were then categorized into themes. Major themes were then classified into three categories: the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs teachers had regarding the use of VAM for evaluation of effectiveness (see figure 1).

Figure 1

Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs



Overwhelmingly, teacher attitudes towards the use of VAM was negative due to what they perceived as a disconnect in defining the education of the whole child with a test score in English and math. In particular, strong affective terminology was most used with regard to the public release of teacher names and rankings (e.g. demoralizing, resentment, public stoning, offensive, irreversible.) criticizing how the information was disseminated, and the lack of privacy for teachers. Many teachers were angered and felt that the newspaper was premature, irresponsible, and unfair. The responses also demonstrated that teachers had knowledge that validated many of the issues that already exist in the literature, such as the impact of student-level factors (e.g. special education students, students with little room to improve, English Language Learners), parent-level factors (e.g. education level, support at home), teacher-level factors (e.g. team teaching, previous teacher effects, being on leave for part of the year, teaching to the test), and institution-level factors (e.g. type of curriculum, leadership, lack of random assignment of students). Implications that were raised included: increased competition amongst teachers; under-performing children being “unwanted”; “branding” teachers; narrowing of the curriculum; cheating as a means to “game” the system; and parental competition for those labeled as most effective teachers. Concepts introduced by teachers included: lack of recognition of their dedication and efforts; lack of resources to properly teach; influences of school culture; influence of teacher seniority on selection of classes; influence of school initiatives and programs; interference of district and union policies; year-round vs. traditional calendars; importance of administrator competence; degradation of the level of collaboration found in professional learning communities; restrictive curriculum; and influence of lack of student motivation for doing well on the test. Teachers’ beliefs surfaced issues about necessity of having a rich curriculum to develop a whole child, the purpose of education being the educating of an individual not a test score, the turning of education into a business model, and that teachers want to improve in their practice. Responses indicated that teachers welcomed a process for evaluation to improve practice, but it should be done privately, and that VAM should not be the sole tool for evaluation. They suggested including other measures such as classroom observations, parent feedback, student feedback, and portfolios.

Further investigation is warranted to understand what metrics teachers would apply to the things they deem important in the education of a child. Also, some teachers indicated the need to remove ineffective teachers, but what was lacking in the responses was how to identify ineffective teachers. Further study is needed in order to understand what criteria teachers would use to determine ineffectiveness, and whether those criteria would be similar to ones used to identify effectiveness. In addition, there is little reference in the literature to the issue of the social learning environment. The process of learning is not isolated to the relationship between the teacher and an individual student. Rather, learning is also constructed upon interaction with peers, and is a dynamic process that is also dependent upon inter-relationships and interactions within and outside the classroom. Because these teachers work in an urban district that serves high percentages of minority, underprivileged, and English Language Learners, further exploration is needed how effectiveness can be measured when the challenges are compounded.

In conclusion, this study found that teachers identified many factors (e.g. institutional, teacher, parent and student level), which are outside of a teacher’s control, that influence who and how they teach. Hence, the use of standardized test scores is not a valid measurement of teacher effectiveness. Most significantly, they argue for an evaluation that addresses the development of the whole child by fostering critical thinking, love of learning, and respectful

citizenship, through a rich and diverse curriculum. An implicit assumption that can be made from their responses is that what VAM measures is not aligned to what teachers see as the purpose of education. This misalignment stems reform efforts in which there has been a substantial change in our purpose of education, where we have moved from the development of the individual as a basis for a democratic society, to the development of individuals as a currency for economic competitiveness. This misalignment is noteworthy for all of us, because society's definition of the purpose of education ultimately affects the type of educated citizen that is produced, and how that education is measured.

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