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Los Angeles

Preparing Early Childhood Educators for Diverse Classrooms:

Engaging Identity Through Dialogic Pedagogy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Andréa Cristín Rodríguez-Scheel

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Preparing Early Childhood Educators for Diverse Classrooms:
Engaging Identity Through Dialogic Pedagogy

by

Andréa Cristín Rodríguez-Scheel

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Tyrone C. Howard, Chair

This dissertation examined how an intervention called intergroup dialogue (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003) shaped a cohort of teacher education students. Specific attention was paid to the ways in which intergroup dialogue effected the identities of participants as well as how it impacted how they “saw” race in their classrooms and how they thought, talked, and the way they planed to teach about race and other identities in their work with students. Data collection methods included analysis of written reflections from participants collected throughout their dialogue experience, a final reflection paper regarding their dialogue experience, written reflections that asked them to consider the ways in which race and other identities were engaged or not engaged in their student teaching classroom, and interviews with each participant six months after their intergroup dialogue experience that asked them to reflect on identity, intergroup competencies, and engaging race and other identities in the context of the classroom.

Results suggest that intergroup dialogue was an effective experience for participants by helping them prepare for teaching across difference. Participants reported a sense of expansion of multiple identities, feelings of empowerment and commitment to action, and a sharpened ability to “see” the impact of race, racism, and racial identity in the context of teaching and learning in schools. At the same time, while some participants took it upon themselves to “lean in” and engage race in the context of their student teaching placements, many felt that they were missing critical mentoring from their guiding teachers on how to most effectively be anti-racist educators. As students of color continue to grow in number in public schools (Hussar & Bailey, 2014) it is of the utmost importance that teachers be prepared to engage race in their classrooms and teach across difference. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

The dissertation of Andréa Cristín Rodríguez-Scheel is approved.

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Clarence La Mont Terry, Sr.

Tyrone C. Howard, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

DEDICATION

For my son, Jackson, with all of my love.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“How many cold, hard, truths do you want to tell a seven year old?!” My professor glared at me and threw up her hands in exasperation. It was not the first time we had come into conflict over our differing views on children’s social consciousness, nor would it be our last. In my view, she represented one of the most dangerous problems in teacher education; she was kind, well-educated, and filled with good intentions, yet she consistently encouraged my cohort to subscribe to a “festivals and food¹” version of multicultural education. Authentic discussions of race, racism, power, and privilege with the students we taught and amongst our cohort of pre-service elementary teachers were discouraged – something I disagreed with given my firm views that children can handle such conversations. As a child, my mother felt strongly about raising my sister and me with this sort of understanding. Growing up in a biracial family, we could not ignore the phenotypic differences amongst us, so conversations about race were central in our lives. My mother’s rationalization for her choice to engage us at a young age around this topic stemmed from her perspective that it was better to equip children with the tools necessary to understand structural racism, so that children do not attribute inevitable racialized experiences to deficits within themselves. As a child who was racialized in many different spheres of life, I was always grateful to my mother for providing us with such an education at home, and wished that my teachers had complemented her approach in their own pedagogical practices at school.

Given today’s rapidly changing demographics, this silence on issues of race and racism can be considered a form of educational malpractice. According to the Pew Research Center, the

¹ According to Pease (as cited in Sleeter & McLaren, 1995), “All too often, the mainstream educational institutions regard cultural diversity as cosmetically brown or black in complexion or as a few festivals that celebrate the food, clothing, or dance of minorities. The concept of cultural diversity, in this light, is painfully peripheral, if not superficial” (p. 399).

White population in the United States is decreasing in percentage, while Latinos, African Americans, and Asian and Asian Americans are increasing (Passel & Cohn, 2008). Projections state that by 2050, Whites will make up 47% of the U.S. population, Latinos will be 29%, African Americans will make up 13%, and Asian and Asian Americans will make up 9% of the United States population (Passel & Cohn, 2008). These changes in the nation will be mirrored in the classroom. Given that children are quick to learn and develop biases by the time they enter school, and it is the job of teachers to provide their students with tools that are necessary to make sense of these social realities so that children will be better prepared to navigate this diverse society; however, when teachers are silent on issues of race, class, and gender, they are contributing to the phenomenon of colormuteness that plagues many educational institutions today. Nieto, Bode, Kang, and Raible (2008) define a colormute position as “an unwillingness or inability to engage in any conversations about diversity and difference” (p. 189); however, as Pollock (2004) states, “deleting race words can actually help make race matter more” (p. 3). Recent empirical research in social psychology confirms Pollock’s sentiment; in a laboratory study by Richeson and Nussbaum (2004), college students were presented with either a colorblind or multicultural message that was presented as a solution to reducing interracial conflict. Students who received the colorblind message demonstrated greater racial bias on both a racial attitudes survey and on an implicit racial attitudes reaction time test. Given changing demographics and the increasing significance of race in U.S. society, teachers cannot afford to be silent on issues of race.

I take the position that there are two key contributing factors to teacher resistance to engaging younger students in conversations about race in the classroom: 1) teachers falsely perceive children to be too young to have authentic conversations about difference and

inequality; and 2) the field of teacher education lacks a cohesive view on how to best prepare what is often a predominantly White and female teaching force to critically reflect on their various identities. The focus of my dissertation will be on how an intervention, intergroup dialogue, may help both White and teachers of Color examine, engage, and reflect on their different, but intersecting, social identities. I will be examining this issue because I fundamentally believe that reflecting upon one's multiple social identities is a precursor to being an effective teacher of youth in a rapidly diversifying country. In this chapter I identify and unpack issues related to both of the previously mentioned factors – teacher resistance to engaging with youth on the topic of race, and the urgent need to better prepare teachers for increasing racial diversity in urban, public, schools. First, I will begin by providing a brief introduction to children's racial attitudes and ideas, by examining research that demonstrates that not only are young children capable of processing conversations about race, that many students yearn to have these discussions because they are keenly aware of them at a young age. Next, I will discuss the demographic divide that exists between a mostly White and female teaching force and students of Color in urban schools. Then I will briefly touch on colorblind and color-conscious attitudes and beliefs. Last, I will conclude by describing the intention of this study – an intergroup dialogue intervention with a group of pre-service educators that offers teacher education programs a different way of preparing early childhood educators to critically reflect on their identities and engage diversity with young children.

Children's Developing Racial Attitudes and Parent Racial-Ethnic Socialization

Despite lay beliefs that children do not see race, research informs us that children as young as six months old are able to differentiate people along both racial and gendered categories (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). As children grow, their racial awareness develops as well;

racial biases and preferences have been demonstrated in children as young as three-to-five years old (Katz & Kofkin, 1997). These biases and preferences often manifest in the form of identification of the self and others, as well as social inclusion and exclusion in children's social networks. Because children develop and act on this keen awareness at such an early age, ensuring that children have opportunities to discuss race is important; however, research also informs us that parents are often silent on issues of race with their children (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). It is important to note that parents do increase the frequency with which they discuss race as their children enter adolescence (Hughes & Johnson, 2001), however, given that young children develop racial attitudes rapidly, these conversations cannot and should not be delayed. It is important to note that parents of children of Color are more likely to socialize their children around issues of race than their White counterparts (Boykin & Ellison, 1995), however, research suggests that even parents of Color resist engaging conversations about racial discrimination with preschool age children, despite recognizing the importance of their children having this knowledge and preparation (Peters & Massey, 1983). Given parent silence, ensuring that children have teachers who critically engage their students in conversations about race, racism, and racial identity in preschool settings from an early age becomes even more important. While the next section will discuss some of the problems that are inherent to parents taking a colorblind approach in their parenting, it is also important to conclude that schools in the United States have been conceptualized and promoted as institutions to prepare children for democratic participation as adults; and given increasing diversity in the context of the U.S., to deny children a chance to engage the topic of race would be dismissive of a compelling state interest.

More often than not, parents may elect to maintain a colormute position with their children out of fear that discussing race with their kids may contribute to the development of

racist ideologies in their children (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). Further, in addition to not initiating racial discussions with children, parents also generally avoid challenging statements made by children that reflect racial bias (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). It is important to note that despite parental intentions to avoid nurturing racial bias in children, research shows that White parents who engaged colorblind racial-ethnic socialization practices still had children who developed pro-White racial preferences on trait-based stereotype measures (Pahlke, Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). Fortunately, there exists a possibility that such attitudes may be reversed if children are offered opportunities to engage in explicit contestations about race. A study by Hughes, Bigler, and Levy (2007) found that White children who were exposed to school lessons about historical racism demonstrated more positive and less negative views of their African American counterparts. Further, both White and African American students who were exposed to antiracist lessons also valued racial fairness more than children who did not receive such lessons (Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007). In short, engaging children in explicit conversations about race and racism may hold the key to improving race relations in the United States and create a more harmonious society; however, given that research shows that parents maintain a color-mute position even in contexts where they are told by researchers to explicitly discuss race with their children (Vittrup & Holden, 2011) means that the classroom may offer the most effective space to engage race with youth.

Changing Demographics and the Demographic Divide

As the nation becomes more diverse, public schools in urban areas are more likely to be attended by African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latina/o students than White students (Gay & Howard, 2000), and are also more likely to be staffed by White women than women or men of Color (Tenore, Dunn, Laughter, & Milner, 2010; Zumwalt, K., & Craig, E., 2005). This

demographic divide in our nation's schools highlights the significance of racial difference and racial identity for both students and teachers in today's schools. It is important to note that a good teacher does not have to share the same racial identity as the students that they teach. According to Tenore, Dunn, Laughter & Milner (2010), "Teachers from any ethnic, cultural, or racial background can be successful with any group of students when the teachers possess (or have the drive and commitment to acquire) the knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, and beliefs necessary to teach all students well" (p. 97). Developing a strong sense of racial identity can be seen as a precursor to such work.

Supporting racial identity development is one way that teacher education programs can help prepare teachers to work with diverse students. According to Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000), "Colleges of education face the daunting task of preparing predominantly White middle-class students with limited or no experience with persons from another ethnicity or social class to be effective teachers of diverse students" (p. 33). Contributing to this challenge is that fact that some pre-service teachers may view student diversity as an obstacle, as opposed to a strength (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Most pre-service teachers grew up in monoracial communities, and had little to no interaction with members of different racial backgrounds (Causey, Thomas, & Armento (2000). This often means that they may endorse stereotypical and negative thoughts about communities of Color that they obtained through institutional and cultural socialization processes (Harro, 2000). In addition to possibly holding negative stereotypes about the students that they will be working with, Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000) report that "One factor that makes the task of influencing attitudes about diversity difficult is the tenacity with which pre-service teachers cling to prior knowledge and beliefs about other people" (p. 33). In addition to the limited knowledge they often have about other groups, many pre-service teachers lack

information about their own structural positionality² in today's racialized society. Lastly, White pre-service teachers often uphold the ideologies of "optimistic individualism," "absolute democracy," and "naïve egalitarianism" (p. 34) – attitudes that are consistent with color-blind ideologies. What each of these studies tells us is that there is a growing need for racial identity engagement and challenging colorblindness in teacher education programs.

Moving from Colorblindness to Color-Consciousness

Colorblind ideologies have a long history in the United States, and at one time were considered to be a "progressive response to racial bigotry" (Atwater, 2008, p. 246), but are now considered to be a modern form of racism and discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). According to Bonilla-Silva (2006), color-blind racism is an ideology to justify racial inequality that employs the following frames: abstract liberalism (using ideas such as "equal opportunity" to oppose strategies to remedy racial inequality), naturalization (the assertion that racial phenomena, for example segregation, is natural), cultural racism (cultural deficit arguments about people of Color), and the minimization of racism (the notion that racism is not an organizing factor in U.S. society). Current research and theoretical frameworks suggest that endorsing colorblind ideologies can have the opposite effect in the classroom and often contribute to deficit notions about students of Color (Atwater, 2008). According to the American Psychological Association (as cited in Atwater, 2008), "psychological research conducted for more than two decades strongly supports the view that we cannot be, nor should we be, color-blind" (p. 247). Thus, teacher education programs should actively work to eliminate this modern form of racism from the minds of pre-service teachers before they enter the profession³.

² One's identity status in a hierarchical society; e.g., race, class, gender, etc.

³ This applies to in-service teachers as well, but is beyond the scope of this project.

It can be argued that a critical element of interrupting these potentially dangerous patterns of thought amongst pre-service teachers involves the endorsement of color-conscious⁴ (as opposed to color-blind) ideologies. More often than not, colorblindness prevails in education at all levels because educators and policymakers are uneasy about how to talk about race, but by not talking about it, more damage is actually being done. According to Howard (2010):

“Colorblind perspectives also may contribute to internalized racism, reinforce racial hierarchies, and contribute to the development of deficit models about students of color. Colorblind perspectives also may reproduce racial and cultural hegemony in school practices, such as curriculum choices, teacher expectations, testing procedures, instructional practices, and even more pedestrian tasks such as seating arrangements and opportunities provided for participation in learning” (p. 124).

Given the problems associated with colorblindness in the context of schools (Atwater, 2008; Pollock, 2004; Lewis, 2003), it is of the utmost importance that teacher education programs actively work to dismantle such ideologies especially amongst teachers. Focusing on developing racial identity in pre-service teachers may offer a potential solution. According to a study by Gushue and Constantine (2007) on color-blindness and racial identity conducted with White psychology trainees indicate that participants who had a stronger White racial identity were less likely to endorse color-blind ideologies. Thus, the key to interrupting colorblindness may lie in teacher education programs providing explicit opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop

⁴ I apply Richeson and Nussbaum’s (2004) explanation of colorblind perspectives and multiculturalism here, except I refer to what they call multiculturalism as color-consciousness. Richeson and Nussbaum (2004) state: “In short, color-blind perspectives advocate reducing, eliminating, and ignoring category memberships, whereas multiculturalism advocates considering, and sometimes emphasizing and celebrating, category memberships” (p. 417).

their sense of racial identity. Research on intergroup dialogue programs has shown to be effective in accomplishing such a task.

Intergroup Dialogue as a Pedagogical Tool

Given resistance and ignorance to discussing race, scholars have developed and utilized intergroup dialogues to offer structured spaces for engaged conversation and reflection about race, as well as other identities. According to Zúñiga, Nagda, and Sevig (2002):

Intergroup dialogues are facilitated, face-to-face encounters that cultivate meaningful engagement between members of two or more social identity groups with a history of conflict or potential conflict (Zúñiga & Nagda, 1993). These intergroup encounters provide a forum that fosters honest, thoughtful, and significant conversations about difficult or controversial issues across race and other social group boundaries. By “members of social identity groups,” we mean people who have a specific affinity with one another because they are members of a social group that shares a similar social status and a common history in society (Young, 1990). Examples of social identity groups include those based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, socio-economic class, and other socially constructed group distinctions. While students also have other identities (for example, being an athlete, a science major, or a musician), we focus on identities – singular or intersecting – and relationships that are embedded in systems of power and privilege. (p. 7)

Thus, centering and interrogating social identity group membership, for example, racial identity is an integral part of the process. The focus on social group membership is critical in that it

allows for an exploration of the ways that structural relations of power (e.g., racism) play out in the daily lives of individuals.

An intergroup dialogue is purposefully structured in composition and content, and takes place over time to enable sustained communication so that participants are able to develop enough trust in one another for authentic communication (Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). Dialogue takes place in a setting that allows different groups to engage in authentic contact with one another, where they are able to critically engage in issues related to structural inequality. The face-to-face component of intergroup dialogue is important, because although we live in a diverse society, we do not often engage that diversity in authentic ways in the pursuit of democracy and social justice. Recent geographic research indicates that despite increases in diversity, segregation persists (Holloway, Wright, & Ellis, 2012), thus necessitating spaces for healthy and productive intergroup contact.

It is my contention that intergroup dialogues may hold promise for helping pre-service teachers develop more complex understandings of multiple identities vis-à-vis a focus on intersectionality. Intersectional perspectives are another important component of intergroup dialogue. While dialogues may focus on one specific identity, for example race, other social identities are addressed as well, often times using a focal identity (i.e., race) as a lens to examine others, such as gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and ability. By employing an intersectional perspective, intergroup dialogues allow for an exploration of commonality across difference. For example, in a dialogue on race with White people and people of Color, discussions of gender may allow for intergroup collaborations between White people and people of Color to tackle issues pertaining to racialized femininities and masculinities. For example, work by McIntosh (1990) has described how White women's experience with gender oppression

may help them understand White privilege and racial oppression. Additionally, Crenshaw (2009) has also discussed how intersectionality may contribute to coalition building. The recognition of commonalities across groups is important, in that it can lead to community building and intergroup collaboration – both elements that will benefit teachers in their work with students, families, and communities.

Intergroup dialogues in teacher education programs may be able to help prepare pre-service teachers for work in urban schools by giving candidates an opportunity to critically reflect on the relational nature of their social identities, and explore other manifestations of asymmetrical power relations of domination and subordination (Apfelbaum, 1979). Research on the effects of intergroup dialogues reveal that participants report an increase in the importance and centrality they ascribe to their racial identities (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). In addition, intergroup dialogue participants also report increased thinking about racial group membership, develop their ability to perspective take, feel more comfortable communicating with those that are different from them, and are more interested in building bridges with those that are different from themselves (Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). The aforementioned elements are all important for teachers to have as they work in schools with students who deserve and need teachers to employ a critical, reflective praxis, and social justice orientation.

Purpose of the Study

While the content and structure of intergroup dialogues seem to offer teacher education programs a valuable pedagogical tool to prepare teachers for work in diverse communities, to my knowledge, no study has looked at outcomes associated with participation in an intergroup dialogue during pre-service teacher training. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of a critical-dialogic intervention on pre-service early childhood education teachers’

racial identity and critical consciousness. I am most concerned with pre-service teachers because they are at the start of their professional career, indicating that they are at a critical developmental moment in their professional lives during which they may be able to nurture reflective skills that will benefit them in multiple areas of their work. Further, it is important that teacher candidates be offered a space for reflection on race, racism, and racial identity prior to entering the classroom so that they can grapple with issues of power and privilege before working with diverse youth. In addition, I am most concerned with early childhood educators because they are uniquely positioned to create learning environments for young children who are in need of anti-bias curricula and critical educators as they work to make sense of the rapidly diversifying world they live in. According to Winkler (2009), “if anti-bias education exists in school curricula at all, it tends to be too little, too late” (p. 4); thus clearly positing the field of early childhood education and its teachers in an important social position in a rapidly changing society. Given that young children are quickly developing racial attitudes and ideas, it becomes even more important that their teachers come to the classroom prepared to offer students the tools necessary to foster socially just ideas about race, racism, power, and privilege in the pursuit of promoting healthy racial attitudes and unlearning racially problematic beliefs – elements of good teaching that should frame other types of learning that occur in teacher education, including, but not limited to classroom management and pedagogical knowledge. Specifically, this study asked the following research questions:

- In what ways, if any, does intergroup dialogue with pre-service early childhood educators shape their sense of identity?
- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue enable participants to “see” race in schools and classrooms?

- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue shape the ways that pre-service teachers think, talk, and teach about identities and justice in their practice?

Significance of the Study

While previous studies have documented the importance of racial identity amongst White early childhood educators (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010; Han, 2007) to my knowledge, no study has looked at critical-dialogic pedagogy as a specific tool that teacher education programs can employ to help early childhood teacher candidates achieve higher levels of racial identity and critical consciousness with a diverse group of pre-service teacher candidates. In the current educational climate, discussions of teacher quality are common; however, often exclude matters of race. It is my belief that a precursor to being an effecting teacher of diverse students is the ability to understand the power and significance of one's own identity, as well as develop the skills to critically reflect upon one's identity before entering the classroom. Research with White preschool teachers by Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010) suggest linkages between racial identity development and cultural competence, with teachers who scored higher on a measure of White racial identity self-reporting higher levels of multicultural teaching competencies. This is consistent with work by Carter and Goodwin (1994), who state: "The most important implication of racial identity theory for educational practice is that educators need to understand their own levels of racial identity development in order to change their perceptions and expectations of children of color" (p. 324). Given the empirical and theoretical significance of teachers engaging and developing their racial identities, it is important that research examine how teacher education programs can help better prepare both White and pre-service teachers of Color for diverse classrooms. Thus, the findings of this study may offer teacher education in general, and early

childhood teacher education specifically, a color-conscious framework and method for preparing teachers to work with diverse youth in preschool settings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THEORY AND LITERATURE

As stated in the previous chapter, this research seeks to explore the potential of an identity-driven, color-conscious, intergroup dialogue intervention with pre-service early childhood educators. Because of the significance of race, racism, and racial identity to this work, I ground this study in critical race theory (CRT) as an explanatory framework for understanding the impact of race and racism in both society, and at the core of my research questions. This utilization of CRT as an analytical framework will be revisited in the next chapter as I discuss the implications of employing critical race grounded theory in analysis of artifact and interview data.

The goals of this chapter are two-fold, to 1) describe contemporary models of multicultural teacher education and 2) unpack the significance of identity vis-à-vis intergroup contact theory, social identity theory, and racial identity theory. In addition, I will also outline intergroup dialogic pedagogy in more detail in the context of the aforementioned theories to illuminate how a critical-dialogic intervention may offer pre-service early childhood educators a process-based approach that differs from other models.

History of Critical Race Theory

As previously stated, this study acknowledges the reality of race as an organizing concept in U.S. society, and engages CRT as a theoretical framework to account for the role that race, racism, and racial identity play in the lives of teachers and students in urban schools. While CRT has been established in the field of education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1998), it's historical origins lie in the legal field. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), "The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in

studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (p. 2). An outgrowth of critical legal studies (CLS), CRT emerged in the mid-1970s as a response to the slow rate of social progress and racial reform in the law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). While CLS was successful in theorizing and critiquing the ways in which the law supported and maintained a hierarchical class structure in the United States, it failed to theorize on how race and racism were maintained vis-à-vis legal ideology (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Thus, CRT emerged as a framework to explain, expose, and challenge racism in society.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were the first to apply CRT to the field education. In their piece, *Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education*, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) assert that race continues to be an important factor in U.S. society; that U.S. society is based on property rights, not human rights; and that educational inequality can be understood through analyzing the intersections of race and property. They begin their argument by discussing how race is more relevant than ever, despite the fact that it is under-theorized. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state: “By arguing that race remains undertheorized, we are not suggesting that other scholars have not looked carefully at race as a powerful tool for explaining social inequity, but that the intellectual salience of this theorizing has not been systematically employed in the analysis of educational inequality” (p. 50). While Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) recognize that race intersects with class and gender, they argue that neither variable can stand alone to explain school inequity, especially as it manifests in achievement differences between white students and students of Color.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) turn to legal scholarship to develop their second proposition: that U.S. society is organized around property rights. Citing work by Derrick Bell, Ladson-Billings and Tate detail how slavery in the U.S. cemented the significance of property

rights over human rights for people of Color. They assert: “a government constructed to protect the rights of property owners lacked the incentive to secure human rights for African Americans” (p. 53). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) go on to relate the significance of property to education in various ways, including property taxes and school quality, curricula as intellectual property, and variations in curriculum (and consequently, opportunity to learn) correlated with property value.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) engage the original tenets of CRT to education as follows: to support the tenet that racism is a part of U.S. society, they detail how students of Color often attend low-income schools, and that “the cause of their poverty in conjunction with the condition of their schools and schooling is institutional and structural racism” (p. 55). To support the tenet arguing for a reinterpretation of traditional civil rights law, they discuss the shortcomings of the Brown decision, and how integration did not lead to better academic outcomes for students of Color, but instead promoted white flight and decreased teaching and administrative positions for African Americans. They cite Crenshaw (2009), who argues that traditional civil rights law is ambiguous, and can be interpreted to accommodate hegemonic perspectives. Lastly, they discuss the importance of naming one’s own reality and assert, “the voice of people of Color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system” (p. 58).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) go on to discuss how race and property interact in a critical race theory of education. Citing Harris, they focus their argument on how whiteness is property in schools. They go on to apply Harris’ “property functions of whiteness” to schools as follows: 1) Rights of disposition: students are rewarded for conforming to white norms; 2) Rights to use and enjoy: material differences and structure of curriculum; 3) Reputation and status property: schools and programs associated with people of Color are often perceived as being of

lower status (e.g., bilingual programs, urban education); and 4) The absolute right to exclude: separate schools, white flight, tracking, etc..

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) close their article by discussing the limits of multicultural education, which they describe as often being associated with trivial aspects of culture (food, celebrations), as opposed to critically examining tensions that exist within multicultural communities and fear of engaging difference. They write, “the current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change to the current order. Thus, critical race theory in education, like its antecedent in legal scholarship, is a radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms” (p. 62).

Tenets of Critical Race Theory

Solórzano (1997, 1998) extended the development of CRT in education by identifying five tenets of CRT in education: 1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology; 3) the commitment to social justice; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective.

The Centrality and Intersectionality of Race and Racism

This tenet speaks to the understanding that racism is a normal, central, and ordinary feature in U.S. society. Further, CRT scholars also assert that while race and racism are organizing principles in society, they also intersect with other identities, such as gender and class.

The Challenge to Dominant Ideology

CRT critiques liberalist ideals, such as colorblindness, neutrality, objectivity, meritocracy, and equal opportunity in the law and educational institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Specifically, CRT argues that these ideals function to maintain the subordination of people of Color, and thus challenging them is central to any CRT framework.

The Commitment to Social Justice

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), “Unlike academic disciplines, critical race theory contains an activist dimension. It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better” (p. 3). Further, CRT views the elimination of racism in society as part of a larger project of dismantling all forms of oppression (Solórzano, 1997).

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

CRT embraces critical raced-gendered epistemologies and recognizes people of Color as creators and holders of knowledge (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Consistent with this approach is the embracement of qualitative methods, such as testimonios, narratives, and counter-storytelling. According to Ladson-Billings (2009), “The primary reason, then, that stories, or narratives, are deemed important among CRT scholars is that they add necessary contextual contours to the seeming ‘objectivity’ of positivist perspectives” (p. 21-22), which in turn, help challenge the dominant ideology.

The Interdisciplinary Perspective

CRT embraces interdisciplinary approaches and multiple methods to challenging the ways in which theories about race and racism have been narrowly constrained in intellectual production by disciplinary boundaries. By engaging multiple frameworks and methods, CRT scholars are able to develop more comprehensive analyses of the role of race and racism in society in general, and in education in particular.

Multicultural Teacher Education

Various teacher education programs have taken up the task of preparing teachers to become social justice educators of students of different racial backgrounds; however, most approaches do not interrogate issues of difference authentically. In a comprehensive review of the literature on teacher education, Ladson-Billings (1999) contextualizes this contemporary reality within a socio-historical approach, and states that in the 1960s, children of Color were perceived as being culturally deprived/disadvantaged, and the role of the school was to “compensate for the children’s presumed lack of socialization and cultural resources” (p. 216). These assumptions presumed whiteness as normative and families of Color as inadequate. Consequently, teacher education programs were organized around the same assumptions. Ladson-Billings cites Zeichner (1991, 1993) who stated that teacher education programs were organized around academic (teacher as scholar/subject matter specialist; increases academic abilities of teachers), social efficiency (scientific study of teaching as a discipline), developmentalist (child study, believes in a natural order in which learning should occur; focuses on resocializing students), or social reconstructionist (asks questions about inequality and how education might bring about social change) traditions. Increasing diversity and demographic shifts were perceived as problematic instead of embraced, and teacher education programs continued to maintain whiteness as normative. Ladson-Billings quotes Goodwin (1997), who states, “The core of American education with its attendant white, middle class values and perspectives remained intact. Multiethnic or multicultural education was synonymous with ‘minority’ education. Thus, teachers, despite cultural ‘training,’ continued to function within a Eurocentric framework” (p. 218) – establishing a challenging place for multicultural education in the contemporary times. Even today, Ladson-Billings (1999) found that “few multicultural

teacher education programs were grounded in the theoretical and conceptual principles of multicultural education. Most programs were satisfied with adding ‘multicultural content’ rather than changing the philosophy and structure of the teacher education programs” (p. 221). This section will detail some of the empirical and theoretical work in this area, as well as discuss the strengths of what has been done, as well as areas of potential improvement.

The Power of Socialization and the Task of Undoing Deficit Thinking

As mentioned in the previous chapter, many pre-service teachers are White, middle-class, monolingual females, who grew up in communities that offered few opportunities to engage across difference (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000). Given the lack of interaction with people of Color, most pre-service teachers rely on institutions, such as the media, for information about communities of Color (Harro, 2000). According to Cortés (as cited in Yosso, 2002), this “societal curriculum” (52) teaches us from a young age about the value society places on dominant and subordinate groups (Kellner & Share, 2005). Further, because of their position in the social hierarchy, dominant groups not only create power differences, but they also reinforce binary representations in an attempt to maintain their power. This precise distinction between two different groups, an in-group and an out-group, allows for the maximum exercise of power and control by members of the dominant group (Apfelbaum, 1979). Because of this, societal representations of subordinate groups (women, people of Color, children and the elderly, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, poor, working class, disabled, Jewish, etc.) are often negative, derogatory, and manifest in acts of individual and institutional oppression by those in power (Ostenson, 2008).

This “societal curriculum” results in the cultural transmission of stereotypes - cognitive “shortcuts”, known to social psychologists as “schemas”, that aid in rapid and unconscious

information processing. According to Bem (1981), “a schema is a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides individual perceptions. A schema functions as an anticipatory structure, a readiness to search for and to assimilate incoming information in schema-relevant terms. Schematic processing is thus highly selective and enables the individual to impose structure and meaning onto the vast array of incoming stimuli” (p. 355). Because we exist in such a complex world, schemas offer assistance by sorting, classifying, and processing information to protect us from over-stimulation. However, it is important to note that this filtering process is not always accurate and is the product of a racist society.

Multicultural teacher education has offered different models to try and undo some of this deficit thinking as they prepare teachers to work in school settings with students who are racially different. Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000) found that a three-week immersion experience in an urban school as part of a ten-week course on middle school social studies methods offered pre-service teachers a transformative experience in the way that they viewed students of Color. For the students in this study, their experience in the urban school was one of the first times that they came into contact with people from different backgrounds. Given that intergroup contact can have either positive or negative consequences depending on the conditions in which contact occurs, what can be done to better prepare pre-service teachers to engage in a critical and respectful manner with their students? Causey, Thomas, and Armento (2000) featured two case studies of White female teachers who had gone through a middle school methods course. One of the teachers reverted back to her individualistic, deficit thoughts about students, while the other teacher was able to maintain a critical lens in her teaching and practice. Results from this study offer important insights into developing best practices for teacher education, including the following: 1) “A well-articulated program with attention to diversity issues over several

semesters offers the best hope for moving pre-service teachers toward greater cultural sensitivity and knowledge and toward strength and effectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms” (p. 43); and 2) “Teacher education programs, in collaboration with school system educators, should address the career needs of teachers as they face the joys and challenges of diverse classrooms. We must commit to follow-up programs for our graduates if we wish to support sensitivity to cultural diversity in classroom settings over the career paths of educators” (p. 43). While both ideas are important, they fail to mention the necessity of reflection (both personal and pedagogical) in teaching.

Engaging With Others About Becoming a Social Justice Educator

Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007) recognize the need for reflection in teacher education, and cite Kirk (1986), who stated: “teacher education consistently fails to produce teachers who have critical insight into their democratic role and function as teachers...and the role of schooling in society” (p. 155). As professors and researchers who work with pre-service teachers, Lynn and Smith-Maddox ask, “How, in other words, do prospective teachers go about challenging their beliefs, values, and actions? Reflection and dialogue are two pedagogical tools used to achieve this objective” (p. 97). Collective engagement with reflection and dialogue were done through participation in Inquiry - a program that allowed pre-service teachers to “critically examine and pose questions about issues such as ability grouping and tracking, teacher autonomy and choice, student teaching assignments and placements, and the quality of their observational experiences” (p. 99). According to Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007):

During Inquiry, the pre-service teachers tapped into their personal knowledge base and reflected on their assumptions and beliefs about ability groupings while connecting with related researches discussed in the foundation course. The

dialogue promotes reflection on the student teachers' experiences. This process seems to assess their practical knowledge and carry forward their understanding of the teacher's role in implementing educational practices and the ideals of education reform (i.e., de-tracking). Implicitly, Inquiry has the propensity to transform social relations in the classroom and to raise an individual's level of consciousness about relations in society, which have inherent benefits for the individual, the classroom, and the school community. (p. 101).

As was aforementioned, Lynn and Smith-Maddox call for more critical reflection in teacher education programs, and define critical reflection vis-à-vis cite Zeichner and Liston's (1987) model, which includes, "(1) teachers' technical ability to achieve goals and learning objectives; (2) teachers' consideration for the learning context and interest in assessing the competitive perspectives and worth of educational goals; and (3) teachers' ideological interest in the struggle for social justice" (p. 97). While all components of the model are important parts of what it means to be a critically reflective social justice educator, one important component is missing: the critical examination and reflection of one's own social identity group(s), and the implications of those identities in relation to the student populations that one works with. Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007) do recognize the importance of identity, but focus on the possibility of forming a superordinate identity of pre-service Inquiry teachers as social justice educators as a way to "[allow] individuals to become part of a collective in which they are learning to question schooling and classroom life" (p. 97). While this is important, it is also critical to not gloss over the significance of a teacher's multiple identities, as who one is affects how and what one teaches.

Multicultural Education Coursework in Teacher Education

Scholars of multicultural teacher education assert that the practice of self-reflection is critical for helping White pre-service teachers understand themselves – a prerequisite for understanding the experiences of diverse students (Sleeter & Owuor, 2011; Howard, 2003; Gay & Howard, 2000). Multicultural education coursework within teacher education programs is a prime site for self-study, as well as overcoming deficit attitudes about diverse students in the hopes of preparing a teaching force that meets the needs of students in urban schools. However, it is important to note discrepancies in the research on the effectiveness of multicultural teacher education coursework in meeting this goal. According to Sleeter (2001), empirical attempts to document such progress have come in two forms: experimental designs that measure attitude change and narrative case studies written by teacher educators about their experiences teaching teachers. Sleeter (2001) asserts that most studies employing pre/post designs do successfully document positive attitude change; however, due to the short duration of the courses, it is unknown how long-term their results are, as well as to what extent they matter in the context of the classroom. Lawrence (1997) attempted to document the carryover effects of a fifteen week multicultural teacher education course on the pedagogies of pre-service teachers when they entered their student teaching site and found that the effectiveness of the course varied according to the racial identity status of the pre-service teacher, further reinforcing the significance of offering identity-driven courses rich in opportunities for critical self-reflection in teacher education. However, before identity is explored in this paper, we must first look at intergroup contact in the context of schools– what happens when members from two different identity groups, for example a White teacher and students of Color, come into contact with one another.

Students and Teachers in Urban Schools: Intergroup Contact and Identity

When students of Color and White teachers come into contact in urban schools, they are not neutral groups meeting in a neutral location. They are members of distinct social identity groups that have different and specific histories within a racialized United States. Thus, there are historical and contemporary relations of domination and subordination that need to be attended to when contact occurs if that contact is to end up with positive results.

The Contact Hypothesis

Social psychologists have theorized about intergroup relations and intergroup contact since Gordon Allport published *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954. In this classic piece, Allport outlines his contact hypothesis to theorize what happens when two different social identity groups come into contact with one another, as well as how to best handle that sort of contact. It was Allport's belief that contact between groups was important to disrupt prejudice and improve intergroup relations. However, Allport was also quick to caution that certain conditions must be met to optimize the possibility of positive contact. Allport (1954) proposed that positive contact can only occur when four specific conditions are met: equal group status within the situation (considering that groups do not come into a situation with equal status given social hierarchies), common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support as sanctioned by authority.

According to Allport (1954):

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., law, custom, or local atmosphere), and

provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups. (p. 281).

Brown and Lopez (2001) locate the development of Allport's contact hypothesis within a specific socio-historical moment: the end of the World War II and the integration of the U.S. armed forces and schools. According to Brown and Lopez, this era viewed integration as assimilation, and because of racial hierarchies that perceived whiteness as privileged and normative, people of Color were expected to abandon elements of their identity that were significant to them in the integration process. They cite Myrdal (1944), who wrote: "Education means an assimilation of white American culture. It decreases the dissimilarity of the Negroes from other Americans" (p. 280). Brown and Lopez (2001) cite decades of social psychological research in which researchers attempted to improve intergroup relations by minimizing the salience of group identities, and highlight interpersonal similarities. Yet, they thoughtfully pose the question, "Is interpersonal similarity key to improving intergroup relations? Allport's statement does not seem to emphasize similarity in attitudes, but appears to highlight similarity in status, institutional authority, and goals" (p. 282). Brown and Lopez (2001) also go on to state that most of the research and theorizing that seemed to support interpersonal similarity for improving intergroup relations never actually took place with actual face-to-face contact. To the contrary, Brown and Lopez summarize studies that have been done with face-to-face contact (i.e., the robbers cave study, jigsaw classroom, etc.), and found that interpersonal similarity was not what mattered, but cooperation and contribution to a common goal did matter. They conclude, "common goals and equality in status, rather than interpersonal similarity, are key factors in resolving intergroup conflict" (p. 283).

In addition, Pettigrew (1998) also summarizes the work of recent studies that have contributed to our understanding of what factors are necessary to improve intergroup contact through attitude change. These include: learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, changing affective ties (specifically engaging empathy), and reappraising the ingroup. Lastly, Pettigrew extends Allport's model by adding a fifth condition: the potential for friendship. According to Pettigrew (1998), this is not merely a contributing factor, but an essential one to developing healthy intergroup contact and relations.

Engaging Social Identity: The Significance of Difference

Henri Tajfel first developed social identity theory in the 1970s. Tajfel was a Polish Jew living in Europe during the rise of Nazism who wanted to understand issues of prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict. Tajfel did not believe that these issues were not a function of individual personality differences, but larger social forces. According to Hogg (2006), Tajfel's theoretical goal was to "develop an explanation that did not reinterpret intergroup phenomenon merely as the expression of personality traits, individual differences, and interpersonal processes among a large number of people" (p. 112).

Tajfel defined social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 272). Social identity is a concept located around group membership ("we" or "us"), as opposed to individual identity, which can be thought of as personality traits that are not shared with other people ("I"). According to Tajfel and Turner (1979) a group in this sense is:

a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of

themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership of it. (p. 40).

Hogg (2006) contributes to theorizing on social identities by adding that identities vary in their significance according to two factors: chronic accessibility (the extent to which one constantly thinks about their identities) and situational accessibility (the immediate situation); Thus, as Hogg (2006) states, “As the situation or context changes, so does the salient identity, or the form that the identity takes” (p. 115).

Social identity is explicitly related to intergroup relations in that we make comparisons between our own social identity groups and the groups of others. According to Tajfel, “social comparisons between groups are focused on the establishment of distinctiveness between one’s own and other groups” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 276). In addition to making comparisons, social identity theorists assert that we strive to evaluate our own group in a positive manner in relation to the groups that we are comparing ourselves to. In the context of urban schools, White teachers may develop a sense of unconscious internalized dominance; thus, attention to power dynamics and status differences is critical.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) were not naïve to status differences between groups, and thus their theory allows for a discussion of status hierarchies in the pursuit of a positive and distinct group identity. According to Tajfel and Turner, “The lower is a group’s subjective status position in relation to relevant comparison groups, the less is the contribution it can make to a positive social identity” (p. 43). Reactions to this type of situation include the following: individual mobility (note, this is an individual solution – does not function at the group level and contributes to de-identification with the group), altering the elements of comparison (comparing to the group on a different level, changing the attributes of what is compared, changing the

outgroup), and social competition. Tajfel and Turner (1979) go on to discuss secure and insecure group comparisons – with secure comparisons occurring when social hierarchies are questioned, and insecure comparisons when social hierarchies are perceived as rigid and fixed – the type of condition that lends itself to ethnocentric and prejudiced beliefs.

According to Tajfel and Turner’s social identity theory (as cited in Brown & Lopez, 2001), social identities inform aspects of the self through knowledge of and associations with social group memberships. It is assumed that individuals seek a certain level of distinctiveness between their own group and other groups in the pursuit of achieving a positive self-image based on group associations. According to Brown and Lopez (2001):

stressing interpersonal similarity is not necessary for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice. In fact, at times, similarity serves as a threat to intergroup relations precisely because it does not allow individuals and groups to maintain their strong, highly valued, and functional ties to important social groups. (p. 285).

It is also important to note that the fact that difference needs to be engaged and understood does not mean that similarity has no role in facilitating positive intergroup contact. According to Hornsey & Hogg (2000), “assisting subgroups to keep their cultures and identities alive within the context of a superordinate identity will be more effective in promoting intergroup harmony than assimilation” (p. 254). If we think about the aforementioned study by Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007) in which pre-service teachers were encouraged to assume a superordinate identity as social justice educators, one can theorize that a model that encourages engaging and centering one’s racial identity (as well as other social identities) as opposed to denying the significance of one’s identities, while maintaining a common, collaborative identity as social justice educators amongst peers, or social justice advocates alongside students and parents,

would maximize the potential for intergroup collaboration amongst teachers and students of Color in urban schools.

Racial Identity

Racial identity can be considered a type of social identity⁵; however, racial identity is a more fluid and complex than simply belonging to a categorical group or not. Helms (1990) defines racial identity as follows: “a sense of group of collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular group” (p. 3).

Carter and Goodwin (1994) go on to state:

Racial identity theory informs us that racial identification is not solely determined by racial group membership (i.e., ancestry, skin color, physical features, and language). It also suggests that personal psychological resolutions about race may take varying forms and expressions since each level of racial identity has emotional, intellectual, perceptual, behavioral, social, and cultural correlates.

Every student, teacher, teacher educator, and administrator brings to the educational enterprise his or her unique racial identity resolution (p. 314).

Thus, while one can belong to a social identity group that is consistent with their racial identity, racial identity theory allows for an analysis of the extent to which one does belong (or not), as well as what characteristics, meaning, and implications are associated with the varying levels of identity. Because different racial groups in the United States have different experiences, different models have been developed to illuminate the complexities around identity development for each group. The next section will detail models of identity development for African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and White Americans.

⁵ Other examples of social identities may include gender, sexual orientation, class, religious, ability, etc.

Black Racial Identity Development

Black racial identity development is thought to be composed of five stages: preencounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1971, 1978, 1991). Preencounter is often marked by low levels of racial awareness, as well as moderate preferences for White people and culture (Carter & Goodwin, 1994). Race begins to take on more personal meaning in the encounter stage, where an individual is thought to have entered a sort of awakening motivated by challenging experiences (often painful) around race. This awakening is often accompanied with a sense of motivation to learn more about one's developing sense of identity. The next phase, immersion-emersion, is characterized by deep involvement and exploration of one's identity, including cultural markers and practices. Typically, anger and resentment towards Whites is also common at this stage. According to Parham (1989), "At this stage, everything of value in life must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by a tendency to denigrate White people, simultaneously glorifying Black people..." (p. 190). According to Tatum (1992), this anger eventually subsides as individuals delve deeper into their own exploration of their self and group. As that occurs, individuals move into the internalization phase, a stage marked by psychological flexibility, openness, security, and confidence around one's racial sense of self and others. The last phase, internalization-commitment, is marked by a commitment to activism on the behalf of racial justice, and is able to work with and accept allies across racial difference.

Latina/o Racial Identity Development

Heterogeneity in the origins and experiences of Latinas/os in the context of the United States has presented a challenge for developing a model of Latino racial identity development. While Latina/o is a blanket term used to describe people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban,

Central and South American descent, the reality is that these national origins differ significantly in political affiliation, acculturation, reception by the U.S. government, and cultural practices (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001). Despite this diversity, Latinos are often grouped due to common features, such as the significance of family, religious traditions, and Spanish language (Ferdman & Gallegos, 2001). Given this complexity, Ferdman and Gallegos (2001) offer a model with six different orientations (as opposed to stages, which suggest linear progress): Latino-integrated, Latino-identified, subgroup-identified, Latino as other, undifferentiated/denial, and White-identified. Latino-integrated folks are comfortable with the complexities of their identity, and see themselves as “both/and” instead of “either/or”. They are also comfortable with positive and negative aspects of their group identity, comfortable with Latinos and non-Latinos, and able to see Latinos and other racial groups broadly. Those who claim a Latino-identified orientation have a pan-Latino identity and often embrace in raza identities and activities. According to Ferdman and Gallegos, “culture is second to raza” and Latino-identified folks may be a bit more rigid in their conceptualizations of Latinos and other racial groups. Subgroup identified people tend to identify more with their national origin, and not as much with other Latinos or people of Color. This orientation tends to have a narrow lens of their own subgroup, which they view positively, and others, which they view as inferior. The Latino as other orientation does not necessarily identify as Latino, but also does not identify as White. They tend to see the world in terms of White/not White racial dynamics, and resists categorization in the hopes of collaboration. The Undifferentiated orientation embraces colorblindness, and elects to see people as “just people” instead of members of categorical groups. Last, the White-identified orientation views themselves as White, and consequently, superior.

Asian American Racial Identity Development

Kim (as cited in Sue et al., 1998) proposed a five-stage model for Asian American⁶ identity development after reviewing the literature and conducting narrative research with third-generation Japanese American women that includes the following stages: Ethnic awareness, White identification, awakening to social political consciousness, redirection, and incorporation. The ethnic awareness stage is thought to begin around 3-4 years old, and develops in response to family members who may serve as ethnic role models. At this point, identity is thought to be positive or neutral. The White identification stage begins when a child enters school, and is exposed to different institutions that privilege whiteness. As a result, the child years to identify as White, and develops low self-worth about their own identity. The awakening to social political consciousness stage develops with increased political awareness and participation. In this stage, the desire to identify as White is abandoned, and identification with the struggles of other oppressed groups begins. The redirection stage involves reconnecting with one's Asian roots. Anger towards Whiteness is common at this stage, as one realizes that it was the reason for negative feelings about one's self in childhood. This stage is also marked by pride in being Asian American. Last, incorporation occurs when one reaches a comfortable and healthy Asian American identity. Anger towards Whiteness is no longer present, and the individual has a healthy respect for all racial groups.

White Racial Identity Development

White racial identity development, originally introduced by Helms (1990), proposes a six-status⁶ model that accounts for both an abandonment of racism, as well as the establishment of

⁶ This model was based on one group with a particular history in the U.S., and thus, may not represent the variability and diversity that exists in the Asian American community.

an antiracist White identity (Carter & Goodwin, 1994). The first three phases of the model represent the former, while the next three represent the latter. The first status, contact, occurs when one discovers people of Color; however, this recognition usually occurs without awareness of one's whiteness. Awareness of whiteness occurs in the second status, disintegration. During disintegration, recognition of the unearned privilege associated with whiteness enters the picture, along with a sense of conflict regarding this reality. Disintegration may be marked by benevolent racism, as Whites may demonstrate feelings of sympathy (as opposed to empathy and motivation to engage in antiracist action) towards people of Color. The next status, reintegration, is marked by an acknowledgement of one's whiteness, accompanied by a belief in White superiority and the inferiority of people of Color. Reintegration is marked by symbolic racism, as Whites demonstrate problematic attitudes towards people of Color, including endorsement of statements, such as "Affirmative action gives Blacks too many jobs" (Carter & Goodwin, 1994). Carter and Goodwin (1994) point out that it is easy for Whites to stay at this status in a racialized society such as the United States, and that it may take a powerful event to inspire questioning of issues of race and inequality. Such questioning leads to the fourth status, pseudo-independence, in which Whites may question beliefs about racial superiority and inferiority that perpetuate in society. This status is marked by conscious attempts to understand racial difference and power and privilege, but it is important to note that at this status, the individual may not yet recognize how they benefit from such inequality, as well as perpetuate it. The fifth status, immersion-emersion, is marked by a more accurate understanding of race and racism, as well as the initiation of questioning how one can begin to embody an antiracist White identity. The sixth and final status, autonomy, occurs when one is able to develop a healthy, White, racial identity in which one feels comfortable acting as an ally and confronting racism.

Racial Identity and Early Childhood Educators

Racial identity has real implications in the context of schools. According to Carter and Goodwin (1994), “the racial identity levels of educators themselves influence how they perceive and interact with children of color” (p. 307), as well as predicting acceptance of diversity in the pre-kindergarten classroom (Sanders & Downer, 2012). According to quantitative work by Sanders and Downer (2012), White pre-kindergarten teachers, the racial group most represented amongst early childhood educators, were less likely to accept diversity in pre-kindergarten environments. Han, West-Olatunji, and Thomas (2010) provide a more detailed, qualitative, analysis of this trend by examining the cultural competence of White early childhood educators through a racial identity lens. Results from their study indicate that teachers who occupied the lower statuses of Helm’s White racial identity development model were more likely to endorse colorblind teaching in their classroom, as well as depreciate the importance of multicultural education with preschoolers. Teacher participants who ranked higher in White racial identity development were more likely to recognize their racial privilege, which in turn, led to their understanding and appreciation of the importance of developing cross-racial relationships in the classroom. While their research focused exclusively on White in-service early childhood educators, they recommend that pre-service teacher education programs include interventions geared at developing prospective teachers’ racial identities for both White teachers and teachers in the pursuit of developing a more culturally competent teaching force; however, they do not detail what such an intervention might look like, nor do they explore the processes that might facilitate the development of racial identity and cross cultural competence in teacher education – a void that research on intergroup dialogic pedagogy with both White teachers and teachers of Color may be able to fill.

Intergroup Dialogue: Pedagogy of Possibility

Engaging and grappling with racial identity is an important component of productive and collaborative intergroup relations across race in educational settings. According to Banks (as cited in Bryan & Atwater, 2002), “Teachers cannot transform schools until they transform themselves” (p. 823). Unfortunately, opportunities that encourage the type of critical transformation necessary to propel one into examining their own belief systems are rare in both pre-service and in-service science teacher education. Nevertheless, the process of becoming a teacher requires lessons both in content and method – lessons which, according to Cochran-Smith (2004), need to be anchored in an appreciation of diversity that offer spaces for pre-service teachers to “unlearn” biased beliefs and assumptions. Intergroup dialogue may offer teacher education programs such a space, as intergroup dialogues encourage critical reflection on issues of identity, power, privilege, and building across difference. Further, dialogues may also offer a space to meaningful engagement about race within and across groups vis-à-vis the synergy of pedagogical and communication processes.

Pedagogical Processes

Another key component of intergroup dialogue is that it involves exploration of both content and process. Intergroup dialogue is not people coming together to talk at random; it is highly structured and purposeful, with specific themes, readings, and assignments for every week. Information, theory, and personal experience and perspective are shared, and accompanied by “intellectual, social, and personal reflection” (Schoem, Hurtado, Sevig, Chesler, & Sumida, 2001, p. 13). This wedding of content and process is an important element that has produced cognitive effects regarding the types of attributions that students make about race-based inequality. Lopez, Gurin, and Nagda (1998) explored the pedagogical practices that affect the outcomes of

intergroup interactions, and found that students who participate in courses that highlight issues of justice and equality were more likely to think structurally about racial inequalities than students who did not participate in such courses. This is especially important when one considers teacher education. While research informs us that individualistic societies often tend to “blame the victim,” which ends up looking like deficit thinking in the minds of teachers who serve urban students, implementing this kind of pedagogy in teacher education may help dismantle deficit thinking in pre-service teachers before they start working with students.

Nagda, Kim, and Truelove (2004) examined the integration of content and process in intergroup dialogue. They assessed intergroup learning, as facilitated by both enlightenment (lectures, readings) and encounter (hearing and learning from people from other social identity groups) in a cohort of undergraduate social welfare students enrolled in a course entitled “Cultural Diversity and Social Justice.” Students were given pre and posttest surveys that measured their involvement in enlightenment and encounter elements of the course, as well as their motivation to engage in intergroup learning, ascribed levels of confidence and perceived importance of taking action to reduce prejudice and promote diversity. Results indicate that “the course as a whole, focusing on learning about difference using varied learning modalities, had an overall significant impact on increasing students’ motivation for intergroup learning, their assessment of the importance of prejudice reduction and promoting diversity, and their confidence in doing so” (p. 208). Further, it is also important to point out that these results were consistent for both students of Color as well as White students enrolled in the course. Critical to these results were the encounter component of the curriculum. According to Nagda, Kim, and Truelove (2004):

The enlightenment learning did not affect changes in the importance of prejudice reduction and promoting diversity, but did positively influence confidence in both aspects. Even though content-based learning may emphasize the importance of undoing prejudice and discrimination, it may reach students only at an abstract level. The encounter-based learning, on the other hand, had wider influence on the outcomes because the issues of prejudice and discrimination are personalized in the intergroup dialogues, both in terms of how they apply to individual students' own experiences and also their classmates' experiences. The participatory, face-to-face learning can evoke empathetic relations among peers. As students listen to their peers' first-person narratives, and come to better appreciate the impact of prejudice and discrimination on people that they know, they may feel more compelled to promote diversity and interrupt others' prejudices. (p. 209).

Communication Processes

Nagda (2006) theorizes around the communication processes in intergroup dialogue that can aid in alliance formation. According to Nagda (2006), there are four main communication processes that occur in intergroup dialogues:

1. Alliance building: "relating to and thinking about collaborating with others in taking actions toward social justice" (p. 563).
2. Engaging self: "the involvement of oneself as a participant in interactions with others" (p. 563).
3. Critical self-reflection: "the examination of one's ideas, experiences, and perspectives as located in the context of inequality, privilege, and oppression" (p. 563)
4. Appreciating difference: "learning about others, hearing personal stories, and hearing

about different points of view in face-to-face encounters; it is openness to learning about realities different from one's own" (p. 563).

Utilizing survey data, Nagda (2006) found that the pedagogical practice of encounter led to appreciation of difference and engagement of self. Appreciation of difference facilitated self-engagement, which in turn facilitated critical self-reflection and alliance building. Lastly, the communication processes of self-engagement and alliance building contributed to the psychological processes of bridging differences. According to Nagda (2006), "When critical self-reflection happens in the context of dialogue, it can spur greater insight into both the social structural forces of inequality as well as the individual impact on participants in the dialogue and the dialogic engagement itself. Thus, critical self-reflection sets intergroup dialogues apart from solely anti-bias, prejudice reduction, and other efforts directed toward intergroup harmony" (p. 568). Given the transformative potential of intergroup dialogue, it is worth exploring the impact of such a program with teachers who will most likely work across difference in their professional work.

Identity Development in the Context of Intergroup Dialogue

Recent research demonstrates that intergroup dialogue programs are successful with increasing levels of racial identity in both college students and adolescents (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Rodríguez, Gurin, Sorensen, & Nagda, Under Review; Stephan, 2008; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). In a randomized field experiment (N=737), intergroup dialogue participants demonstrated an increase in racial identity salience and engagement after completion of an intergroup dialogue, as well as one year later, in comparison to a control group (Rodríguez, Gurin, Sorensen, & Nagda, Under Review). Further, increased racial identity engagement was associated with positive intergroup

outcomes one year later, including motivation to bridge differences, awareness of inequality, structural origins of inequality, and commitment to action to address racial inequality (Rodríguez, Gurin, Sorensen, & Nagda, Under Review). It is important to note that the aforementioned identity effects associated with participation in intergroup dialogues appear for both White students and students of Color (Rodríguez, Gurin, Sorensen, & Nagda, Under Review) – an important result given critiques that intergroup dialogues benefit White students at the expense of students of Color (Gorski, 2008).

Conclusion

Ladson-Billings (1999) asserts that we need voices to interrupt dyconscious racism, and engaging in respectful dialogue across difference in teacher education programs is one way for teacher candidates to learn about diverse experiences authentically vis-à-vis narrative storytelling. According to Ladson-Billings (1999), Cochran-Smith has used narrative storytelling successfully in her work with pre-service teachers to create “opportunities for explorations of experiences with race and racism” because “The stories provide an avenue for talking about social taboos that many teacher education programs avoid” (p. 230). Research from intergroup dialogues offers empirical support for the fact that sharing stories offers important benefits to both students of Color and White students. For students of Color, the opportunity to speak publically about racism may enable a sort of “psychic preservation of marginalized groups” by functioning as a “kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 24). For White students, hearing narratives of racial injustice may function as a catalyst for personal and social change, as well as encourage reflection upon the ways in which one contributes to the master narrative either consciously or unconsciously.

As was aforementioned, intergroup contact between predominantly White, female, middle-class teachers and students of Color in urban schools occurs every day. In 2005, Hollins and Guzman report: “many [teacher] candidates have negative beliefs about individuals who are different from them, despite their willingness to teach in diverse school settings” (as cited in Howard, 2010, p. 41). Given the potential prevalence of deficit thinking that teachers may have about students of Color and their communities, it necessary to explore process models that may potentially be used in teacher education programs to develop racial identity amongst teacher candidates. This project specifically sought to fill this void in the research by exploring the possible impact of a critical-dialogic course on a cohort of pre-service early childhood educators. The next chapter will detail the methods that were utilized in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in chapters one and two, this study aimed to evaluate the effects of an intervention, intergroup dialogue, on pre-service early childhood educators' sense of racial identity, color-conscious attitudes, and comfort engaging race in the classroom. While previous studies have documented the importance of racial identity amongst White early childhood educators (Han, West-Olatunji, & Thomas, 2010; Han, 2007) to my knowledge, no study has looked at intergroup dialogue as a specific tool that teacher education programs can utilize to help early childhood teacher candidates achieve higher levels of racial identity and color consciousness with a diverse group of pre-service teacher candidates. As I have stated in previous chapters, given the changing ethnic and racial demographics in the nation's schools, it is imperative that pre-service teachers develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to teach and talk across racial differences.

In the current educational climate, discussions of teacher quality are common; however, often these discussions and rubrics of teacher quality exclude matters of race and racial differences. Most attention is paid to content knowledge and pedagogical expertise, and while these are both important, a third component, cultural competency, is too often forgotten in the pursuit of developing high quality teachers. It is my belief that a precursor to being an effective teacher of diverse students is the ability to understand the power and significance of one's own identity, as well as develop the skills to critically reflect upon one's identity before entering the classroom. The processes involved with engaging in identity development and racial awareness work can be linked to traits that make teachers more effective practitioners, including self-reflection and empathy. Research with White preschool teachers by Han, West-Olatunji, and

Thomas (2010) suggest linkages between racial identity development and cultural competence, with teachers who scored higher on a measure of White racial identity self-reporting higher levels of multicultural teaching competencies. Given the empirical and theoretical significance of teachers engaging and developing their racial identities, it is of the utmost importance that research examine how teacher education programs can help better prepare both White and pre-service teachers of Color for diverse classrooms. Thus, this study asked the following research questions:

- In what ways, if any, does intergroup dialogue with pre-service early childhood educators shape their sense of identity?
- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue enable participants to “see” race in schools and classrooms?
- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue shape the ways that pre-service teachers think, talk, and teach about identities and justice in their practice?

Research Design

This research endeavor engaged two types of qualitative methods to evaluate what impact, if any, intergroup dialogue had on early childhood pre-service educators. By collecting, analyzing, and triangulating data obtained from documents completed by participants for purposes of this study and one-on-one interviews with participants, I was able to obtain a more comprehensive perspective of the effects of intergroup dialogue on this particular sample of pre-service early childhood educators. Table 3.1 will touch on each methodological tool that I utilized, as well as how it answered each research question:

| Tool | When Tool Was Utilized | Purpose of Tool | Relationship to Research Questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-class reflection papers | The in-class reflection papers were completed at different points during the course of the critical dialogue. | The in-class reflection papers helped me understand how participants respond to specific pedagogical practices that occur within the dialogue. | 1, 2 |
| Final self-reflection paper | The final self-reflection paper was turned in at the end of the critical dialogue. | The final self-reflection paper helped me understand participants' perception of the effects of their participation in dialogue on their identities and attitudes towards social justice. | 1, 2 |
| Quick writes from observations in the field | Quick writes from observations in the field were turned in at the midpoint and end of the winter and spring quarters. | These quick writes helped me understand participants' perceptions of the ways in which race and other identities were occurring in the context of their student teaching placements | 2, 3 |
| Interviews | At the end of the academic year. | Interviews provided insight into participant' perceptions of the benefits, challenges, and utility of their dialogue experience. | 1, 2, 3 |

Artifacts

Written documents from the course were coded and analyzed. According to Merriam (2009):

Personal documents are a reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world. But because they are personal documents, the material is highly subjective in that the writer is the only one to select what he or she considers important to record. Obviously these documents are not representative or necessarily reliable accounts of what actually may have occurred.

They do, however, reflect the participant's perspective, which is what most qualitative research is seeking. (p. 143)

Merriam (2009) also point out that documents offer researchers additional benefits, including the ability to track development, provide descriptive information, and contribute to the process of theory building.

Documents that I analyzed included brief in-class reflection papers⁷, which took no more than five minutes for participants to complete, a final self-reflection paper⁸ that was submitted at the end of their dialogue experience, and quick-writes from the field⁹, which participants completed in two student teaching placements after participating in dialogue. Each type of document served a different function – the five-minute reflections referred specifically to pedagogy and what was happening in the moment during the dialogue, while the final paper offered insight about the meaning and relevance of participants' social identities in their lives and attitudes towards social justice in educational contexts at the end of the dialogue course. Finally, the quick-writes from the field allowed for insight into participant perceptions of the ways in which race played out in the context of schools.

Participants completed the five-minute reflection papers in class after engaging in the following activities: testimonials, caucus groups/fishbowls, the web of oppression, dialoguing about a hot topic that focused on an example of institutional oppression, and using the conceptual model of the cycle of liberation (Harro, 2008) to begin exploring actions participants can take to interrupt oppression. Students were given five minutes to reflect upon each activity, and provide

⁷ Appendix A

⁸ Appendix B

⁹ Appendix C

a written response that described a significant moment that occurred for them in the activity, what made that moment significant, their thoughts and feelings during the activity, and what factors would have increased or decreased their participation. Final reflection papers were completed off campus by participants, and were turned in to the researcher. Both the in-class reflection papers and final reflection paper were submitted to the researcher during the fall quarter in which participants engaged in dialogue. While there may be some overlap in theory between the final reflection paper and the final interview (detailed in the next section) there are two key differences: 1) the final papers were completed without the presence of the researcher, and 2) the final papers were turned in after the completion of the course, whereas the final interview took place at the end of the research study – several months after participants engaged in intergroup dialogue. In addition to these documents, participants also submitted quick-writes of their perceptions and observations on race and other identities in the context of their student teaching placement during the winter and spring academic quarters. These documents were completed off campus by participants, and were turned in to the researcher.

Interviews

In addition to the aforementioned methods, a final one-on-one interview took place with all participants at the end of the academic year at an agreed upon location between the researcher and the participants. Interviews provided insight into participant perceptions regarding the benefits, challenges, and utility of their dialogue experience. According to Patton (2002), the benefit of an interview lies in the ability to obtain information that is in the minds of participants. Patton (2002) states:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot

observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people question about those things.

The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (pp. 340-341)

Interviews were semi-structured, thus meaning that questions were used flexibly, and were primarily open-ended. Semi-structured interviews were ideal for this specific research endeavor, as they allowed for specific topics to be explored, and also allowed for the perspectives and priorities of the participants to play an active role in the information that was conveyed. The following are a list of questions that were asked of the participants, but should be considered representative of the topics that were covered, as opposed to functioning as a predetermined list of questions:

1. What do you identify as?
2. Do you feel that discussing race with students has a place in the classroom?
3. Do you feel like race gets discussed implicitly, explicitly, or not at all in your classroom?
4. If race is discussed, who brings it up? Students? Teacher?
5. What are some of the benefits to explicitly talking about race in an early childhood classroom?
6. What are some of the challenges to engaging in a race-conscious pedagogy in an early childhood classroom?
7. What "groups" are represented in your classroom?

8. In your opinion, do you feel like your teacher education program prepared you to teach in an early childhood classroom?
9. Do you tailor the curriculum and instruction in your classroom to the needs of the racial/ethnic groups represented in your classroom?
10. What kind of professional development might you envision needing to be able to discuss race with your students after obtaining your credential?
11. Do you engage families and communities in your work?

The following table (3.2) offers the data collection adhered to in this project:

| Quarter and Week | Activity |
|--------------------------|--|
| Fall Quarter Week 1 | Distributed initial self-assessment and CoBRAS; Begin dialogue |
| Fall Quarter Week 2 | Collected initial self-assessment and CoBRAS from participants; Collected in-class reflection #1 |
| Fall Quarter Week 3 | |
| Fall Quarter Week 4 | Collected in-class reflection #2 |
| Fall Quarter Week 5 | |
| Fall Quarter Week 6 | Collected in-class reflection #3 |
| Fall Quarter Week 7 | Collected in-class reflection #4 |
| Fall Quarter Week 8 | |
| Fall Quarter Week 9 | Collected in-class reflection #5 |
| Fall Quarter Week 10 | Returned copies of initial self-assessment to participants; Distributed and collected CoBRAS; End of dialogue course |
| Fall Quarter Finals Week | Collected final self-reflection paper |
| Winter Quarter Week 5 | Distributed the first winter quarter quick write to participants electronically |
| Winter Quarter Week 10 | Distributed the second winter quarter quick write to participants electronically |
| Spring Quarter Week 5 | Distributed the first spring quarter quick write to participants electronically |
| Spring Quarter Week 10 | Distributed the second spring quarter quick write to participants electronically |
| Summer 2014 | Interviewed participants |

Site Selection and Rationale

Research for this yearlong project took place during the 2013-2014 academic year on the campus of a large, public, west coast university, as well as on an off-campus interview site. Data collection began with an intervention – a critical dialogic course offered to pre-service teacher education students enrolled in an urban residency program at a large, public, west coast university. This particular urban residency program was offered through the school’s teacher education program, which was housed in a research and teaching center in the graduate school of education at the university. Both the research center and the teacher education program have a longstanding commitment to social justice and the integration of theory and practice. According to the urban residency’s program handbook, the teacher education program seeks to develop teachers into “transformative professionals”, a concept inspired by Giroux’s “transformative intellectual”, an educator with “a social vision and commitment to make public schools democratic public spheres, where all children, regardless of race, class, gender and age can learn what it means to participate fully in a society that affirms and sustains the principles of equality, freedom, and social justice”. Nestled in this pursuit is an implicit recognition of the significance of identity. A practical outcome of this recognition has been the development of a three-part course sequence entitled “Teaching in Urban Schools”, of which the first course is entitled “Exploring Identities”. The previously mentioned dialogue occurred within the “Exploring Identities” course, which took place on the university campus, and which I also served as instructor. In addition, in-class reflection papers, which were analyzed in the pursuit of answering the aforementioned questions, were also distributed and collected on the university campus. Participant interviews took place at an agreed upon off campus location between the researcher and the participants.

Given the center's commitment to social justice and diversity within the program, it was an ideal site to offer a dialogue experience with pre-service teacher education candidates. Further, it was important to offer such a course to students in the urban residency program; to my knowledge, they are one of the few places that offered early childhood certification at a large, public, diverse university with a commitment to prepare teachers for urban classrooms.

Participant Selection and Rationale

Participants were selected from the incoming 2013-2014 urban residency early childhood education and elementary multiple-subject cohort. The program is an 18-month teacher residency that is supported through partnerships with the local public school district and a local center for small schools. According to the program handbook, the goal of the urban teacher residency program is as follows:

the goal of [the program] is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in urban schools by developing a network of community teachers and teacher leaders working in the high-need subject areas of math, science, and early childhood education within a consortium of innovative PreK-12 small autonomous schools and small learning communities (p. 8).

Students in the urban teacher residency begin their foundational coursework in the summer, and then complete a ten-month apprenticeship with a teacher mentors in different placements. In their second summer of the program, students complete coursework and begin working on their Masters project. Students receive assistance from the program to secure teaching jobs, and complete their Masters project by December. In addition, they also clear their credential in three years.

In addition to the fact that these students elect to pursue their credential, certification, and Masters Degree from a school with an explicit commitment to social justice, to my knowledge, this is only program that offers a joint multiple subject credential and early childhood education certification at a large public university, enabling me to work with a diverse cohort of future early childhood educators.

Data Analysis

Data from artifacts and interviews were analyzed with a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990):

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, and analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship to one another. (p. 23)

Grounded theory was selected to analyze this particular data set and aforementioned phenomenon because it allows for inductive analysis of social research, and particularly lends itself well to the study of interactions in context. Thematic open coding was used, and category construction was developed in response to emerging codes. As data accumulated and codes were grouped, axial coding occurred. It is also important to note that various data points were constantly compared to others in the pursuit of category construction. It is important to note that codes and categories are derived from data, but are not considered data. Codes from each data point were documented and merged into a master list of codes, which subsequently led to the refining of categories, and ultimately theory development. This process was systematic, yet flexible. This process of continuous reevaluation also meant that various data pieces were

recoded, modified, and/or supported. Once data saturation occurred, analysis shifted from inductive to deductive, and the focus became one of checking for the existence of developed theoretical patterns.

Including research participants in the analysis portion was an important component of this study, as it recognizes the “value of research participants’ knowledge and [creates] a more lateral relationship in place of a hierarchical relationship” (Malagon, Perez Huber, & Velez, 2009, p. 268). Further, it also provided participants “with a role in communicating how their experiences and stories are portrayed in a research project” (Malagon, Perez Huber, & Velez, 2009, p. 268). Lastly, in addition to the ethical benefits associated with involving participants in data analysis, it also helped to solidify and strengthen the emerging theory by checking for evidence to contradict, as well as support, the emerging theory. Member checks were utilized to incorporate the participants in the analysis portion of this study. While informal member checks took place implicitly throughout the duration of the study, formal member checks occurred during Spring 2015, when I sat down with my participants and went through my preliminary findings to ensure that my interpretations “rang true” with their perspectives and experiences.

Researcher Positionality

Given that qualitative researchers often function as their own instrument, it is important that I speak to my own identity and positionality in relationship to this study. I identify as a biracial, 4th generation, middle-class, Chicana. Growing up with a White father and a Chicana mother, I could not afford to ignore the realities of race in childhood. Outsiders always questioned my presence in my father’s life, especially when he married my step-mother, a Japanese American woman. No one seemed to understand how I fit in their household since my skin color and features were so different from theirs. While I looked like I “belonged” to my

mother, the fact that I do not speak Spanish, have a mother who not only went to college, but also earned a Ph.D., and have a German last name sometimes complicates my relationships with other Latinos. Schools have been particularly relevant institutions in which racial identities have come into play, sometimes in more positive ways and other times in more painful ways. Fortunately, I have wonderful memories of attending preschool and kindergarten in East Los Angeles with two teachers (one Latina and one Japanese American), who in my opinion, successfully enacted culturally relevant pedagogy. In the two years that I attended school in East Los Angeles, I felt safe and at ease with my teachers and peers. When I transferred to another school for first grade, things changed drastically, and I experienced the painful realities that accompany being the student of well intentioned, yet benevolently racist, teachers. As a child, I longed for spaces in school where I could learn about and process issues pertaining to race and identity, especially since I saw them at home and in the school yard, yet my teachers at my new school did not seem to have the tools to support me in this quest; hence, my research questions may be related to my own early childhood experiences in school. Further, in chapter one, I also spoke about my experience with a professor in my teacher education program who herself thought that young children could not handle discussing race, so my research questions have also emerged from my professional and academic experiences as well.

Positivistic notions of “objectivity” have long dominated the research world, however, more recent scholarship, such as feminist standpoint theory and Chicana feminist epistemology, have pushed back to challenged the field to reconsider what exactly is “objective”, and how might claims to false objectivity reinforce hegemony. Consistent with CRT’s valuing of the lived experiences of people of Color, Delgado Bernal (1998) argues that Chicana researchers (as well as other scholars of Color) have a unique viewpoint that gives meaning to data. Expanding on

Strauss and Corbin's (1990) concept of theoretical sensitivity, Delgado Bernal offers the concept of cultural intuition which states that scholars of Color draw from four key sources when analyzing data: (1) one's personal experience, (2) the existing literature, (3) one's professional experience, and (4) the analytical research process itself. While I make no claims of objectivity in this study, I align myself with a theoretical framework that embraces the voices of people of Color in the pursuit of validating and addressing issues of race, racism, and racial identity in scholarly work.

In addition to occupying the role of a researcher for this study, I was also the instructor of the course that participants were recruited from. Given my dual roles, it was important to note that it was made clear to all participants that their participation in this study was voluntary, and while it was appreciated, it was not mandatory and they were free to withdraw from the study at any point without fear of being penalized in the classroom or being graded unfairly. I took steps to rule out any unconscious biases on my part and scored student papers without their names attached, so that my knowledge of participants did not bias my scoring. In addition, I also conducted two anonymous check-ins with students during the dialogue to make sure that they did not feel that the research was taking away from the goals of the course.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter I will present findings that emerged from data collected throughout the duration of my study. The research questions that I pursued in this study were the following:

- In what ways, if any, does intergroup dialogue with pre-service early childhood educators shape their sense of identity?
- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue enable participants to “see” race in schools and classrooms?
- How, if at all, does intergroup dialogue shape the ways that pre-service teachers think, talk, and teach about identities and justice in their practice?

Influenced by Bogdan & Bicklan’s (2007) organizational approach to writing qualitative results, I begin this chapter by proposing a hypothesis: that intergroup dialogue can offer schools of education an effective pedagogy for preparing teachers for the ideological and reflective components of teaching across difference in the context of urban schools. Specifically, I aim to show that intergroup dialogue can expand participants’ sense of identity, promotes a sense of empowerment and commitment to action, sharpens their vision and enables them to “see” the impact of race, racism, and racial identity more clearly. At the same time, results also suggest that intergroup dialogue, while powerful, by itself is not sufficient in preparing teachers to address race and identity in their classrooms.

Given that this study took place over the course of an academic year, I will present data in a chronological order. This chronological approach reflects developmental shifts in the ways that participants thought about race and identity as it relates to themselves as teachers and as it relates to their practice throughout the academic year. This chapter will present data across three

different contexts: the university setting where they engaged in intergroup dialogue and took other courses, the field where they student taught, and then reflecting back over the year. I will begin where the participants’ journey began, in the Fall 2013 academic quarter, where the intergroup dialogue took place. In this section, I will share themes that emerged out of analysis of two artifacts – in-class quick writes and final course papers. Next, I transition readers out of the university classroom and into the field experience, where I will share results from data collected during the Winter 2014 and Spring 2014 academic quarters, which includes qualitative analysis of quick writes that assessed the extent to which participants “saw” race in the context of their pre-service classrooms. Finally, I will offer readers a culminating sense of how participants felt about race, identity, and teaching at the end of the academic year by concluding with data collected during Summer 2014, final interviews with participants. Before getting into results, however, I offer readers a brief introduction to the individuals who participated in this study.

Identity Profiles

In order to make more meaning of the data that will be presented in this chapter, I offer readers a brief identity snapshot of each participant. The information presented in the table 4.1 was derived from an interview question, which asked participants, “What do you identify as?” and offered participants an opportunity to self-identify as they wish. Participants are listed in alphabetical order of pseudonym.

| Table 4.1 <i>Participant Identity Profiles</i> | |
|---|--|
| Participant | Response to the question, “What do you identify as?” |
| Kacey | I identify as a middle class, white, woman. |
| Portia | I guess if people were to ask me, right away I would say Korean American... a girl...and I think more lately, because I got a position, I would say I’m a teacher. |

| Table 4.1 (Continued) <i>Participant Identity Profiles</i> | |
|---|---|
| Participant | Response to the question, “What do you identify as?” |
| Naomi | Female, Latina...immigrant...Catholic... heterosexual...I come from a very low socioeconomic status household...working class |
| Dominique | Filipina American...I guess I grew up middle-class...cisgender, heterosexual, and female. |
| Ariella | I’m kind of having trouble with that in a way...yesterday when I was filling out the survey, there was a question about what kind of class you identify with, and I would say low/working-middle class, but then [my boyfriend] was overhearing me talking about this and wasn’t sure about my response, so he looked it up, and told me I was middle class because of [a variety of reasons, including going to graduate school, becoming a teacher, projected salary, etc.]...and for some reason I was offended and taken aback by that because [I’ve always had an association with being middle class that I don’t like]. I identify more as lower-middle/working class because I have more of a connection with my family in that way because they were always either working class or on the lower end of middle class, and middle class to me seems more affluent and things that I don’t connect to... besides that, heterosexual, female, and Latina. |
| Trisha | I identify as a female who is heterosexual, and I am biracial, so both Mexican and my mother is of German descent. As far as social class, I would say I’ve always been working class, and maybe dipping in and out of poor working-class. |
| Lydia | I am a Black, Salvadorean, young woman. |
| Chrissy | Latina |
| Simone | A white, queer, female, who’s an educator. |

As readers will see in the following sections of this chapter, participants had multiple and intersecting identities, some of which are named above, as well others that they will speak to at other points in this chapter, but are not included in the chart above. I offer these snapshots to readers in an effort to contextualize the following data points, and not to one-dimensionalize participants.

The University: Fall 2013

I first met the participants of this study on October 1, 2013 in a classroom in a large, public, university located on the west coast. In our first meeting, I explained my dual role to participants – that I was both their dialogue facilitator as well as a doctoral student who would be studying the ways in which the effects of dialogue on the ways that they thought about race, identity, and teaching for my dissertation research. After going over the syllabus, the course, the study, and IRB protocol¹⁰ with participants, we began the dialogue. Throughout the ten weeks of dialogue, I collected in-class quick writes¹¹ at five points in time throughout the quarter (during weeks two, four, six, seven, and nine of a ten week quarter), and final course papers were collected and analyzed after the quarter.

Artifacts: In Class Quick Writes and Final Course Papers

Dialogue is very much a process, and analyzing artifacts allowed me as a researcher to explore what was happening for students during the ten week quarter, as well as hear from them in their own words their understandings and interpretations of what they were thinking, feeling, and experiencing. I will first begin by sharing themes that emerged from analysis of in-class quick writes, as it illuminates the processes that participants experienced both individually and collectively. Then, I will share results from analysis of participants' final course papers, which offered insight into how participants felt that they grew as a result of participation in dialogue, as well as how they saw dialogue contributing to their work as teachers.

¹⁰ In order to minimize the risk of participants feeling pressure to participate in the study, I had a colleague of mine join class on this particular day to go over informed consent with participants. During this time, I stepped out of the room so that participants would be able to make a decision regarding their participation without my physical presence. After completing informed consent, my colleague left and I returned to the classroom.

¹¹ Appendix A

Results from in-class quick writes.

Data from quick writes show that throughout the quarter, participants experienced growth in two key areas which I will discuss here, 1) an expanding sense of identity, and through taking risks, going beyond surface level discourse about identity, and 2) experiencing intergroup emotion, where participants were able to deepen their sense of community.

Expanding identity.

During one dialogue session, we explored the concept of multiple identities, which for some participants was a new way of thinking of themselves. To demonstrate, I offer an excerpt from Ariella's final course paper¹² that shows this transition. According to Ariella:

Before this course, my understanding of my identity and privilege was limited to my sex and culture. In class, our identity wheel activities made me reflect on portions of my identity that I had never considered (e.g., ableism, gender and religion) (December 14, 2013).

As part of this process, participants were asked to complete a Social Identity Wheel¹³ (as referenced by Ariella in the above excerpt), which is a graphic organizer that asked students to list how they identified along different dimensions (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, language, ability, and religious/spiritual affiliation). In addition, participants were also asked to indicate 1) which identities they thought about the most, 2) which identities they thought about the least, 3) which identities they would like to learn more about, and 4) which identities had the strongest effect on how they see themselves as a person. After completing the wheel individually, participants were asked to share their wheel with the

¹² For prompt, please refer to Appendix B

¹³ Adapted from "Voices of Discovery", Intergroup Relations Center, Arizona State University

group. During a quick write distributed after this session, Chrissy, who identified as a Latina, wrote, “I discovered more about how I personally internalize identities I didn’t even realize affected me so much” (October 15, 2013). Portia, an Asian-American woman, echoed Chrissy’s sentiment, writing, “The identity pie chart and sharing really got me thinking about what identities I concern myself with and realizing I’ve been taking for granted and not having to worry about other things” (October 15, 2013).

While the process of completing the wheel offered insights for some, the act of sharing and listening to others seemed to deepen the experience. According to Naomi, a Latina, “I like when my classmate shared about their ethnic backgrounds, specifically when they belong to an identity as a group to which I do not belong to. I find it helpful to hear how white and Asian people think and feel. Most of the people I know are Hispanic” (October 15, 2013). Naomi’s reflection speaks to an important point: although we live in a diverse society, we may not have opportunities to engage across difference. Having an institutionalized space dedicated to active engagement across difference in the form of their dialogue class seemed to be important to the group. In sharing what she found most affirming and helpful about the session, Portia wrote, “Hearing others, finding similarities, and building community...we see each other four times a week, but don’t usually have time to discuss these deep topics” (October 15, 2013). The issue of time is a pressing one, in particular, in teacher education, where participants spend day hours in the field and evening hours taking courses that will prepare them to become classroom teachers. As Portia’s excerpt makes explicit, participants saw one another frequently, but did not often feel that they had an opportunity to engage in dialogue outside of our course due to the demands of the program. This speaks to the need to have dedicated courses in teacher education programs to

offer teachers in training a structured space to grapple with issues of identity as it relates to their praxis.

Experiencing emotion in dialogue.

Intergroup dialogue is not always emotionally easy (Khuri, 2004), and experiencing a range of emotions during intergroup dialogue can be a launching point in the direction of identity expansion. As a practice, intergroup dialogue includes what are thought of as “high risk” activities – activities that push people towards learning edges and aim to prevent superficial engagement. Such activities come after establishing trust, practicing dialogic communication, and exploring identity. During one session, the participants were asked to divide into two groups to discuss their perspectives on race in caucuses of white people and People of Color. It was communicated explicitly to participants that the goal of separating was also to come back together and share what they discussed in their respective groups with the other group. Three participants joined the white caucus (two of whom identified as white, one of whom identified as multiracial and was of German and Mexican descent) and the remaining six stayed in the People of Color caucus group. In the quick write¹⁴ that followed this session, several participants wrote about the emotional dimension of splitting up by race-based groups, and reflected on what it meant for their group as a community that sought to become allies with one another. For example Trisha, a multiracial woman who joined the white caucus, stated, “Even though I knew we were dividing into caucus groups, I was still surprised with my own anxiety” (November 5, 2013). Kacey, a white woman in the same white caucus, shared a similar feeling, and wrote, “My own discomfort about racial conversation puzzled me” (November 5, 2013). It is important to note that target group members may also feel a sense of discomfort in the physical act of splitting

¹⁴ For prompt, please refer to Appendix A.

into two different groups, but tend to have a qualitatively different experience in their caucus group. According to Ariella, a Latina who joined the People of Color caucus group, stated, “During our small groups, I thought I could relate to practically everything people were saying, but also less afraid to say things” (November 5, 2013). Lydia, a multiracial woman who also joined the People of Color caucus reported a similar level of ease. She wrote, “In my People of Color group, I felt very comfortable engaging in our conversations” (November 5, 2013).

As the above excerpts demonstrate, participants experienced different types of intergroup emotions in their respective caucuses, and eliciting intergroup emotion was a goal of this particular strategy. In one’s own caucus group, their racial identities are activated, and they are afforded an opportunity to see both commonalities and differences in the embodied experiences of members of their racial identity groups. During the current sociopolitical moment, myths of postracial realities are pervading political discourse, and activating racial identities in the ways in which caucus groups does explicitly combats colorblindness, and also offers participants ways to see intragroup diversity, thus theoretically expanding the ways in which one views themselves as well as others. For purposes of the activity, participants were asked to join a caucus group that they identified with, and while caucus groups do activate racial identities, they do not conflate race and culture, nor do they negate other identities that intersect with race.

While dividing up into caucus groups can stimulate a variety of emotions, coming back together can be difficult as well. Despite high levels of emotions, the group appeared to be able to fully commit to the experience and share with one another in meaningful ways that benefitted them both individually and as a community. According to Lydia, “This experience has taught me how important it is to ‘check myself’ ...this does make me realize that it is important for me to change certain things about myself” (November 5, 2013). In addition, consistent with what she

stated above, Naomi also spoke of valuing hearing the experiences of others. She stated, “Due to the fact that I have never had close friends who belong to a different group than the one I belong to, I find it very helpful when my classmates from the dominant/white group share their experiences and thoughts. I really enjoy listening to what they have to say” (November 5, 2013). In subsequent quick writes, others echoed appreciations of the process and of one another. To exemplify this point, during the last session, when asked to reflect on what surprised her the most, Simone, a white woman, stated, “How much of a community we are and that we can actually dialogue!” (December 3, 2013). This appreciation was carried into other reflections and communicated in other data points, including the final course papers, as I show next.

Results from final course papers

While the quick writes allowed for an immediate snapshot of where participants were at various points in the quarter, the final course papers provided a deeper, more comprehensive reflection of what students took away from the experience. As in the quick writes, expansion of identity was also present in the final course papers. Other themes that emerged from the final papers included participant statements about valuing dialogic principles and perceptions regarding their utility in participants’ daily lives as educators. Participants also described feelings that were coded as empowerment and commitment to social justice action. Each theme is discussed below and supported by excerpts from course papers.

Expanding identity

According to final course papers, participants seemed to have developed a more comprehensive sense of their multiple social identities. Consistent with definitions in social psychology, I define identity in this context as one’s identification with different socially constructed groups. Whereas there are both personal and social identities, this section unpacks

the ways in which participants recognized that they belonged to multiple social identity groups. Prior to participating in dialogue, many of the women in my study stated that they were accustomed to thinking of themselves along raced and gendered dimensions. Through their participation in dialogue, participants developed more expansive understandings of identities as being multiple and intersecting. By engaging in a process of looking at power and privilege around different social group memberships, it appears as if dialogue “took the blinders off”, which seems to capture how Trisha described her process:

Before experiencing this class I was aware of the fact that I am a biracial female but that was the extent of my knowledge. How I felt in my own skin and the many privileges I take for granted were unbeknownst to me. Although, I realized the fact that society places me in the category of a white female and that comes with privilege, I just didn't realize how much privilege... This class has taught me such rich insight into how many different identities I actually possess. For example, I am a heterosexual, young adult, female that is educated and able bodied. I am biracial but also believe in God and had a Christian based upbringing. I just named seven salient social identities in one sentence of which all I take for granted. Juxtaposing my understanding of what social identities are before and after this class I see that I walk around with privilege that I truly did not understand. For instance, being heterosexual and identifying as female, normative gender or “Cisgendered” is something I didn't even recognize (December 15, 2013).

In the excerpt above, Trisha shares how she came to not only see herself as a member of multiple social groups, but also as someone who carries privilege vis-à-vis memberships in some social

groups. This realization was also present for participants who identified as Women of Color. Ariella, a Latina, also came to see herself as having privilege through the intersectional approach of intergroup dialogue. She writes, “While doing my identity wheel, I realized I hold more privilege than what I previously thought. [For example,] my privilege as a heterosexual female allows me to express affection towards my significant other without attracting hatred” (December 14, 2013). While both the excerpts above make mention of realizations that accompany recognizing one’s privilege, they do not provide a clear picture of what that means for the participants and how they are experiencing their newfound consciousness. It may be easy to imagine that grappling with unearned privilege may invoke negative feelings, and for some that may be the case, but for Kacey, a white woman, it appeared to be a process that was accompanied by a sort of liberatory consciousness¹⁵:

I do not remember clearly what I thought about my identity before going to our [dialogue] class this past quarter. I could have said that I am a White woman, but I might not have thought to mention my Christian heritage or heterosexuality and I certainly would not have thought to mention that I am able bodied. I think that previously, I would have been more likely to say that I am “White, but...” and follow it with some qualifier about how challenging life is for me too and something about how I am also a real person. I do not feel the need to do that now. In looking closer at White Identity Literature, I see that scholarship on my racial privilege does not disqualify my legitimacy as a human (that struggles as all humans do). Nor does my shaky membership in the middle class. I would say

¹⁵ According to Barbara J. Love (2000), “A liberatory consciousness enables humans to live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality, rather than on the basis of the socialization to which they have been subjected” (p. 470).

that the process that I went through in this class freed me from a great deal of defensiveness (December 18, 2013).

Previously, Kacey reported feeling “puzzled” by her “discomfort” around engaging the topic of race, and now, after a quarter of reflecting and dialoguing on identity, she appeared to have shifted into a new place. Now seeming more comfortable and less apologetic about privileged identities, Kacey appeared to be in a place where she can work for change without the barrier of defensiveness.

In addition to shifts in one’s own identity and sense of self that happen through dialogue, it is important to note that dialogue can also prompt shifts in the ways that participants see others. While intersectionality as a theoretical framework has long existed in the Critical Race Theory literature (Crenshaw, 2009), through dialogue, participants were able to approaching intersectionality as a tool for understanding their own lives and experiences in more complex ways (Phoenix, 2011) which in turn allows for the development of empathy in consideration of the experiences of others, which Dominique communicates as she reflects on her expanding sense of identity:

When I was asked to understand my social identities at the beginning of the dialogue, I felt mostly comfortable with the social groups that I thought I would identify myself as. If I was asked point blank about what my social identities were, I think I would have responded by saying I was an Asian-American, middle-class, straight woman. Although I had studied about power and privilege in society, which did cause me to think about what kind of privileges I had and the different injustices and inequalities others experienced, I never pushed myself to think further before about how these social identities affected my

positionality in the community that I grew up in, and how all of that has culminated in the rest of my experiences as an adult... While gender, race, and class are social identities that I felt shaped me the most, I am realizing that it is my privilege as heterosexual, Christian, and able-bodied which allow me to operate so easily in the world. In considering these social identities, I realized that much like class, they were something that could be hidden, but in representing these identities on ourselves we have a bit more of a choice on how we can present sexuality, religion, and ability....However, with the possibility of these three identities possibly being hidden, my understanding of possibly revealing aspects of my beliefs to some people helps me understand what it could be like to have to hide an aspect of my social identity (December 16, 2013).

Through engaging in reflective work and dialogue with others throughout the quarter, the coupling of hearing and sharing first person narratives seems to have prompted a shift toward a more empathetic understanding of the social locations from which others speak.

Valuing dialogic principles

The expansion of one's sense of identity and related sense of empathy that was achieved by participants seemed to happen largely because of dialogic principles and practices¹⁶, which many participants wrote about in their final reflection papers. According to Simone:

This class really functioned as safe space, where a group of female educators could look at their identities. It was empowering and amazing. But to get to this place a lot of foundational work had to be done. This work is what I will most

¹⁶ Dialogic principles and practices include, but are not limited to, empathy, perspective taking, suspending judgment, recognizing triggers, etc.

remember from the class because of how important it was and its applicability to my future classroom. The first thing Andrea taught us, before we even started discussing social identities, was about dialoguing. Learning the difference between debate, discussion, and dialogue was so important. The difference between discussion and dialogue were especially relevant. *Comparing Debate, Discussion and Dialogue* highlights how, “In discussion, one listens only to be able to insert one’s own perspective. Discussion is often serial monologues. Discussion tends to encourage individual sharing, sometimes at the expense of listening to and inquiring about others’ perspectives.” This is in contrast to dialogue: “In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and points of connection.” This was revelatory to me, as simple as it may seem. What separated my positive and negative experiences around social issues was usually whether the conversation had been discussion or dialogues. I was used to waiting to share my ideas without concern for others. I have a bad habit of speaking too much, and listening too little. I came into the class wanting to change this and learning about dialogue is helping me (December 14, 2013).

Others also spoke about identifying dialogue as a specific form of communication – one that was distinct from ways in which they may have engaged around issues of identity in the past.

According to Ariella:

At the beginning, I did not understand the difference between the three forms of communication compiled and adapted by Ratnesh Nagda, Patricia Gurin, Jaclyn Rodríguez & Kelly Maxwell (2008). I thought there existed an unspoken understanding that you communicate respectfully in academic conversations,

since some of my undergraduate coursework included assignments that made no distinction between engaging in a discussion or debate. I used both terms interchangeably, as well. In an interview with Jeannie Weiler, Linda Teurfs made a statement about communication that helped me understand the purpose of this class. The objectives of a discussion, debate, and dialogue differ on the intent. In a dialogue, “We come to respect individual differences...deepen our trust in each other. Dialogue helps to surface things early before they become problems” (Teurfs, 2003. p. 6). Our cohort is composed of a diverse group of women. We leaned on one another well before this course, but I am certain we would all say that Tuesday was our favorite day this quarter, because we had a weekly opportunities to reaffirm the trust and respect we developed so quickly (December 14, 2013).

While the issue of intention and outcomes can be a “hot topic” in social justice circles, with some valuing the intention and impact, and others dismissing intention and only attending to impact, it is important to note that for this group, intentions did matter. As part of a four-stage model that begins with forming and building relationships in the dialogue, participants seemed to establish the groundwork that was necessary to have authentic engagement around such challenging, yet important, issues. According to Chrissy:

Had we not established such a successful counter space, with open and trusting dialogue, I don’t think I would have quite gotten to where I did, with regards to examining my issues with race. Breaking up into segregated caucuses, and then coming back together to discuss our separate findings really worked to bring about the most honest conversation possible (December 15, 2013).

According to the participants the early groundwork around effective communication (active listening, suspending judgment, etc.) contributed to the ability to have honest and authentic dialogue. With such courageous conversations, trust, respect, listening, and fully committing to the experience is important. In her final course paper, Trisha also identified other intergroup relations skills that she felt facilitated healthy dialogue and enabled her to grow:

The intergroup relations skills “I have learned (e.g., communicating with others, feeling and showing empathy for others, staying in dialogue when experiencing conflict with others, taking risks, and so on)” will serve me well in the future. So many of my peers were able to share their stories and biases in such an honest and real way that it helped me see so many different perspectives (December 15, 2013).

Like Trisha, Naomi also saw connections to how she might apply what she learned in dialogue to her career as a teacher. According to Naomi:

In this course, I have gained intergroup relations skills that are essential for a future social justice educator. In order to effectively communicate with other people who might have different perspectives than mine, I need to engage in dialogue, actively listen with empathy, and to respect others’ perspectives (December 14, 2013).

Portia also reported a more nuanced and thoughtful approach to her professional life and the way in which she views the complexity experienced by urban students. Specifically, she attributed dialogic principles such as empathy and perspective taking as tools that helped her develop a more sophisticated lens from which she can engage her students and fellow colleagues:

About six weeks into my first quarter student teaching at a Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) pilot elementary school, I found myself giving into the deficit thinking that prevailed within the inner sanctum known as the teacher's lounge. A student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) was only seen as a troublemaker with a disability instead of the boy whose needs extended beyond that of one-on-one academic help, but basic human interaction and affection. His assets ranged in his ability to talk without fear, working with his hands to construct objects, and more, yet I gave into the deficit thinking for a week or so. I quickly realized my snap judgments and tried to figure out ways of changing my thinking. Though I was unable to help him other than giving him additional guidance during independent work, I was able to plant seeds of hope and asset thinking by questioning my mentor with the following, "He is not simply a 'trouble maker.' He is an active and creative fourth grade boy with a deeper need. What deeper need does he have?" I learned that I should always go back to the basics, empathy and perspective taking, when I lack understanding and am in a "deficit thinking mode." McCormick advised in *Listening with Empathy*, [w]e can become better citizens when we can imagine how it feels to be in all sorts of different roles that make up our society and the world. The skills of empathy and perspective taking can help us get along with people who are different from us—different in gender, social class, sexual orientation, race, culture or politics (p. 60). I lacked the empathy and effort in trying to take my student's perspective for a brief moment and it frightened me. What if there was something the student had been struggling with and I was unaware? I wondered and continue to wonder if

his family might be struggling with finances or was a family of gay or lesbian parents. I wondered if he might even be struggling with being one of two Black children in a class of 27 Latino students and two Asian students or for being labeled as “special needs” and “disruptive.” Thinking of it now, it seems obvious that those factors matter, and so I saw him for his deficits—of which, I still feel horrible for giving in. He was seen for his disabilities, so it makes me wonder what I had done and could have done differently to make him feel welcomed in the class and at school instead of being known as the “disruptive fourth grader.” I still ponder on the following questions, but am slightly relieved that such a crucial idea is not something I can easily gloss over (Portia, Final Paper, p. 7-8).

In the above excerpt, Portia applies the intersectional lens that she developed through her work in intergroup dialogue to consider identities in context. Instead of giving in to deficit thinking, she takes a broader view, considering the student’s experience as an African American male in a schooling system that often condemns and persecutes Black youth. In addition, Portia also beautifully weaves together dialogic practices, for example, empathy and perspective taking, as she engaged in her own practice of self-reflection, as well as in the way she engages her mentor teacher around this student. The ability to speak out and problem pose around this issue requires great courage. As a student teacher in California, Portia would not be granted her credential without a favorable evaluation from her guiding teacher. In a relationship with such asymmetrical power dynamics, it would have been easy for Portia to not take such risks. Instead, she acted, and as the next section will show, seemed to feel a sense of empowerment and commitment from doing so.

Empowerment and commitment to action

After a quarter of participating in intergroup dialogue, the participants reported feeling excited and empowered about taking their new skills into the classroom in their work with students. According to Lydia:

[Intergroup dialogue] has helped me set a clear plan and pathway for myself as a social justice educator. For one, I want to be more in touch with my multiple identities, because often times we only think of a few. I also want to learn more about the oppressions that other identities, that are separate from my own, have faced. Exploring these multiple identities will allow me to discover and become more aware of my own bias, which will help gear me in creating change within myself. Moreover, this process will also help me build a more just society. It is crucial for me to understand my role as a social justice educator and acknowledge the challenges I will endure, in order to make my classrooms more inclusive for all of my students. Ultimately, I have gained a lot more knowledge and self-confidence after [intergroup dialogue], which I hope will translate into my role as an educator and into my classroom (December 13, 2013).

Simone also shared a similar conviction. Like Lydia, Simone also reflected on her own learning as well as plans for how to continue her growth and development as a social justice educator:

This quarter I learned more about my own identity. I also learned about how to dialogue and build coalitions. What I do with this new information is now the question. I believe education is liberatory. I want to empower my students with information. I want them to understand the systems of power in the United States, so they know what they are up against. I know each and every one of them can

be successful but only if they know it will be difficult, if they know that they face racism, classism, ableism, sexism, and other issues. I believe elementary students can tackle these issues the same way I did this quarter. What I will be bringing to my classroom then is all of these experiences and skills, and using them to help my students think about their own identity. I want to teach my students to dialogue, and teach them to really listen to one another, to listen in solidarity. It will take modifying and simplifying but it can be done (December 14, 2013).

In addition to her belief that the skills that she learned in dialogue would benefit her and her future students, Simone also described an experience that she had with her guiding teacher in which she was able to apply what she learned in dialogue to interrupt sexism in her pre-service placement:

I also plan to apply these skills on a more personal level. I want to interrupt – isms I see functioning in my own life. For example, my mentor teacher made several sexist comments to me. He was joking but it triggered me. He was telling me I should handle a problem with a girl crying because I was woman and therefore more nurturing. I told him I would not tolerate such comments. He continued to make these kind of jokes saying he now knew how to push my buttons. After about a week of this I talked to him after school about the issue seriously and explained why I felt the way I did. He apologized and stopped the behavior. On my last day in the classroom he thanked me for doing that and said we all have things we are working on. It was hard to talk to someone who was

above me like that but I am happy I did it. It showed me I can stand up for what I believe in. It empowered me (December 14, 2013).

Strengthening, reinforcing, and refining some of the ideologies and commitments that may have brought participants to a social justice teacher education program was a powerful theme that emerged from final course paper data. That said, commitments are only part of what it takes to be an effective social justice educator.

Taking It To The Field: Winter and Spring 2014

After our quarter of intergroup dialogue, I was curious to learn how participants were “seeing race” in their student teaching placements. I wondered, did the quarter that we spent together dialoging shape the ways in which they were viewing identity and race in the classroom? Would a pedagogy that has been mostly utilized in the context of higher education, intergroup dialogue, “fit” in early childhood and elementary classrooms? In order to assess this, I asked participants to fill out quick writes¹⁷ on their winter placements, which were in elementary classrooms, and their spring placements, which were in early childhood settings. These quick writes asked participants to reflect on what they noticed about race and other identities in the context of the classroom, what they noticed about how their guiding teacher did or did not engage race and other identities, and also asked if participants could draw any connections between what they were seeing in the field and what they learned last quarter in dialogue. Data from quick writes indicated that the participants were attuned to the significance of identity categories in the lives of their students. Participants attributed these observations to a heightened sensitivity around multiple and intersecting identities that they developed through intergroup dialogue. At the same time, their comments suggest that the guiding teachers whom the program

¹⁷ For quick write prompts, please refer to Appendix C.

had assigned to participants to mentor them in student teaching made deliberate decisions to not engage topics of race and identity with their students. This section will unpack three key themes that emerged from quick writes written by participants about their observations in their student teaching placements. First, I will share with readers the ways in which participants “saw” race in their student teaching placements. Next, I will detail the ways in which participants described cultivating a heightened sense of sensitivity around identity as a function of participation in dialogue. Finally, I will report on participants’ perceptions of their guiding teachers lack of meaningful identity engagement in the classroom.

“Seeing” Race in the Field With Kids

As mentioned above, participants were tuned in to the significance of race in the lives of their students. According to Dominique:

From last quarter’s dialogue, I think I have become much more sensitive to seeing what is happening (language and actions) around my students to build their different social identities...It was interesting to see how some of my students were discovering differences in race and racial experiences in their context. [For example,] the only African American boy in the class had made note of how the principal was “brown like” him (February 2, 2014).

Other participants also noted what happened when a student was “the only” one of her or his kind, and were sensitive to the ways in which this may have contributed to the way that students experienced school. According to Simone:

I think there were a lot of issues going on with race and identity in my class that the students would have benefitted from having time to talk about with an adult. For example, one student was the only black boy in class and the only one on

permit from a poorer neighborhood. His father got out of jail towards the end of my time there and it was a huge deal for him. He was telling all his friends and I think they didn't understand at all. There was a huge cultural disconnect between him and his peers (April 6, 2014).

At times, such cultural disconnects can transform into deficit thinking and marginalization on the part of teachers, as students begin to act on and form opinions on what this difference means.

Chrissy states:

I've also noticed the stereotype prove true, Black boys are one of the most marginalized groups, and it certainly does begin in preschool. It's depressing...and I'm worried about the other children's internalization of resentment and the racial implications behind that ("He's a bad kid" is mumbled about a Black boy, by the majority of peers who happen to be Latino) (May 23, 2014).

In the above examples, difference was marked in visible and noticeable ways for Black and Latino students. Nevertheless, in classrooms that may have looked more homogeneous, participants were still attuned to diversity within classes that were composed of the same racial group. For example, Naomi writes:

The classroom where I am doing my student teaching might seem as not very diverse. However, all students have diverse cultural backgrounds. They all could be categorized as Hispanic. Yet, their families are from different countries in Latino America. I gave them a survey to get to know them better. In the question about their heritage, they were very specific when they mention that their parents

were from different Latin American countries or from very specific states in Mexico (February 4, 2014).

Noticing the significance of identity in the lives of their students, some participants stated that they tried to work with this pedagogically and create spaces where students could talk about how they experienced race and identity in their own lives. For example, according to Dominique:

From last quarter's dialogue, I have tried when I could to open up some thought to get my students to start thinking about their identities or at least to open up topics that would connect to how they see themselves. One discussion topic I used for a writing mini-lesson was to have students find evidence about why Los Angeles is a special city. One student said, "because of the Mexicans." As I probed his half-joke of an exclamation, he began to say really interesting things about what it means to identify as Mexican and Chicano (February 1, 2014).

While small, Dominique's decision to "lean in" to this comment and engage the student is significant. In the current climate of "accountability" and colormuteness, it would have been easy to let such a comment slide, and yet, Dominique's chose to not let such an opportunity go. Thus, while participants may not have met their personal goals of directly engaging race and identity with students in their student teaching placements, it is important to gleam hope from examples such as above where possibilities for dialogue and meaningful engagement with youth were opened up, as opposed to shut down.

Heightened Sensitivity As a Function of Dialogue

As stated in the previous section, participants were more attuned to the significance of race and other identity categories in their work with students. In quick writes, some participants explicitly attributed this sensitivity to the work that they did the previous quarter in dialogue.

According to Dominique, “From last quarter’s dialogue, I think I have become much more sensitive to seeing what is happening (language and actions) around my students to build their different social identities” (February 1, 2014). Also important were the ways in which they saw identities – as fluid and intersecting, as opposed to static and fixed. According to Ariella, “What I learned in the fall is that everything is intertwined and that a person’s religions, sex, gender, and race influences perspective” (June 25, 2014). While Ariella mentioned some socially constructed identity categories, and not others, the general crux behind her reflection is that identities influence positionality and standpoint in multiple and complex ways. As participants sought this understanding, they also made conscious attempts to not only attend to the structural power implications behind each identity category, there were also conscious attempts to resist flattening students along prescribed identities. Reflecting on one’s own process can be helpful in thinking about the unique perspectives that students bring with them to school. According to Trisha:

After understanding my own identity and connecting it to the classroom I understand that every child has a unique story and specific needs. I feel it is very important for me to create a space that the children feel comfortable and safe. This will include modeling the proper behavior and dialogue within the classroom. Understanding one’s identity and feeling safe within that identity is very important and necessary in order to progress and learn (February 2, 2014).

Trisha went on to reflect on the importance of understanding how one uniquely experiences identity in a later quick write. She states, “I am more aware of not putting people in fixed categories such as race. Even though it was never in a negative way, there could still be negative outcomes of such classifications” (May 20, 2014). These excerpts speak to the complexity of

teaching with an identity conscious lens. When doing so, there is a complicated dance between attending to the lived realities of embodying categories that are both socially constructed and significant, and at the same time, practicing caution and not reducing students to essentialist categories. Ariella also made active attempts to not impose identities on the students she worked with. According to Ariella, “Language is just so important about how you address children. You do not know who they will grow up to be, so as adults, I learned that we need to be conscious of not imposing on them a gender” (May 22, 2014). In these quick writes, other participants also wrote about the discomfort they experienced around the ways in which gender was constructed as fixed and rigid in their classroom placements. According to Lydia:

There seems to be this reoccurring theme/ideology that gender roles need to be set, which makes me uncomfortable at times. For instance, boys are only allowed to do XYZ, while girls are only allowed to do XYZ. In my spring quarter placement, the children were asked to sing a popular Disney song from the movie *Frozen*. The teacher separated the girls from the boys, asking the girls to stand on one side while the boys stood on the opposite side. I didn’t understand why she wanted to set the performance up in such a way to separate the students. Although I tried to suggest a different format, it was very difficult for me not to say anything specific because I did not want to step on any boundaries (July 16, 2014).

Ariella faced a similar struggle around gender binaries in her classroom that prompted her to engage the skills that she learned in dialogue with students. According to Ariella:

Whenever the topics of gender and sexuality come up in my classroom, which tends to be around conflict resolution solutions, I try to dialogue with my

students. I try to ask open-ended questions and make them reflect on what they are saying and the emotions they're feeling. However, in my classroom, I don't see the TAs or my mentor teacher really doing that. What I hear is language that tells children they can only be a boy or a girl. They're often dismissed from whole group activities by boy/girl. The activities that the teacher has them do for art are also separated by boy/girl. "The wristlets are only for the girls...the scarves are for the boys...teacher, we need more pink ones for the girls..." (May 22, 2014).

While Ariella engaged in resistance against the gendered practices that were occurring in the classroom by dialoging with her preschool students, it was both challenging and discomfoting for her to feel like she was going against her teacher. As the next section will detail, Ariella was not alone in her frustration, as several other participants shared feelings of frustration around the ways in which identities were and were not engaged in the classroom.

Guiding Teacher Mentors and the Lack of Meaningful Identity Engagement

Participants stated that while they were appreciative of other qualities that their guiding teacher mentors displayed, did note that they were not in classrooms where they were offered models for how to effectively engage the topics of race and other identities with their students. According to Lydia, "My mentor does a lot of empathy lessons that touch upon several different ways her students identify themselves. However, I have not seen a specific way that my mentor teacher engages race and other identity categories in my placement" (April 12, 2014). The few times that participants did report race or culture being raised by mentor teachers, the undertaking was superficial. This surface level approach to multicultural education, sometimes described as a

“foods and festivals” approach (Au, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994), does not critically interrogate difference. According to Chrissy:

Race is not mentioned, discussed and/or celebrated in isolation. Rather, it is mentioned in passing as part of cultural studies and art projects. We don't mention Latinos/Hispanics, but we mention *tacos*, *quinceañeras*, and *novelas*. We don't discuss Asian people, or the history of the Chinese émigrés, but we did make a tissue paper dragon, and lanterns for Chinese New Year (February 3, 2014).

Interestingly, this lack of engagement on the part of the mentors was not because teachers were not aware of the significance and importance of these topics. In the following excerpt, Chrissy explained that guiding teachers were aware of the significance of identity in the lives of their students, but were not engaging youth in such conversations:

As always I'm happy to have been in my particular [dialogue] course, because it's clear that social identities are a factor in the learning environment, even at such a young age, and it's clear that students experience the intersectionality of social identities, and that teachers see a need to address these issues, but the teachers at my pre-service placement don't know how to engage in those conversations. The work done in Fall quarter and my observations in all of my pre-service placements make it clear that addressing identities and positionality is absolutely necessary. My research after that has solidified my belief that there are strategies that can be employed to engage in dialogue with students at whatever age (April 7, 2014).

Interestingly, data from quick writes reinforced notions that participants were developing perceptions that their guiding teachers were aware of the impact that identity but did not actively engage topics of social identity in their praxis. According to Simone:

My teacher knows the demographics [at my school] are changing, and is disapproving and has taken action about some of the actions of the school, like the PTA meetings being at a wealthier white parents house thus alienating Latino parents, and that she was forced by the principal to prep students for the language assessment so they wouldn't be classified as ELLs. So at a school-wide level she is very engaged. Within the classroom though there are not many direct conversations about race and identity. She makes efforts to be culturally diverse but there are not critical discussions (February 3, 2014).

As stated in the quote above, Simone (and others) spoke frequently about how they had hoped to have guiding teachers who would be able to serve as critical mentors who could model anti-racist praxis. This was a consistent theme in personal communication with participants, as well as in their final interviews, which I will describe more in detail in the following section.

Reflecting Back and Looking Ahead: Summer 2014

The last phase of data collection took place during the summer, when participants were wrapping up assignments for their university coursework and were preparing to start teaching in their own classrooms that coming fall. At this point in my data collection timeline, two quarters had passed since participants had experienced intergroup dialogue, and they had been in a total of four student teaching placements – infant care, early childhood, lower elementary, and upper elementary. To try and understand any ways in which dialogue had shaped participants after so much time had passed, I utilized a final semi-structured interview with each participant, which

allowed them to speak more fluidly about their dialogue experience and other thoughts on children, race, and teaching across difference.

Final Interviews: Reflecting Back and Preparing to Move Forward

This section reports data from final interviews with participants. Each participant was interviewed once, after the academic year was over. Interviews took place during the summer of 2014, when participants were done with their student teaching and first year of coursework in their graduate program, but before they began teaching in their own classrooms. Themes that emerged from interviews included participants' commitment to engaging anti-racist pedagogies with children in their work as teachers, as well as their yearning for guiding teacher mentors who could effectively model anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom,

Commitment to engaging anti-racist pedagogies with children.

One theme that emerged from interviews was that participants seemed to be tuned in to the ways in which students in their placements were aware of race and other identities. According to Trisha, engaging identity with students was an important place to begin, not a peripheral consideration. When asked for her perspective on the importance of engaging identity with youth in the classroom, Trisha replied, "I would even start there. If you don't know who you are, it's hard for you to carve out where you stand and what your perspective is, and perspective taking is really important for students to learn" (July 22, 2014). In addition to the theoretical value of addressing identity and being conscious of one's own standpoint, participants also reported believed in the value of addressing race with students in the classroom to interrupt the development of problematic ideologies. According to Kacey:

So if you're paying attention, you know that students are very aware of identity, about power differences, about skin color, and they have ideas, and they want to

talk about those ideas, it's really just the discomfort of the adults that restricts that, not the actual need of the students. As I actually experienced in my last placement working in a preschool classroom, all of the students in the classroom were Latino, and they had ideas about race. They had ideas about Black people in particular, just going from a series of conversations that came up about Black people in general, and kids had a chance finally say something about what they thought, and they had quite a few racist ideas that were coming out. They were just sharing what they understood the world to be like. They informed me that Black people fight, and all kinds of other things. So they obviously need a chance to talk about things and be questioned, and to have reading material that addresses topics of identity (July 1, 2014).

Given the demographics of Los Angeles, and the schools in which participants were placed, tensions between Black and Latino students were mentioned more than once by participants. Chrissy, in sharing an experience that came not from her classroom, but from one of colleagues, speaks to the importance of addressing these tensions head on and at a young age. According to Chrissy:

It has to be then, because [someone] was telling me about one of her four-year-olds who was reading about the Civil Rights Movement, and [she] was telling her that before Martin Luther King Jr. fought for civil rights and equality, African American children and other children weren't allowed to play. The white children were separate, and [she] asked her if she thought that was ok. The little girl was like, "Yeah, obviously, Black people are scary! They should be

separate!” So she got the opposite message from the book she was reading about separation and segregation, she thought it was a good plan (July 29, 2014).

Chrissy’s comment illustrates the importance of deliberately engaging with students around these topics, and not just being satisfied with having “multicultural” materials in the classroom.

The need for critical race mentors.

All participants spoke with disappointment about the lack of mentoring around racial engagement in their placements. While several complimented their guiding teachers on other dimensions of their practice, participants often experienced a sense of frustration of the lack of explicit engagement around issues of identity with students. During her final interview, Simone actually mentioned that she formally complained about this. According to Simone:

I actually complained in the end of the year survey. When I was asked about what I didn’t like about my placements, I said that all of the teachers were great, they were very supportive of me, and were good mentors, but none of them thought about social justice, or seemed to have any clue about it, and they in no way made any connections to what we were learning about in our classes on social justice. I feel like that’s a big flaw in the program (July 8, 2014).

This was very frustrating for participants, as well as limiting. Given that participants felt that they were not mentored in the way that they would have hoped to be, their sense of efficacy around teaching for social justice in their own classrooms was impacted. According to Simone:

I think it’s really hard when you just read theory, because it’s supposed to be that you read the theory and then you see it in practice. That’s the model they’re developed, and it just doesn’t work if there’s not that connection – it just falls apart. I think I just tried to do things on my own and took that initiative...both of

my elementary placements let me do it, so I tried to do it, but it's super hard when it's not supported...So I don't know if I feel prepared or not because I haven't had a real chance to do the actual groundwork needed to do stuff around identity (July 8, 2014).

When asked about her thoughts on engaging issues of race and identity with young students, Portia and the rest of her colleagues unanimously agreed upon the value of taking such issues head on. Unfortunately, Portia was the only one in the cohort who had a guiding teacher mentor who supported her in such an undertaking. When asked about her students and race, Portia spoke about the prevalence of subtle racial slurs and insults in her first grade placement. After a Latino student told an African American student “my family says we should just kill [your type of people]”, Portia realized that she needed to tackle the issue of race head on. She brought in the story of Ruby Bridges and created opportunities for journaling and small group discussions on race, to which her students were very receptive. According to Portia:

For a lot of them, it opened it up more that they could talk about each other, and they were more open to talk about it, that it was no longer a taboo thing, like, let's talk about it and let's talk about why it makes us uncomfortable. They would write it in their journals. Even if they were working on a different lesson, they would go back to the original lesson I taught and write more on it. It sparked interest, which I think was good, and opened the room up for dialogue (July 8, 2014).

In addition to student enthusiasm, Portia stated that her teacher was also receptive:

She was open to everything. She was like, “Let's go for it.” It was something she wanted to do in her classroom, but because whole changing of the Common Core

and all of those things, she couldn't implement it the way she wanted to (July 8, 2014).

While Portia was in a mentoring relationship, it is important to note that she also had an influence on her guiding teacher mentor. Together she stated that they were able to co-create a space where students could express what life was like for them as children of color in Los Angeles. Instead of clinging to colormuteness¹⁸, as many other mentor teachers did, Portia was able to develop a sense of agency around her praxis, leading her to conclude that such work was advantageous to her students. According to Portia, "The benefit is that you're setting foundations, so that once they're older, it's already ingrained in them. Even us as adults, we struggle with identity, so it's like we're giving them tools that I wish I had" (July 8, 2014). As stated above by Portia, participants were very much a work in progress, still growing and developing in the ways in which they grappled with their intersecting and multiple social identities. While they all entered their dialogue experience in the fall in different places in terms of identity development and their intergroup competencies, they all felt that they benefited from the experience. As stated previously in this chapter, participants experienced an expansion of their sense of identity and comfort discussing issues of identity, as well as gained insight and perspective into the lives of others.

¹⁸ Nieto, Bode, Kang, and Raible (2008) define a colormute position as "an unwillingness or inability to engage in any conversations about diversity and difference" (p. 189).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As revealed in the previous chapter, intergroup dialogue offered the participants in this study a viable space within their teacher education program to prepare internally for teaching across difference. When I mention preparing internally¹⁹, I speak to the expansion of multiple identities, the sense of empowerment and commitment to action, and their sharpened ability to “see” the impact of race, racism, and racial identity in the context of teaching and learning in schools. At the same time, while some participants took it upon themselves to “lean in” and engage race in the context of their student teaching placements, many felt that were missing critical mentoring from their guiding teachers on how to most effectively be anti-racist educators. As students of color continue to grow in number in public schools (NCES, 2014) it is of the utmost importance that teachers be prepared to engage race in their professional lives. In light of the findings of this study, this chapter aims to make four points that speak to the importance of preparing teachers to effectively teach across difference: 1) teacher education matters, 2) dialogue matters, 3) race (continues to) matter, and 4) critical race mentoring matters.

Teacher Education Matters

Despite the significance of teachers in the lives of children, research on outcomes in teacher education has historically been, and continues to be, an understudied area of research (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Grossman and McDonald (2008) point out that while there has been a significant amount of research and scholarship on teaching, research on teacher education lags.

¹⁹ While I do label this shift as internal, it is important to note that in addition to the reflective work that each participant engaged in, social and collective forces within the dialogue also facilitated this transformation.

In light of shifting demographics and the demographic divide, it is especially important for teacher education scholars to study the ways in which we prepare teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms, and to build practices around outcomes based research (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). This study contributes to the body of literature that exists around preparing teachers to do the reflective work around identity, power, and privilege that is a necessary complement to extensive preparation around pedagogy and content in order to be effective teachers of students of color (Milner, 2010).

Recently, teacher education in the United States has come under attack. The National Council on Teacher Quality's 2013 review, a widely circulated yet controversial document, proclaims that colleges and universities with teacher education programs have "become an industry of mediocrity" (Greenberg et al., 2013). They go on to state that teacher education programs produce teachers with "inadequate knowledge to thrive in classrooms with ever increasing ethnic and socioeconomic student diversity" (Greenberg et al., 2013). While my intention here is not to fuel anti-teacher and anti-teacher education sentiment, I find the point on demographics compelling, and believe that data from this study reinforces the importance of teacher education as a site to prepare teachers for the diversity they will see in their classrooms.

Critical race theory (CRT) as a movement and an analytical lens is well positioned to respond to the importance of increasing diversity in schools, with particular attention paid to the complexities of race and racism in U.S. society in general, as well as more specifically in teacher education. In light of the five tenets of CRT (recognition of the centrality of race and racism in the United States; a commitment to challenging the dominant ideology; a commitment to social justice; values experiential knowledge; and challenges ahistoricism through interdisciplinary perspectives), Solórzano and Yosso (2001) define a CRT in teacher education as "a framework

that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism impact on the structures, processes, and discourses within a teacher education context” (p. 3). Considering shifting demographics and contemporary discourses around race, it is imperative that teacher education programs create spaces within their curriculum for pre-service teachers to work with and through the complexities of race and racism as they prepare for their careers as educators. Milner (2010) also recognizes this in his assertion that an “academic degree alone, whether undergraduate or advanced, in a particular discipline such as mathematics, history, or English, is insufficient for the complex work of teaching because teaching requires more than learning or knowing a particular content or subject area” (p. 118). Considering the complexity inherently present in the art of teaching, Milner (2010) presents five conceptual repertoires of diversity within teacher education that should be attended to: color-blindness, cultural conflicts, myth of meritocracy, deficit conceptions, and low expectations. Darling-Hammond (2000) also offers an argument in support of teacher education by summarizing various studies that show that enthusiasm for teaching and intelligence are also insufficient. According to Darling-Hammond (2000):

Developing the ability to see beyond one’s own perspective, to put oneself in the shoes of the learner and to understand the meaning of that experience in terms of learning, is perhaps the most important role of universities in the preparation of teachers...the capacity to understand another is not innate; it is developed through study, reflection, guided experience, and inquiry (p. 170-171).

In the above quote, Darling-Hammond (2000) makes a statement that explicitly positions teacher education as a site not only for developing content and pedagogical knowledge, but also for perspective taking and reflection – two skills that are honed and developed in intergroup

dialogue, which participants in this study were able to experience as a function of their participation in a teacher education program.

Dialogue Matters

Results from this study also contribute to and reinforce existing scholarship on the benefits of intergroup dialogue (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009), as well as extend what we know about the effects of intergroup dialogue on undergraduates to a different demographic: graduate students pursuing teacher education. In short, one of the important findings from this study revealed that dialogue matters. As we consider ways to prepare teachers to work across difference in the context of schools, intergroup dialogue offers teacher education programs one way to support pre-service teachers as they move forward in “a paradigm and mind-set shift” (Milner, 2010) promote racial literacy (Stevenson, 2014) vis-à-vis critical self-reflection. As data from this study demonstrated, dialogue equipped participants with more nuanced and developed ways of looking at the role that race and other identities function in society. While participants engaged in the type of scholarly reading and writing that is expected of students enrolled in graduate teacher education programs, the face-to-face, participatory, nature of dialogue helped prompt the shifts within themselves that enabled participants to better see the ways in which race and other identities mattered in the lives of one another and in the lives of their students.

All of the participants in this study elected to attend a graduate teacher education program with an explicit social justice emphasis, and yet, they all still grew in their sense of their identities and intergroup capacities as a function of participation in dialogue. It is also important to note that benefits were seen in both white participants and participants of color. Crucial to this was the simple act of coming together to participate in dialogue and explicit engagement across

difference. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, participants spoke of the value of hearing perspectives and voices different from their own and different from those they were socialized with. This also speaks to the point raised by Darling-Hammond (2000) on the significance of developing perspective-taking skills in teacher education. Further, all participants spoke with great favor about their experience, drawing explicit connections to the benefit of dialogue in their preparation as teachers. While they all entered the program with undergraduate degrees, enthusiasm, and presumed commitments to justice, their dialogue experience offered participants an opportunity to expand their sense of identity, thus building capacity to deepen understandings of the conceptual repertoires of diversity outlined by Milner (2010) earlier in this chapter.

Findings from this study speak to the importance of studying practices that can be employed in teacher education programs, such as intergroup dialogue, as well as the application of such pedagogies and knowledge to the field. Research done over the years has spoken to the sense of disconnect experienced by teacher education students when they move from the university to the classroom. According to Cochran-Smith et al. (2014) these studies have documented a “sobering understanding of the many challenges teacher candidates experience when they try to transfer ideas learned in campus classes to their work with students in schools, particularly when those ideas run counter to standard school practices” (p. 111). As shown in chapter four, participants in this study experienced this when they tried to find places to apply what they learned in their dialogue experience to the classroom. While participants reported wanting to integrate what they had learned and seeing a utility for such an integration, many seemed to feel as if their mentors would not be supportive of such a stance. Given both the

historical and contemporary realities of race, what does it mean when guiding teachers do not adjust their practices to account for more progressive and dialogic pedagogies around race?

Race (Continues To) Matter For Both Children and Adults

In the middle of the twentieth century, Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1939, 1947) conducted the now famous “Doll Study”, which illustrated the significance of context in producing a white bias amongst African American children living in the Jim Crow South. While the Doll Study has been critiqued on both methodological grounds and interpretation of data (Bernstein, 2011), the same white bias that was present in the mid-twentieth century has been replicated recently (Davis, 2006; Cooper, 2010) despite claims that the United States has become a post-racial society (Howard & Flenbaugh, 2011). That being said, it is important to prepare teachers to resist the myth of post-racialism, engage in their own critical reflection around race, racism, and racial identity, and structure their classrooms in a way that support healthy intergroup relations amongst students (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

Both CRT and results from this study also speak to the need for teachers to develop more complex understandings of the role of race and racism in the lives of students. While issues of race and racism have historically operated along a black and white binary, participant reports of what the youth in their classrooms were saying about race and racism speak to the urgent need to explore both internalized subordination²⁰ and horizontal oppression²¹ in communities of Color. While scholars have documented a persistent white bias in both Black and white children, data

²⁰ According to Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin (2007), internalized subordination “refers to the ways in which the oppressed collude with their own oppression” (p. 44).

²¹ According to Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin (2007) horizontal oppression occurs “when oppressed people [misdirect] their rage at other members of their group or at other groups also oppressed by a particular form of oppression rather than directing their anger outward toward the more dangerous and powerful members of advantaged groups” (p. 46).

(as paraphrased and interpreted by participants) from this study speak to a powerful anti-Black sentiment amongst many of the Latino children they were working with in their understandings of race. While painful, this is not surprising. Previous research done on children's racial attitudes has documented a pro-white bias in both African American and white youth (Averhart & Bigler, 1997). While studies on the racial attitudes of Latina/o children are not as plentiful as those conducted on the racial attitudes of Black and white children, a pro-white bias amongst Latino youth in the United States has been documented (Stokes-Guinan, 2011).

In addition to the official curriculum that students are presented with in school, both the hidden and null curriculums reinforce the dominance of whiteness. The participants in this study recognized that there was no malice on the part of their guiding teacher mentors, however, from their perspective, the choice to step back from engaging identity was both puzzling and troubling. In some ways, guiding teachers went above and beyond to reinforce binaries, as noted in excerpts on the gendered practices in classrooms that were shared in the previous chapter. On the other hand, there was explicit silence around race and other social identity categories. Given the commitments of the participants, individuals who elected to attend a social justice oriented teacher education program, the disconnect participants experienced between the theories they read about in their university classes and the practices they saw in their field placement was unacceptable. Their disappointment speaks to the need of critical race mentors in teacher education, which will be detailed in the next section.

Mentoring Matters

While it was previously acknowledged that practices in teacher education remain understudied, research has documented the importance of the student teaching context and relationship with supervising mentor teacher in shaping the developing of student teachers

(Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012). Specifically, the relationship between the supervising in-service teacher and pre-service student teacher is particularly important. Citing multiple studies, Ronfeldt and Reininger (2012) state, “Many have suggested that cooperating teachers, more than other figures, have the strongest influence on pre-service teacher attitudes and learning during student teaching, and perhaps across teacher preparation generally” (p. 1093). The significance of mentors takes on a new dimension in urban and multicultural contexts, where teacher turnover rates are more likely to be higher than areas where schools have more economic resources and better performance on standardized assessments (Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). Given the importance of mentoring in the development of teachers, it is of the utmost importance that social justice programs ensure that pre-service teachers are paired with critical race mentor teachers. I define a critical race mentor teacher as an individual who embodies the tenets of critical race theory. They recognize the centrality of race and racism in the United States, they have a firm commitment to challenging the dominant ideology, they have a firm commitment to social justice, they value experiential knowledge and the voices and perspectives of students of Color; and they challenge ahistoricism through interdisciplinary perspectives in their praxis as a classroom teacher. In addition, to the work that they do with their own students as teachers, critical race mentors would also support pre-service teachers in their own development into critical race pedagogues, whom as Lynn (1999) asserts recognize the importance of maintaining identity and culture, engage intersectional perspectives in their understanding of identity, and practice a liberatory pedagogy. Participants in this study reported being placed with mentor teachers whom they felt cared about their development as teachers, and were knowledgeable of content and pedagogy; however, mentor teachers did not model what it meant to be an anti-racist educator for participants. If the goal of a CRT in teacher education is to “identify, analyze, and

transform subtle and overt forms of racism in education in order to transform society” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 4), it is crucial that pre-service teachers be paired with mentors that can adequately cultivate and nurture the kind of pedagogical skills that can lead to such transformation.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the contributions of this study to the field of teacher education, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, I will acknowledge my positionality and dual role in this study. Next, I will discuss limitations of the sample and the fall quarter quick writes. Finally, I will address the fact that I did not observe participants teach in the field.

As previously stated in this dissertation, I was not only the researcher, but I was also a participant as a dialogue facilitator. Due to this dual role, I offered two anonymous check-ins during the quarter that participants took dialogue to ensure that they felt that any data collection efforts were not undermining their experience in the course. I also made sure to communicate to participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that they could withdraw at anytime and could still stay in the course without fear of penalty. Also, as a researcher, I refrained from analysis during data collection so that I would not bias myself in any ways that would affect the ways that I interacted with participants during the dialogue. Nevertheless, it is important for me to acknowledge that I did interact with participants closely over the course of an academic year, and they knew that I was studying the extent to which their experience in dialogue shaped them as developing teachers. Some readers may question to what extent participants were being authentic in their responses to data points, however, I found that participants were not only authentic in their responses to me, but also with themselves in their own processing of their development. For example, Portia wrote about being honest with herself

in this process in her winter quick write. She wrote: “I realize that I am not as far along in the ‘cycle of liberation’ as I would like; yet I realize that it is a neither/nor, but a process”. While my positionality can be viewed as a potential limitation, it can also be viewed as a strength in that it also afforded me analytical benefits in the research process. According to Delgado Bernal (1998), Chicana researchers bring their cultural intuition to the research process. Informed by personal and professional experiences, as well as collective experiences, my cultural intuition afforded me a unique standpoint to engage participants and analyze data and disrupt traditional, Eurocentric, ways of engaging research.

In addition to the complexities of my own positionality, it is important to note the small sample size and to be explicit that results from this study are not meant to be generalized to the larger population. Going beyond issues associated with a small sample size, it is also important to recognize that participants attended a program with an explicit commitment to social justice – an approach to teacher education that is relevant giving shifting demographics, but is not pursued by everyone. This decision on the part of participants may suggest that they entered the program with a different orientation towards justice than pre-service teachers who elect to obtain their credential through more traditional programs or alternative pathways.

Finally, it is also important to that I did not observe participants in their student teaching placements. During student teaching, there may be constraints on what pre-service teachers are allowed to do in the classroom, which would be determined by their supervising teacher. Because of these constrains, I did not have the opportunity to see the commitments that participants reported materialize into classroom practices. While data on what participants reported they would like to do once they get their own classroom is still valuable, it does not

replace what would have been gained by having the opportunity to actually observe participants efforts to teach with dialogic principles and practices.

Implications For Practice

Research from this study supports an argument for the inclusion of intergroup dialogue in teacher education courses. As teacher education programs grapple with how to best prepare teachers to engage issues of race, identity, and social justice with their students, dialogue offers schools of education a specific pedagogy for *how* to facilitate such engagement and preparation. In addition, while participants were formally enrolled in one quarter of intergroup dialogue, results convey that longer training might have produced stronger outcomes, speaking to the importance of *sustained* dialogue. This begs the question, what would have been different if participants had taken dialogue throughout the academic year? Would more time in dialogue result in stronger changes? While I can only speculate as to what the longer effects of dialogue may have been, research done on the effects of other diversity training experiences on teachers and colorblindness has shown that teachers are less likely to endorse colorblind ideologies when they participate in diversity training that lasts longer than a day (Atwater, 2007). As quotes in the previous chapter demonstrated, participants had favorable things to say about their dialogue experience, and reported excitement about bringing their dialogue skills to their work as teachers; however, participants also reported feeling a bit uncertain about *how* to best integrate what they had learned into their work. According to Milner (2010), “One or two standalone courses that attempt to capture and to build teachers’ conceptual repertoires of diversity will appear fragmented. Teacher education students will likely sense this fragmentation and find it difficult to develop and locate synergistic meaning in their teaching practices” (p. 127). In light of Milner’s assertion, it is also important to consider how the effects of dialogue may be

strengthened if it were explicitly connected to other courses in the program. Could more dialogue training coupled with critical race mentor teachers contribute to reducing colorblindness in pre-service teachers? Only future research will tell, but results from this study position such a research endeavor as worthwhile.

Given the previously mentioned significance of guiding teachers, it is recommended that teacher education programs partner novices with mentor teachers who practiced critical race pedagogy and anti-racist teaching in addition to being strong models of content and pedagogy. It is also important to acknowledge the shortage of viable mentor teachers who engage such an approach in the current age of “accountability”. Thus, another viable option to consider is the possibility of using fewer guiding teachers, and placing more than one pre-service teacher under their mentorship. This would not only allow for more pre-service teachers to see high quality practices and classroom environments, but also to have opportunities to engage in peer-to-peer co-teaching with other pre-service teachers. Research on peer teaching models (where two peers are assigned to one mentor teacher) suggests that the approach has favorable outcomes, including benefits to students in the classroom, to the guiding teacher, and also to the partner pair, including feeling more support and practice collaborating (Bullough et al, 2003). While some might question whether such an approach deprives student teachers of the intense guidance that might be needed to produce powerful, antiracist, educators, I assert that such an approach offers a better solution than pairing some student teachers with mentors that have moderate attitudes towards justice. Research has shown that teachers who have experienced direct modeling and instruction on how to discuss race and racism with students report lower levels of colorblind attitudes (Atwater, 2007). According to Atwater (2007), the more practice that teachers have embodying antiracist pedagogies in the classroom, the more difficult it is for teachers to cling to

colorblindness. Thus, having the opportunity to be mentored by a powerful antiracist educator, even if it is done in the context of a co-teaching placement, may offer pre-service teachers a better training when learning to teach for social justice than the traditional one-on-one model that is currently embraced. Last, it is important to recognize the significance of alliances in working for social change and how dialogue prepares people to be effective allies. If offered the possibility of being mentored by a critical race pedagogue and paired with a peer pre-service teacher in the same placement classrooms, teacher education programs may be closer to shifting the discourse of teacher education and whole school transformation.

In addition to considering the benefits of dialogue to pre-service teachers, it is also worth considering the benefits of such an approach to in-service teachers. Professional development seminars for teachers in the areas of content and pedagogy occur with regularity in schools, and given shifting demographics, it would make sense for schools and districts to invest in professional development seminars that would help in-service teachers a) become better teachers of diverse students, and b) become better mentors around issues of race, racism, and social justice for the pre-service teachers that they may end up mentoring.

Implications for Future Research

As my dissertation work indicates, intergroup dialogue contributes to an expansion of one's sense of identity and promotes a sense of empowerment and commitment to action with regards to engaging social justice and identity in the classroom with students. Data also indicates that participants were better able to "see" the impact of race, racism, and racial identity after a quarter of dialogue, and thus were better positioned to "lean in" to engage race in the context of their classrooms. On the other hand, participants reported that many of their guiding teacher mentors resisted engaging the topic of race with students, thus perpetuating microaggressions

vis-à-vis teacher silence on issues of race. While it is important for the field of teacher education to critically examine pedagogies and practices that prepare teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms, it is also important to understand what gets in the way. Why do some teachers go on to be committed anti-racist educators, while others may contribute to and perpetuate oppression? Could interventions like intergroup dialogue in teacher education better prepare teachers to be anti-racist educators and critical race pedagogues?

This study examined the effects of intergroup dialogue during student teaching. Future research may expand upon this study by looking at long-term effects of dialogue on pre-service teachers by studying the pedagogies and classroom practices classroom teachers who have participated in intergroup dialogues. To what extent do people who have participated in dialogue bring the practices that they reported valuing in this study to their classroom? How might colleagues, administrators, and parents respond to such efforts? Most importantly, how do their students respond? In today's rapidly changing society, it is critical to develop a more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of how youth of color in urban areas are grappling with issues of race and racism in their social worlds. While this study primarily focused on the ways in which intergroup dialogue shaped the ways in which pre-service teachers thought about race and other identities in their practice, results also reinforce existing literature that speak to the fact that children form and engage developing notions of race. Future research may focus more on the development of racial identities and ideologies of children with teachers who bring dialogue to their classroom. How do these students think about race and racism? To what extent can teachers play an active role in shaping the ways in which their students think and talk about race and other identities? Do students who have teachers with intergroup dialogue experience go on to engage issues of race and racism in healthy and productive ways? CRT research has examined the

impact of race and racism, including racial microaggressions, on campus climate and experiences of students of Color in higher education (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), and more research is needed to understand the ways in which racism manifests and is resisted in early childhood and elementary settings. Research conducted to answer these and related questions can play a critical role in contributing to practices that can be utilized in teacher education programs to prepare future teachers to actively engage the diversity they will have in their classrooms as well as developing a CRT of early childhood education.

Conclusion

In consideration of the rapidly changing demographics that were presented at the beginning of this dissertation, it is imperative that we deepen our understanding of what it takes to prepare teachers to teach in a changing world. As a divided society, we sit at a crossroads, with some clinging to post-racial narratives, and others taking active steps to recognize, name, and counteract blatant acts of racism and race based hate that continue to occur on a regular basis. Children, like adults, are not immune to the toxicity of racism. According to Beverly Daniel Tatum (1997):

Prejudice is one of the inescapable consequences of living in a racist society.

Cultural racism – the cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of Whites and the assumed inferiority of people of color – is like smog in the air. Sometimes it is so thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out, we are breathing it in. None of use would introduce ourselves as “smog breathers” (and most of us don’t want to be described as prejudiced), but if we live in a smoggy place, how can we avoid breathing the air? (p. 6).

Teachers, given their role as institutional agents, have the power to offer children tools to effectively grapple with the realities of living in a racist society; however, before teachers can do that for their students, they must grapple with issues of power and privilege themselves. Teacher education programs have not only an ethical responsibility, but a wonderful opportunity, to prepare future teachers with not only content and pedagogical knowledge, but racial and cultural knowledge as well (Howard & Milner, 2014). Intergroup dialogue is one way in which teachers may develop more critical, sensitive, and reflective perspectives on issues of race, racism, and racial identity as it intersects with other identities. As results from this study indicate, dialogue offered a cohort of pre-service teachers a space to expand the ways in which they thought about identity. Further, participants also were able to “see” race and other social identity categories with a sharper lens after participation in dialogue, thus positioning them to better hear and listen to what the youth they were working with on a daily basis were communicating about race and racism in their lives. While the constraints of student teaching may have placed constraints on the extent to which participants in this study were able to apply the dialogic principles and practices they reported valuing to their own classroom practices, results offer the kind of “critical hope” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) that educators can transform themselves and their perspectives – a first step in the path towards transforming schools, and ultimately, society.

APPENDIX A

IN CLASS QUICK WRITES

IN CLASS REACTION: SUMMARIZING AND REFLECTING

Please take about 5 minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's class.

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
3. What action taken by anyone in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?
4. What action taken by anyone in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What most surprised you about the class this week? (this could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did or anything else that occurs to you.)

APPENDIX B

FINAL REFLECTION PAPER PROMPT

The purpose of this paper is for you to reflect on your experiences in the dialogue and integrate your learning from all aspects of the course.

Paper Requirements:

Length:

The final paper should be 10-15 pages long (double-spaced), using 12-point Times New Roman font and 1-inch margins all around.

Grading Criteria:

A thoughtful, well-written paper will include:

- Integrative, coherent and well-organized writing;
- Specific examples and detailed descriptions of learning experiences that were important for you;
- Reflections on your thought processes and feelings as you experienced and passed through the dialogue;
- Analyses of your experiences and learning through the concepts of social identities, socialization, group status, personal and social change among others;
- Clear and precise connections between readings, concepts, self-reflection, and examples from dialogue (including connections to your peers' contributions).

Guiding Questions:

Your paper should integrate your reflections on the questions into a comprehensive essay that reads coherently and smoothly rather than relying on a “question-answer” format.

- a. Describe your understanding of your own multiple identities before you entered the class, and how you understand them now that the class has ended.
- b. What insights have you gained about the advantages and disadvantages, power, privilege, and oppression available to (or enacted on) you and other members of social groups? In what ways have specific assignments and dialogues helped inform your understanding?
- c. What intergroup relations skills have you learned (e.g., communicating with others, feeling and showing empathy for others, staying in dialogue when experiencing conflict with others, taking risks, and so on)? What aspects of the course contributed the most to this learning?
- d. Looking ahead, how do you see yourself applying your learning to your professional life as an educator? Describe a specific situation in which you hope to apply these skills and/or where you have already begun to apply these skills outside of class.

APPENDIX C

WINTER/SPRING QUARTER QUICK WRITE

Winter/Spring Quarter Quick Write: Summarizing and Reflecting

Please take about 5 minutes to respond to each question below about field placement.

1. What do you notice about race and other identity categories in the context of your pre-service classroom placement?
2. What do you notice about the way your mentor teacher engages (or doesn't) engage race and other identity categories in the context of your pre-service classroom placement?
3. Can you draw any connections to what you learned last quarter in your observations of race and other identity categories in the context of your pre-service classroom placement?

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