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AILACTE Journal Call for Manuscripts

The *AILACTE Journal* is a refereed journal with national representation on its editorial review board published by the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education.

The AILACTE Publications Committee and the Editorial Board of the *AILACTE Journal* announce a themed issue for 2010: *Teaching for Equity*.

Teaching for equity suggests that all educators envision an equitable teaching and learning environment and are dedicated to making equity visible in their own practice. As teacher educators, we enter our classrooms with specific values, perspectives and understandings based on our experiences. Similarly, our candidates enter our programs with specific values, beliefs and attitudes toward themselves and others. These unique perspectives are central in setting expectations and creating motivating environments, creating teaching and learning goals and focusing candidates on curricular and instructional goals for equitable practices. In what ways has your program been able to influence candidates to teach for equity? What innovative practices or models of effective practice have you developed? What evidence do you have that candidates in your program are able to teach in culturally responsive ways to support all learners?

Criteria for submitting a manuscript:

Manuscripts must be postmarked by June 1, 2010, preceding the October 2010 publication.

- APA style; not more than 15 pages, double-spaced
- Four copies of the manuscript
- Author's name and affiliation on the title page only; auto-biographical sketches of the authors (three to five sentences each) on one separate page
- Complete title and abstract (150-word maximum) on the first page of text
- Running head and page number on subsequent pages
- Electronic file copy of the manuscript in MS Word or compatible software for Windows XP will be needed after acceptance for publication
- Submit manuscripts to: Jackie McDowell, *AILACTE Journal* Editor; 5019 Berry College; Mount Berry, GA 30149-5019; jmcdowell@berry.edu

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Becoming a Teacher-Educator: Supporting the Journey of New Colleagues

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Abstract

Smaller institutions of higher education, such as those that comprise the AILACTE membership, prepare teacher and school leadership candidates to create vibrant learning communities in P-12 classrooms and schools, accomplished in part through well-structured and carefully mentored induction experiences. To optimize candidate and unit outcomes, new teacher educators also require thoughtfully constructed paths of initiation into the community of practice that is the complex world of contemporary teacher education. Successful induction is especially critical in AILACTE-type professional education units, given high levels of task interdependence among faculty responsible for program delivery. This article proposes not only institutional and unit strategies to support new colleagues entering the education professoriate but also cross-institutional and interorganizational initiatives for new teacher educator orientation, induction and mentoring that could be carried out through AILACTE and/or its state and regional affiliates and in collaboration with other teacher education organizations (e.g., AACTE and ATE).

Introduction

Given three decades of reform initiatives, the mandate-ridden, complex and contested multiple contexts of teacher education clearly has captured our attention (Cochran-Smith,

2006). We know more today about best practices in teacher education[1] than ever before, despite remaining questions about what works (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Yet we may be over-looking the needs of new teacher educators[2]. As the focus intensifies on learning outcomes for P-12 students (Cochran-Smith, 2004), an essential ingredient in candidate, program and unit success seems to be missing: the construction of more thorough and thoughtful paths of induction and initiation into our own communities of practice in contemporary teacher education. I believe that the future of our profession will be determined not only by end products and outcomes (i.e., whether professional education units singly or in the aggregate can measure the extent to which P-12 learners are positively impacted by candidates and programs) (Cochran-Smith, 2003). We also must ensure that new colleagues are met, welcomed and oriented at the beginning of their process of induction into the education professoriate.

Recognizing the challenge of negotiating the ever-changing multiple environments inhabited by teacher educators (including P-12 schools; accreditation, program approval and licensure agencies at state and national levels; specialized professional associations; and institutions of higher education) (McIntyre, 2009), we ought to structure a stronger entry into the education professoriate for new faculty colleagues. We should do this not only to support individual professional growth but also to ensure collegial collaboration in program development and delivery and thus the best possible candidate, unit and P-12 learner outcomes. This may be especially critical in smaller, AILACTE-type institutions of higher education.

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[1] The term "teacher education" in this article includes school leader-ship and administrative preparation programs as well as initial and advanced preparation for teachers.

[2] For the sake of brevity, the term "teacher educator" is defined in this article as synonymous with "education professor," meant as an education faculty member in a higher education context. This definition does not include current P-12 employees, clinical categories of faculty or higher education faculty from other disciplines and fields, all of whom may play roles in teacher preparation. Nor does this article take on the topic of the adjunct faculty role and appropriate induction for them.

The proposals presented in this article are based in part on early findings from a pilot research study (Faith, 2009) about the experience of entry into teacher education and the education professoriate. Among other inquiries, I wished to identify efforts of both new and later-career teacher educators to meet the demands of contemporary teacher education practices and to negotiate their career intentions and expectations alongside the multiple and changing mandates that govern the overall field of practice. From what I have learned thus far, entry for new teacher educators at smaller institutions of higher education, typically liberal arts colleges like those that compose the membership of AILACTE, appears to be especially challenging. While aspects of clinical practice and the assessment system in larger institutions may be differentiated and delegated to task specialists, new teacher educators in smaller colleges or universities typically become members of interdependent and integrated professional education units that value their conceptual frameworks and seek to foster program unity. Further, in the smaller units that are typical of AILACTE institutions, program knowledge and assessment expertise is ideally distributed among faculty members rather than concentrated in specialists. Smaller professional education units thus rely on intensely collaborative efforts among faculty members to establish and maintain high quality programs, produce exceptional teacher and school leader candidates and ensure unit success in meeting accreditation and other externally driven mandates. In AILACTE-type institutions, unit success in meeting the increased demands of contemporary teacher education appears to be especially dependent on the knowledge base, skill level and disposition of each faculty member. Smaller units of professional education cannot readily afford non-participants, non-cooperation or ill-informed members.

My initial inquiry suggests that looking more deeply into this problem is warranted. In this article, I first portray tensions between two types of entering education faculty that may present particular difficulties in smaller institutions of higher education, followed by a review of literature that undergirds my proposal for stronger and better-structured induction for new teacher educators. Finally, I outline some strategies for both unit/institutional and cross-institutional or

inter-organizational programs. My overall intention is to provoke reflection, to shape new possibilities for local, regional and even national action agendas and to point out the under-developed research agenda in this area.

Reform Forces and Human Resources: Challenges of Change

Over the last several decades, a confluence of factors has affected teacher education and, consequently, the work lives of teacher educators. What has contributed to the change? First and foremost, the ongoing critiques of P-12 learner under-performance in relation to national education needs, standards and goals have challenged teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ravitch, 2007; Weiner, 2007). Given the political frameworks and public discourse of the last decade or two, in which teachers in P-12 settings came to be broadly regarded as inadequate to the task of increasing levels of learner achievement, at least some of the public criticism has been deflected to teacher education programs housed in colleges and universities (McIntyre, 2009). Concurrently, the reform movements of the last part of the 20th century and first part of this century have strengthened standards for specialized teaching and administrative licenses, increased the use of standardized testing for teachers in both content and pedagogy, intensified field experience and clinical practice requirements for both teacher and leader candidates and integrated more complex and authentic assessments and work samples into program requirements for candidates (Berry, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; Zeichner, 2006). Unit and program standards used in accreditation processes now reflect these higher expectations through both accountability structures and assessment systems, and the stakes are higher than ever before for professional education units. A 2009 NCATE initiative now offers accredited units an option to engage in a trans-formation project that will demonstrate direct positive impact on P-12 schools and learners with the greatest needs.

Faculty who function as unit leaders and who carry these burdens are well aware of the mounting pressures from unit and personal workloads that haven't yet adjusted to

accommodate more complex assessment activities, data-informed decision-making for continuous program improvement and increasingly direct engagement with P-12 schools. Collaborative processes for this work are necessary and time-consuming—and yet not all colleagues may understand the stakes for the unit and their own responsibility to implement curriculum, instruction and assessment practices in their own courses and across programs. One might well ask: Why is this not clear? Unit leaders in my pilot study readily observed gaps between their understanding and those of faculty colleagues with respect to the stakes, also expressing frustration with full faculty ownership of the need to reform key practices (Faith, 2009). Yet, unit leaders did not point to existing programmatic remedies for perceived gaps in faculty knowledge, skills and dispositions. Insights into both causes and cures for the gaps were not forthcoming.

The challenge of unit and faculty adaptation to the changing requirements of teacher education is exacerbated by salary issues. Compared with P-12 salaries for doctorate-holding individuals, faculty salaries in education appear to be flattening and declining (Thornton, 2009). Although institutional resources at private colleges and universities vary widely, salaries at some AILACTE-type institutions may be especially problematic. Given this background issue, where do new teacher educators come from? Who are they? What brings them to the higher education faculty world? In this regard, my pilot study points to two employment trends of long duration that may pose problems for units grappling with the new realities of teacher education.

The first trend is the tendency of AILACTE-type institutions with an insufficiently strong salary structure to attract retiring veteran P-12 educators who are able to supplement low salaries with retirement income resources earned by 15- to 35-year P-12 careers. The second trend is the likelihood that the doctoral experience of a new teacher educator took place in a non-AILACTE-type institution of higher education, typically a larger public or private university where aspects of teacher education (e.g., clinical practice and assessment) may have been delegated to task specialists. Doctoral preparation often inculcates images of the higher education context and professorial careers that are quite unlike

the realities of teacher education in smaller colleges and universities.

In part related to the age of the entering education professor, a third factor appears to be relevant: Was he/she prepared as a P-12 educator before the higher expectations of the recent era of reform in teacher education? Did he/she encounter formative or summative standards-based assessment in teacher education? Decisions to enter the education professoriate may take place many years after an initial experience of teacher preparation from the 1970s or 1980s, as well as many years after doctoral study. Even though P-12 schools have experienced their own cycles of assessment-intensive reform over the past three decades or so, images of the nature of professorial activity, perhaps illusions of a somewhat leisurely higher education workplace culture, have not necessarily been altered in the minds of individuals who choose to become new teacher educators after substantial P-12 careers.

Another element: depending on how recently the doctorate was obtained, new education faculty members may differ widely in their comfort level with theoretical perspectives and scholarly modes of inquiry—and with the possible requirement of publication for tenure and promotion. To illustrate, the following table (Table 1) presents the hypothetical cases of Kirsten and Sandy, composite portraits based on the careers of several individuals interviewed in my pilot study.

Despite these dramatic differences in experience and intentions, both Kirsten and Sandy share certain background elements as new teacher educators: both possess P-12 content specializations as focal areas of teaching expertise, and neither has encountered a specific course in becoming a teacher educator to prepare them for the reform-driven environment they have entered. Neither of them is familiar with the nine standards for teacher educators developed by the Association of Teacher Educators (1996; 2008). Further, neither of them has previously been in a workplace setting where they were inducted into the literature of reform and renewal in teacher education or even the general bodies of literature about teacher education and preparation (for example, Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; Diez & Raths, 2007).

Table 1. Composite Case Studies of Two New Teacher Educators

Dimension of Comparison	Kirsten	Sandy
Years of P-12 Career	5 years	32 years
Level Achieved in P-12	Teacher	Curriculum Supervisor
Licensed as Teacher	Late 1990s	Early 1970s
Authentic and Standards-Based Assessment Experiences	P-12, teacher education, doctoral program	Primarily P-12
Doctorate Earned	2 years before pilot study	25 years before pilot study
Scholarly Inquiry and Research Experiences	Research associate during doctoral program; published in conjunction with faculty mentors	Informal interests pursued; experience with data-informed protocols for school improvement; no publication
Career Intentions in Teacher Education	Higher education professorial success, including tenure and promotion and publication; possible moves to more prestigious institutions	Second career; supported by retirement income; tenure and promotion potentially valuable but not essential to personal definition of success

Even though both Kirsten and Sandy may be familiar with the literature of research and practice in their content specializations, the broader context of emerging expectations and mandates for teacher education programs may not be evident to them. Unlike the field of counselor education, which offers a doctorate to prepare the next generation of professors who will educate counselors at the master's level, the field of teacher education is not well supported by doctoral-level programs that prepare teacher educators entering the professoriate.

Perspectives on Supportive Induction of New Teacher Educators: Literatures Consulted

There are at least four bodies of literature that can help us understand what new teacher educators might need:

1. Reports and research on enhanced induction practices for teachers and school leaders in P-12 settings.
2. Higher education literatures of practice that support tenure success for junior faculty as new members of the academy.
3. Literature about teacher education, here meant as the general field rather than teacher preparation or research on teaching in content specializations.
4. Literature about communities of practice and concepts of situated workplace learning.

These literatures offer important perspectives, sometimes by way of analogy, but very little is precisely aimed at the identified problem: the challenge of introducing new teacher educator faculty members in higher education to the profession of teacher education as it is practiced in the United States, given their likely origins in P-12 settings and some socialization into the education professoriate in larger doctoral-granting institutions. While a growing body of European literature on this topic is developing (Boyd, Murray & Harris, 2008; Harrison & McKeon, 2008; Moran, Abbott & Clarke, 2009; Murray, 2008), the particular structures involved in effecting teacher educator transitions to universities and colleges from school careers are quite different there, sometimes accomplished at the master's level rather than after the doctorate has already been achieved.

Induction Practices in Teacher Education and Early P-12 Careers

These bodies of literature are valuable analogically. Concerning the transition from preservice preparation into full employment responsibilities as a professional educator, we have reports on practice and careful inquiry into many

dimensions of the process: for example, program structures, phased entry, choice of placements and sites for the sake of varied and diverse experience, mentoring, supervision, coaching, collaborative learning, reflection on practice, assessment and evaluation, ongoing support in the early phases of induction and factors affecting retention in P-12 (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Dangel, 2006; Odell & Hulling, 2000; Schwille, 2008; Smith & Evans, 2008; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Our profession is acutely aware of the high value of a well-structured orientation and induction process for professional learning in clinical practice settings. At even minimum levels, teacher educators support clinical practice for preservice teachers through (a) orienting materials, including introductions to governing policies, criteria for success, standards, assessment procedures and paperwork; (b) phased induction, meaning attention to stages of involvement, participation and responsibility; (c) mentoring, coaching, supervision and other forms of guiding support; and (d) educative and evaluative feedback on how effectively assumption of increased professional responsibility is being handled by the candidate or new professional educator. To support retention of well-prepared teachers, we are often advocates for better school-based practices of orientation, phased induction and mentoring. We want to see continuous professional learning (Lytle, 2000) and continued reflective and critical practice in P-12 settings (Fecho, 2000). Our history of steadily improving practice in induction of candidates (Association of Teacher Educators, 1986; Guyton & Byrd, 2000; McIntyre, 2009) can readily translate into an awareness of what new teacher educator colleagues might need.

Supporting Tenure and Promotion in Higher Education

The literature of higher education as a field of study and practice includes reports on well-structured and innovative programs of mentoring and support for junior faculty in all disciplines and fields en route to tenure and promotion (Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Hansen, 2008; Polirstok & Digby, 2007), as well as programs that are designed to support teaching

excellence and reform of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices in higher education classrooms across the entire roster of academic, pre-professional and professional programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels (O'Meara, Terosky & Neumann, 2008). In our field, a retiring P-12 educator (see Table 1, Sandy) entering the professoriate may be rich in practice experience and practical information but may not have researched or written for publication or peer review. By contrast, the relatively recent doctoral candidate (see Table 1, Kirsten), having been inducted into the professorial life in a larger institution of higher education, may overstress a perceived demand for publication and peer review, not necessarily the dominant path to tenure in a smaller AILACTE-type institution of higher education. Unit leaders must recognize that a major concern of new teacher education faculty will be progress toward tenure, yet progress toward tenure is not all that a new teacher educator will need in order to become a more valuable unit member and capable collaborator. New teacher educators need even stronger and better induction processes, especially in AILACTE-type institutions, than are typically developed and offered to other new members of the professoriate.

Teacher Education as a Field of Study

Our own teacher education literature of practice and inquiry is both well developed and underutilized in our own professional communities. I have asserted already that the broader literature about our field (for example, Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre & Demers, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; Darling-Hammond, Bransford, LePage & Hammerness, 2005; Diez & Raths, 2007) may not be readily visible to new teacher educators, who typically arrive with content identifications associated with previously earned licenses and P-12 professional employment. Such pedagogical specializations will likely shape most of their teaching responsibilities. Even if periodicals of a more general nature (such as *AILACTE Journal, Journal of Teacher Education* and *Action in Teacher Education*, among many others in our field) circulate in the unit or library, faculty identity may remain with

the specialization. At accreditation orientations and assessment workshops offered collaboratively by NCATE and AACTE or at other professional conferences or trainings, new teacher educators may become acquainted with some of the broader literature of improved practice (for example, Carter, 2003; Diez, 1998; Mitchell, Allen & Ehrenburg, 2006). Yet recently hired teacher educators may not attend these conferences due to limited budgets for funded travel. Nor would these events necessarily attract new education professors who may plan their path to peer-reviewed papers, presentations and publications through specialized professional organizations or through a section of AERA. Better induction programs for new teacher educators should include substantial use within such programs of the excellent—but perhaps too little appreciated—general literature of teacher education.

Communities of Practice and Situated Workplace Learning

The concept of a community of practice refers to the process of social learning that occurs and the shared socio-cultural, interactive and relational practices that evolve through groups and organizations that have common goals (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Some of the original research about communities of practice occurred in apprenticeship situations (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and much of the adaptation of the concept into specific workplace settings has focused on how situated learning occurs for newcomers as they enter and attempt to acquire the sociocultural practices of the community (Blanton & Stylianou, 2009; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Krumsvik, 2005; Seibert, Mills & Tuff, 2009). Related concepts about entry and knowledge acquisition for members include the negotiation of meaning through participation, participation as active involvement in the social processes of the community of practice and alignment of individuals with the communal learning task (Hord, 2009; Wubbels, 2007). The literature about communities of practice has also been closely associated with concepts about knowledge management as social capital in organizational learning and development and with ways to theorize about and make explicit tacit knowledge that is not easily captured, stored and shared (Blanton &

Stylianou, 2009; Nagy & Burch, 2009). Situated workplace learning in communities of practice can be enabled by assistance from co-workers and by others who share the sociocultural practices of that community. This has high relevance for designing better-structured induction for teacher educators. While this literature generally cautions against an overuse of reified processes (manuals, handbooks, program documents and literature) and an underutilization of participation in relatively informal group activities (mentoring, coaching, unstructured seeking out of peers for advising, among them), both reification and participation in combination support the successful acquisition of tacit knowledge held by the more senior members of the community of practice and for positive negotiation of meaning of membership in the community of practice by the newer members (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Through these concepts, we may come to understand and evaluate how informal induction is occurring in teacher education, and, further, begin to design induction processes that will encourage new teacher educators to move in from peripheral participation and apprenticeship status more fully, for the sake of unit, program and candidate outcomes.

Entering the community of practice that is contemporary teacher education can be difficult for the new teacher educator. Although collaboration is required by our communities of practice, individual achievement is the dominant culture of academe. The new faculty member may be focused on teaching courses with the mindset that these are "my" courses more so than embodiments of program expectations already worked out collaboratively among program faculty and often represented in reified documents such as syllabi, curriculum maps and program documents connected to assessment and accreditation processes. New faculty members in our field may imagine success in the faculty role as akin to other disciplines and fields in higher education, represented by good teaching, progress toward tenure and promotion, productivity in presentations and publications and institutional and professional service that is well regarded by peers. While merited and required of new faculty in education as elsewhere in our institutions, this stance of a new teacher educator would not engage explicitly and concretely the tacit knowledge shared

by the community of practice, particularly in a smaller college or university. This tacit knowledge includes the pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran, 2006; Loughran, Korthagen & Russell, 2008); the multiple contexts of teacher education; complex sets of standards and complicated policy mandates (McIntyre, 2009); accreditation knowledge and skill; the requirement of substantive clinical practice shaped by effective school partnerships (Berry, 2005; Zeichner, 2006); expectations of reflective and critical perspectives in our candidates (Grant & Gillette, 2006), highly integrated coursework and clinical practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b); and assessment processes for candidates and programs leading to data-informed decision-making for continuous program and unit improvement (Diez, 1998; Mitchell, Allen & Ehrenberg, 2006). All faculty in AILACTE institutions are called to engage all of this. The community of practice that is contemporary teacher education simply requires more of its faculty members than is the case in most other disciplines and fields, and AILACTE-type institutions experience this keenly. I assert that new teacher educators need a more explicit introduction to these additional expectations, a well-structured process to make tacit knowledge in all of these areas more public and communal.

Proposals for Better Induction of Teacher Educators: Supporting the Journey of New Colleagues

In proposing new initiatives to address inadequate and incomplete induction of new teacher educators, size and scope of the programs may matter. Relevant to AILACTE institutions, where the supportive structures for a new teacher educator are located in the unit and where new education faculty may arrive one or two at a time, I posit that induction programs and processes might be incomplete, even where good one-to-one mentoring occurs. Mentoring alone may not suffice to convey all tacit knowledge. On the other hand, a national program may blur important distinctions between smaller and larger institutions and their approaches to teacher education, as well as eliminate the potentially helpful role of state licensing

and state accreditation/approval agencies involved in teacher education policies and practices.

At the unit/institutional level, much good can be done for new teacher educators in the unit or with colleagues outside the unit through well-designed mentoring programs; developing collaborative opportunities for peer review of drafts of scholarly writing; assigning books and articles about teacher education to read and review in conversation with other faculty; providing unit documents to review and websites to visit; encouraging teaching excellence through programs offered by the institution; and by using the ATE standards for teacher educators to support faculty development and encourage growth in specific areas. Unit retreats intended to facilitate faculty development and unit collaboration, as well as entry for new colleagues, could be scheduled at an optimum moment in the academic year.

At a cross-institutional level, colleges and universities in the same locale that have already developed working partnerships might team up to deliver richer and more substantive programming to new teacher educators entering in the same academic year, perhaps collaborating on retreats, new teacher educator welcome and orientation programs and mentoring. AILACTE state and regional affiliates could support this process, as could AACTE and ATE state and regional affiliates.

Interorganizational collaboration might also evolve new teacher educator institutes in states and regions, including state and national representatives of accreditation, program approval and licensing agencies. Such models might include online learning modules from national sources. In my vision, the curriculum for such institutes would be driven by the overall unit and faculty experience in contemporary teacher education and might involve many of the elements in Table 2.

Table 2. Potential Elements of Tacit Knowledge to Include in New Teacher Educator Induction

- The literature of teacher education as a field of study and practice
- The pedagogy of teacher education, including reflective and culturally responsive practice
- Perspectives on and best practices for programs, clinical practice, curriculum, teaching and assessment; school partnerships; ensuring stronger P-12 outcomes
- The roles of different sets of standards in units and programs
- The centrality of conceptual frameworks in fostering program unity
- Curriculum and assessment maps in relation to course and program integrity as well as candidate and program assessment
- Unit and program accreditation and approval policies and procedures
- Information about specialized licenses and supporting programs, as well as types of initial and advanced programs
- Common features of contemporary teacher education programs such as portfolios, teacher work samples, teacher inquiry and reflective practice
- Data use for continuous program and unit improvement; assessment systems
- Approaches to adult learning within unit learning communities
- Research, inquiry and scholarship with respect to tenure and promotion goals
- Mentoring, coaching and advising skills with respect to candidates
- Using the ATE standards to guide the development of education faculty

Mentoring relationships could also be established as one by-product of such institutes to advance new teacher educator learning and development. Perhaps mentoring within a structured induction process of this type could be valuable in the renewal and ongoing development of established teacher educators.

Conclusion: Toward a Better Beginning

Our field learned long ago that induction matters for new teachers, yet we haven't yet taken the same care with colleagues' entry into the education professoriate. I plan to continue my research into the career paths and situated learning experiences of teacher educators of different types and in a variety of institutional contexts. But it is not too soon to advocate better induction of new teacher educators and to engage AILACTE, AACTE and ATE and regional and state affiliates in the process. Perhaps doctoral institutions may find ways to address the preparation of teacher educators. In the meantime, this article will have served its purpose if AILACTE colleagues are stimulated to recall their own points of entry into contemporary teacher education, to reflect on their own levels of participation in our ever-evolving and dynamic communities of practice and to expand their own potential roles as helpful mentors and supporters of the new teacher educators in our midst.

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Blown Away: Parents and Preservice Teachers Working Together to Help Struggling Readers

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Abstract

Teacher education programs do not generally provide opportunities for preservice teachers to work with parents. As a result, these novice teachers often leave their teacher education programs with little or no information about how to successfully interact with parents. This article details the actions of parents during a reading course that was purposefully designed to bring preservice teachers into direct contact with children who find reading daunting, and with the parents of those children. Additionally, the article highlights the preservice teachers' reactions to the parents' actions.

Introduction

The teacher candidates were nervous on the first day of their *Teaching Struggling Readers* course. On that day, it was announced that they would be working with children who struggled with reading; but more important, they would be working with the parents of those children as well. With that last bit of information nerves quickly devolved into absolute panic for the 25 preservice teachers in the *Teaching Struggling Readers* course. When they enrolled the semester before, these preservice teachers had no idea that 18 parents, and 16 elementary school children, were going to become regular participants in their *Teaching Struggling Readers* course. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that these preservice

teachers were, as they put it, "very stressed" with the idea of being in the *Teaching Struggling Readers* class. Several of them came to see me at the end of class, in small groups and individually, to express their anxiety with the idea of working with parents.

Background

In the fall of 2008, the decision was made to change the struggling readers' course from a traditional theoretical format to one that took theory into practice. The course appeared to be the perfect vehicle to provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to work with children who find reading daunting—and the parents of those children. During the planning of the course, several stakeholders were identified: the university, local public schools, preservice teachers, parents, students and the local library. Principals and classroom teachers with whom the University had professional relationships were asked to select 25 third grade students who were having the most difficulty learning to read. These would be students who could benefit from extra one-on-one reading tutoring—*and* whose parents would agree to attend the tutoring along with their children. Third grade was chosen because it is the first "testing" grade in the state of North Carolina.

The tutoring sessions would be free of cost; the course instructor would supervise the sessions, which were offered in the evenings, on the university campus, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. As such, the parents and students would become "members" of the university class along with the preservice teachers. Parents would be responsible for bringing their children to the tutoring sessions every other Wednesday from September to December, 2008. Additionally, parents would be asked to continue the tutoring with their children at home.

The course was designed in two overlapping phases. Phase I covered reading theory while Phase II addressed practice. In Phase I, preservice teachers learned about the five essential components of reading and how to successfully teach each component. In Phase II, they drew upon the knowledge they gained to tutor (one-on-one) a struggling reader and provide instructional information for the reader's parent(s). Preservice

teachers were expected to develop detailed lesson plans, one for themselves and one for each parent. They were also required to demonstrate, to the parent, the skill on which they were working and how they used that skill in context. For example, one preservice teacher noticed her tutee was struggling with phonics knowledge in context. The child was able to identify the letter/sound pattern within single words, but struggled to identify the same pattern in a single sentence. The preservice teacher had the nursery rhyme "Jack Sprat" written on her lesson plan. She read the rhyme again and again while letting the child point to each word as she spoke them until the child began to see the letter sound pattern on which they were working and to gain understanding that he needed to read from left to right. The parent did the same and was asked by the preservice teacher to think of some favorite stories, songs or poems she might continue to read at home with her son as they practiced the letter/sound patterns. She offered several songs she remembered from her childhood but said she didn't have the text at home. Using the university's computer lab, the preservice teacher printed several poems and songs for the mother to take home for practice with her son.

Another aspect of the course was that on the first day of the tutoring, the director of the local library system was invited to the class to talk to parents about making the library resources available to them. Parents were invited to visit, tour and join the library with their children. The reason for including the library was to allow the children access to a wide variety or reading materials they did not have to purchase. Additionally, they would have opportunities to re-read for clarity and fluency as they practiced at home with the same books they brought to the tutoring sessions.

As was expected, the first day of the tutoring was the most stressful for the preservice teachers. On that first day, parents were expected at 5:45 p.m. for a general introduction and parent overview session. During my pre-talk with the preservice teachers before the parents arrived, they all, without exception, spoke of being nervous and expressed concern that they would "say the wrong thing" or "make fools of themselves" in front of parents. Their level of stress was somewhat surprising but not entirely unexpected. Research indicates that preservice teachers often do not feel as if they are prepared to

involve parents in their practice (Hiatt-Michael, 2001); and indeed, this was a primary reason for the course's new configuration.

The new configuration took into consideration that preservice teachers' lack of preparedness to involve parents had to be addressed because, "The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on child development and educational achievement" (Fullan, 2001, p. 198). We also know that what children think about school, teachers and the importance of education begin with the signals they receive from parents (Price, Mayfield, McFadden & Marsh, 2001). Additionally, we know from Vygotsky's (1978) work, that what children come to value, believe or accept as culturally important is transmitted from one generation to the next, from parent to child by the social interaction between the two. Researchers also posit that when parents are involved in their children's academic efforts, there is often a noticeable improvement in the children's achievement, grades, test scores and overall academic performance (Henderson, 1988, Epstein, 1991, Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). Finally, as Ferrar and Ferrar (2005) note, gone are the days when schools could simply dismiss the role of parents. Parents' right to know about their children's school activities, involvement and performance has been guaranteed by the No Child Left Behind Legislation (2001).

The Parents

From their questions and comments during the overview sessions, it was clear the parents were pleased to have been invited to participate and simply wanted to know what they needed to do to help their children. Parents told of their fears concerning their children's struggles with academics. They spoke of their desire to help but their uncertainty concerning what to do. One mother wondered what if we had any idea what would happen to her son who had already repeated the first grade and would probably repeat the third grade because his progress to date had been minimal.

As the weeks progressed, preservice teachers became more relaxed with their tutees and parents, in that they no longer

complained about being stressed, but rather they were beginning to talk to parents more often, and routinely sought to involve them in the tutoring process. That involvement could be as minimal as having the parent follow along as the child read to the parent, or as involved as having the parent help develop the comprehension questions for a story the child read. And as they became more diagnostic in their approach to teaching reading, preservice teachers began to focus more clearly on their particular tutee's needs. Without realizing it, each parent/child/preservice teacher group slowly became a "team." In addition to the learning and teaching that was taking place, such teaming created an atmosphere that allowed for the unfolding of personal stories. During our post-tutoring discussions, the stories that emerged moved one preservice teacher, Jasmyne, to note "I am blown away with how hard these parents have worked to help their kids."

Another preservice teacher, Maddy, was stunned when the African American father of her tutee apologized profusely for being ten minutes late to one of the sessions and for his sleepiness and obvious inattention at the session. He explained that on that day his family was attending the funeral of a family member in another state. Because of his promise to his son that he would faithfully take him to tutoring and help him with his reading struggles, he drove all night so they could make it back to campus in time for tutoring. Another mother, who wrote in her parent evaluation of the course that she felt "blessed to be involved in the project," became visibly moved with her son's progress in improving his reading fluency skills. Her unexpected emotional reaction to her son's efforts as he fluently read Shel Silverstein's *Smart*, was as affirming to him, as it was to his tutor.

On the third session of working with parents and students, one Hispanic mother whose third grade daughter was becoming more relaxed with her tutor asked the instructor if she could "have a word" with her in the hallway. That day, she brought four children to the session. The earnestness of her request and the faithfulness displayed in her actions was palpable. In very strained and broken English her communication could not have been more clearly delivered. She explained that she realized the invitation for the free tutoring was issued for her daughter in the third grade. However, her other daughters, one in the

fifth grade, one in the second grade and one in kindergarten, were also struggling with reading. She decided to bring them along to the sessions, hoping they too would be able to watch, listen and possibly derive some benefit from their sister's lessons.

Discussion

Interestingly, the level of commitment and determination from parents seemed to have a more pronounced impact upon the preservice teachers than did the tutoring experience. The suspicion is they were "blown away" with the level of parental involvement they encountered because they often do not have the opportunity to work with parents. Another impact was that as parents faithfully attended the sessions with their children, preservice teachers came to view them more as peers or partners, rather than just someone they needed to provide information about their children.

Nonetheless, it is also possible that preservice teachers were "blown away" because they might have held pre-conceived notions and other stereotypes with regard to the parents of children who struggle with reading. As a result of the strong and positive class evaluation from preservice teachers and parents alike, it has been decided that this class will be taught every year with the parent component attached. As such, it should provide us opportunities for various studies as we seek to uncover answers to many burning questions in the education of preservice teachers. Some issues we will look at in the future might include: Preservice teachers' perception of parents and the intersection of race and socio-economic status, parents' perception of schools of education, the impact of parental involvement on the reading instruction of children who struggle and the impact of parents on the education of preservice teachers. Another thing that might be interesting for future research is children's expectation of their parents in their process of learning to read.

I believe as we continue to include parents in their children's education, and the function Schools of Education might play in that effort, we will be able to broaden preservice teachers' exposure to parents early in their practice. And, we

will be able do so in ways that cause our preservice teachers to look forward to, rather than be "blown away" by, the lengths to which parents will go to ensure their children's success, and be equipped with strategies to best work with parents to facilitate student learning.

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Experienced New Teachers

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Abstract

Although many researchers have focused their efforts on studying first-year teachers, little research has been conducted about experienced new teachers, educators who have teaching experience but are new to a school or school system. This qualitative study of the experiences of three experienced new teachers reveals that many experienced new teachers struggle with some of the same issues as beginning teachers. Eight themes emerged as challenges for experienced new teachers, including: difficulty with the new school culture, trouble learning the curriculum and peer relationships. Practical implications are provided, which are salient for teacher educators who work with preservice and inservice teachers, graduate-level candidates and current and future school administrators.

When I began my teaching career in 1992, I did not feel like a first-year teacher. I *was* a first-year teacher, but I did not struggle with many of the issues that researchers have determined first-year teachers will most likely encounter: managing the classroom, locating necessary resources, talking with parents, understanding administrator expectations and individualizing instruction (Howe, 2006; Odell, 1986; Veenman, 1984). Why? I attribute my success to terrific teacher-preparation training, an excellent induction experience and a fantastic group of administrators and colleagues in my first school.

Five years later, my husband and I relocated, and I accepted a teaching position at a private school for students whose behavior had forced them out of traditional school settings. The year I spent in this new school was unpleasant, at best. There was no teacher induction program, the administrators were uninvolved in my classroom, my colleagues were taking bets as to how long I would stay in that difficult school environment and the students were generally unfriendly and sometimes hostile. I had gone from being a respected teacher in my first school to feeling completely unaccepted in my new job! I attributed my experience to the fact that the school was a private school; and after one year there, I began seeking another public school position.

Thrilled to be out of the private school, I walked through the doors of my new school fully anticipating the respect and positive relationships I had experienced in my first job. Unfortunately, that was not the case. There was no induction process. I was assigned a mentor who had fewer years of teaching experience than I had. My administrators made no efforts to orient me to my new surroundings, and my colleagues busied themselves with their own tasks and their existing social networks. I found myself disappointed and dismayed. No one seemed to notice that I was struggling with many of the same challenges facing first-year teachers: locating necessary resources, understanding administrator expectations and meeting parents in the new community. Everyone treated me as an experienced teacher. And why shouldn't they treat me that way? After all, I was an experienced teacher.

Well, not exactly. I was an experienced *new* teacher. Slaughter (1988) found that although experienced new teachers' obstacles and issues may be similar to those of first-year teachers, the experiences are not identical. Slaughter stated that "further examination of [experienced new teachers] would be warranted, simply because little specific information on them is currently available" (p. 163).

Studying Experienced New Teachers

Out of my personal struggles as an experienced new teacher emerged the motivation to learn more about this group of people. After considering various research strategies, I concluded that the most effective way to examine the experiences of a specific group of individuals and to describe those experiences in depth was through qualitative research. I elected to use the qualitative method of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Portraiture

Portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) is a research method that draws from other qualitative methods, including ethnography, phenomenological interview study, grounded theory and case study, to wit: (a) Ethnographers examine a participant's culture, as well as the participant's *views* of that culture (LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992); (b) phenomenological interviewers are interested in understanding the essence of a participant's experiences with described situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994); (c) grounded theorists methodically develop a theory from collected data through a scientific process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990); and (d) case study researchers examine a specific individual or situation (Denzin & Lincoln).

Although portraiture utilizes pieces from each of the qualitative methods named above, portraiture is uniquely different because of the write-up of the participant's experiences. The final product is a co-created written portrait—a first-person narrative that is shaped by both a participant's experiences and the researcher's thoughts about those experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Conversational interviews that are guided by the researcher, participant-observation and a collection of archival data are all methods of data collection in portraiture writing. The procedures of data collection, data analysis and the writing-up of the data are all pieces of one cyclical process. The researcher is not only looking for emerging themes, but he or she is also keeping the final portrait in mind *while* collecting the data (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis).

Site Selection

I chose to conduct this portraiture study in a school system that provided an induction program for both first-year teachers and experienced new teachers. Although I did not know at the beginning of the study to what extent the system and its administrators distinguished first-year teacher induction from experienced new teacher induction, I knew that they offered the program to both groups of new teachers.

Participant Selection

Kvale (1996) suggested that qualitative research studies ought to focus on a few individual cases, in order to make it "possible to investigate in detail the relationship of a specific behavior to its context to work out the logic of the relationship between the individual and the situation" (p. 103). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), "the portraitist is very interested in the single case because she believes that embedded in it the reader will discover resonant universal themes" (p. 14). Consequently, I limited the study to three participants.

The three participants shared four characteristics. They all: (a) were new to the system the year the study was conducted; (b) were female; (c) taught in separate elementary schools within the system; and (d) had between 6 and 13 years of teaching experience. I limited participation in this study to teachers who met these four parameters in an attempt to control for differences that may have been more strongly influenced by gender, age-level taught and years of teaching than by their current situation of being experienced new teachers. Prior to the onset of this study, I had not met any of the participants, nor had I visited or spent time in their respective schools.

Data Collection

The data collection period occurred during the first three months of the school year. I observed each of the three experienced new teachers as they taught and as they interacted with colleagues, students and parents for three full-length school days (one day in August, one day in September and one

day in October). While in the schools, I also reviewed induction materials.

In addition to observing the participants and examining documents, I also conducted three semi-structured interviews with each participant during those three months. Interviews included questions about the participants' experiences in their new school, their family lives and their feelings about themselves and their work. Additional interview questions were formulated during my observations of the participants.

Data Analysis

Using portraiture's methodological approach, I began analyzing the data by coding and categorizing it (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I followed a deliberate process, which began immediately after my first visit with each participant. First, I transcribed the interview and read the transcription thoroughly, noting any thematic categories that seemed to be emerging. As I reread the transcription, I combined any categories that seemed to belong together and separated those that seemed too broad. I assigned each category a color. During the second read of the transcription, I systematically color-coded every statement the participant had made, based on the category into which it best fit. Occasionally, I made additional categorical changes as I re-examined each sentence within its context.

After analyzing the first interview, I color-coded the field notes from the first day of observation, continually revising and adjusting the categories as necessary. With a color-coded copy of both the first interview and the field notes from the first observation, I began compiling data from each category into one working document, with data organized under appropriate headings. I repeated these steps after subsequent visits with the participants; and I added new information to the compiled document, which I began to refer to as that teacher's "story."

After completing all three visits with a participant, I read that participant's story in its entirety, recalling the vocal inflections, the tears and other specific moments that I remembered from my observations of that teacher. I then set aside my recorded data and constructed from memory an outline of topics that stood out most to me about that participant. Next, I read that teacher's story once again, using

this document to add substance to my outline by providing examples, quotes and topics that had not previously come to mind. In completing this step, I was reminded of the analogy that Goetz and LeCompte (1984) used for this stage of the process:

> Once a researcher has established the categories within which the data are organized and has sorted all bits of data into relevant categories, the ethnography as a portrayal of a complex whole phenomenon begins to emerge. The process is analogous to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. The edge pieces are located first and assembled to provide a frame of reference. Then attention is devoted to those more striking aspects of the puzzle picture that can be identified readily from the mass of puzzle pieces and assembled separately. Next, having stolen some surreptitious glances at the picture on the box, the puzzle worker places the assembled parts in their general position within the frame and, finally, locates and adds the connecting pieces until no holes remain. (pp. 191-192)

Each of the crafted portraits tells the story of an individual experienced new teacher—what her life was like in a new setting, what her struggles and successes were and what might have been improved. The following eight themes emerged from these crafted portraits.

Emergent Themes

Theme One – Unfamiliar Cultures

All of the teachers in this study experienced some degree of difficulty interacting with a school culture with which they were not familiar. One described her personal experience with this obstacle as having to deal with "the way it's always been done." When she first attended meetings at her school, she attempted to make suggestions that were different from the way things had been done; and her ideas were disregarded.

After some time, however, her colleagues and administrators became more willing to accept and use her input.

The second participant was not so adept at managing this challenge. Several times she attempted to state her opinion on an educational issue, and her outspoken behavior only made enemies for her. Those enemies included most of her colleagues, as well as her administrators.

Theme Two – Need for Information about the School District and the School

Experienced new teachers and first-year teachers need to have separate induction sessions. One participant referred to the system's induction meetings as "boring," because they included a sizeable amount of material aimed primarily at first-year teachers.

There is also a need for school-level teacher induction sessions to supplement system-wide meetings. One participant stated specifically that she would have liked more information about the policies at her school via an organized, school-level induction program.

Because of my previous experiences as an experienced new teacher, I understood the teachers' frustrations with not having a clear direction about school policies and procedures. The policies and procedures in both of my new schools were merely glossed over, if stated at all; yet I was expected to perform as though I knew all of this information.

Theme Three – Learning the Curriculum

Familiarizing themselves with a new curriculum was an issue for all three experienced new teachers. One was not familiar with the math program used by the system, another had never followed such strict reading guidelines and the third had never taught fifth grade. All three participants needed much more intensive support in learning the curriculum.

This finding was not surprising to me. As an experienced new teacher, I had struggled to understand how the curricular requirements in one school system could be so much different from those in another. And each change of schools had always

required me to invest significant time in learning to teach from a new curriculum.

Theme Four – "Extra" Requirements of a Classroom Teacher

One participant expressed frustration with all of the "extra stuff" that had nothing to do with actually teaching her class (e.g., weekly meetings such as a drug awareness program and 4-H). In spending time with her, I found this to be one of her greatest areas of difficulty. Attempting to teach fifth grade for the first time in her career, she found herself struggling just to teach the basic curriculum. She had been totally unprepared for the extra expectations that came along with teaching fifth-grade students, and she was unsure how to balance those expectations with the academic curriculum. This finding may prove especially useful to administrators and colleagues of experienced new teachers who are entering a new school and a new grade level simultaneously.

Theme Five – Obtaining Materials and Supplies

All three participants in this study struggled to find teaching materials and instructional supplies. For example, one participant needed certain materials in order to conduct the experiments in her science textbook. Although the supplies may have been in the building, or even in her own classroom, she did not know where to find them.

In addition, every school has its own policies regarding who is allowed to use the copy machine or how to use the school phone. Each of the teachers in this study had to maneuver their way through those types of unwritten rules.

Theme Six – Handling Student Discipline

Although one of the participants encountered some problems with managing student discipline, this area was especially troublesome for another participant who had some particularly difficult students in her classroom. When I mentioned to her that one of my purposes for conducting this study was to observe her interactions with colleagues and administrators, she said, "You'll see me interact a lot with the

administration. You know how the new teacher gets the roughest kids? You'll see that for sure."

Theme Seven – Teacher Cliques

Although one participant did not have trouble making friends and another stated that she was not concerned with building relationships, encountering teacher cliques was one of the third participant's greatest frustrations. Her friend and colleague commented that although the people on her pod tried to encourage her, there were teachers at the other end of the building who would not even speak to her. This situation was especially hard for this participant because she desperately wanted to find individuals to replace the friends she had at her former school. Because she was unable to develop many friendships, she began to dread coming to work.

Theme Eight – "Other Teachers Forget You're New"

Two of the participants regularly encountered problems because of a lack of information about school procedures. One did not know about bus duty and the procedures for lunch. Similarly, another had no idea that she was supposed to include a completed modification sheet for each special education student's report card. One participant suggested that the reason none of her colleagues remembered to tell her things was "because they're just used to doing it. It's not that they *mean* to not tell me, they just don't *think* about it."

Practical Implications

These three participants faced significant challenges when they entered their new schools. However, there are several strategies that can help make the transition to a new school and a new school system more enjoyable and rewarding for experienced new teachers.

Create a School-Wide Induction Program

System-wide induction programs serve a specific purpose: They provide support and introduce new teachers to the entire school system and its workings. A school-level induction (considering the needs of both first-year teachers *and* experienced new teachers) would give everyone the opportunity to become acclimated to the culture of the school.

Foster an Encouraging Climate

Teacher induction is not the only time an environment of support and encouragement can be fostered. Teachers can gather socially at various times during the school year, or there can be school-wide staff social events and team-building activities offered. These can be an encouragement to all teachers.

Create and Regularly Update a Teacher Manual

A school-wide manual detailing all the requirements, duties and responsibilities for teachers at that school can be a very valuable tool. The manual should be distributed before or during the induction process, allowing new teachers an opportunity to formulate and ask questions regarding expectations. As those expectations change during the school year, the manual should be updated.

Involve Teachers in Obtaining Materials and Supplies

New teachers should be involved in the ordering process. Teachers hired after that process is complete need to be given the location of materials and supplies.

Provide a Mentor

Most schools provide a mentor for first-year teachers; however, experienced new teachers are generally disregarded in this area. Mentors of experienced new teachers should have more years of teaching experience than those they mentor. It

would also be helpful if the mentor and the experienced new teacher taught the same grade level.

Provide Curriculum Guides and Maps

Each school system has a different set of expectations regarding curriculum. Some systems follow specific text-books, while others adhere to frameworks provided by the state. Explaining those expectations conveys the value the school system places on curriculum. For each subject that has a curriculum guide/map, new teachers should be provided with a copy of this document prior to the beginning of the school year.

Limit Responsibilities and Behavior Problems

Limiting the number of committees and duties for experienced new teachers is a necessity. It is also important to attempt to limit the number of children with known behavior problems in the experienced new teacher's classroom. First-year teachers are generally protected in these areas, and experienced new teachers deserve the same treatment.

Ask for Their Opinions

Experienced new teachers have a fresh, experienced set of eyes when it comes to important issues within a school: the climate of the school, the requirements of the teachers, the relationship the school has with its constituencies and the overall effectiveness of the school. Asking the experienced new teacher for his or her opinions about these matters can greatly encourage the teacher and can help improve the school.

A Final Thought

Those in the field of education must remember that experienced new teachers are still *new* teachers. Although experienced new teachers have taught before, they are in a school culture that is unfamiliar to them, and they need guides and support systems to help them "learn the ropes," just as any new teacher would.

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Literacy as Access: Reviewing the Data, Investigating the Skills, Knowledge and Dispositions and Providing Evidence-Based Professional Development to Serve African American Learners More Effectively

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Abstract

A study group from the Quality Teacher Network in Reading (QTN/R) reviewed the achievement gap data between Black and White fourth-grade readers in Minnesota. From the results of the review, the study group developed a professional development series. The investigation helped the study group determine from a professional development standpoint how to provide educators an insight into some of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they should develop to serve African American learners' literacy development. The article chronicles what leading Black researchers believed could create a reflective, dispositional change in educators in order to help them develop more effective practices that would promote higher academic achievement in African American learners.

Collins and Porras (1994) in *Built to Last* spoke of the *bhag*—the big hairy audacious goal. There is no hairier goal than that of closing the achievement gap and the performance of African American learners. In the state of Minnesota, this

gap is quite prevalent between fourth grade African American and White readers on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A study group from the Quality Teacher Network in Reading (QTN/R)[1] decided to further investigate this concern to determine from a professional development standpoint how to provide educators an insight into some of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they should develop to better serve African American learners' literacy development. We wanted to provide evidence-based professional development that would enlighten educators of African American learners. Our charge was to *create a reflective, dispositional change in educators in order to help them develop more effective practices that would promote higher academic achievement in African American learners*.

Reviewing the Data

The study group collected data and research around the academic and affective literacy needs of African American learners. Our initial thoughts were that Minnesota's African American achievement gap was extremely wide due to exceedingly high performance of White learners and not based on the low performance of African American learners. Upon disaggregating the Minnesota reading data, we found that our African American learners scored an average of 35 points lower over a decade on NAEP fourth grade reading scores. Nationally, in fourth grade reading, African American learners rose 13 points from 2000 to 2007, helping to drive overall progress higher in the last seven years (up 13 points) than in the previous eight (down 2 points). The data (Figures 1 and 2) indicated that the achievement gap in Minnesota was legitimate because it was based on the low performance of African American learners and not the overly high performance of White learners.

[1] The QTN/R is a special interest group selected of 50 reading professionals who volunteered their expertise for the improvement of reading instruction in the state of Minnesota.

Figure 1: National NAEP Trend Data

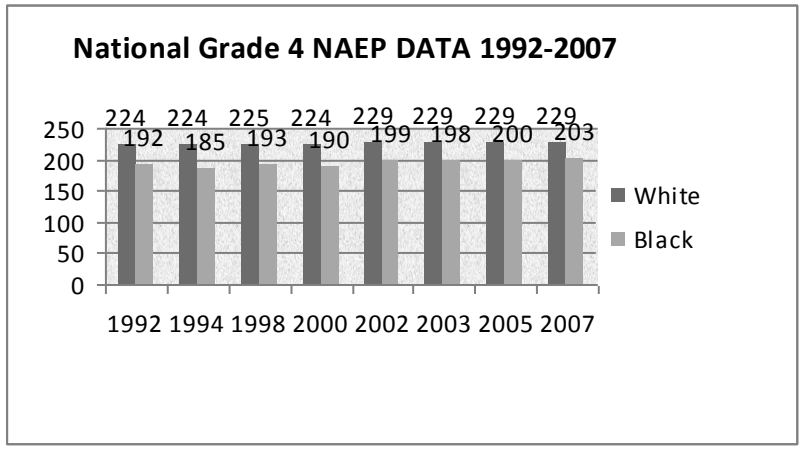
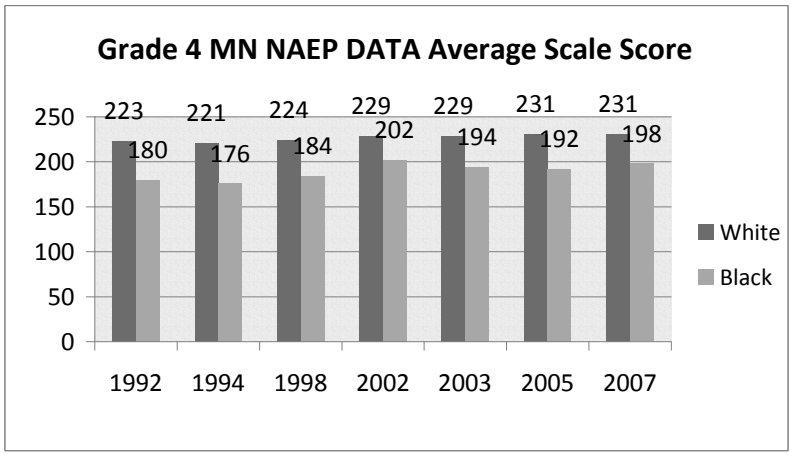


Figure 2: Minnesota NAEP Trend Data



Investigating the Skills, Knowledge and Dispositions

To provide research evidence beyond data, we reviewed the scholarship of those well versed in the literacy development and the achievement gap pertaining to African American learners (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Delpit and Dowdy, 2002; Kunjufu, 2002; and Lynch, 2006). While reviewing the research, we created a matrix in order to compare the research across the achievement concepts of curriculum, instruction,

assessment, motivation, environment (internal and external), teacher dispositions and access.

The study group asked essential questions that educators needed to know when investigating the literacy needs of African American learners. Our questions were: what should we teach? (curriculum); how do we teach it? (instruction); how do we know the students learned what was taught? (assessment); how do we engage learners? (motivation); what about our role in the instructional process? (dispositions); what factors are within our sphere of influence? (internal environment and classroom access); and what factors are out of our immediate sphere of influence? (external environment and societal access).

Delpit (1995) responded that contemporary curriculum does not foster independence, rather dependence on external sources for direction and meaning. Educators needed to create contextualized experiences for African American learners in which they learn the features of dominant discourses in order to change an oppressive system. Ladson-Billings (1994) answered that teacher instruction should be fluid, humanely equitable and extend lessons and material beyond the classroom and into the community. The typical educator role of all-knowing authority interfered with the learner's ability to succeed. Tatum (2005) elucidated further that instruction for African American learners should focus on skills and strategies that develop an identity that would be useful in and outside of school and lead them to read, write and think about issues relating to their existence.

The researchers' answers to the assessment question were steeped in caution. Kunjufu (2002) warned that an over reliance on intelligence tests that are not culturally sensitive has led to an over abundance of African American learners being placed in special education programs. He recommended the *CAS: Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity* (Williams, 1972), *SOMPA: System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment* (Lewis & Mercer, 1978) and *LPAD: Learning Potential Assessment Device* (Feuerstein, Rand & Hoffman, 1979) as culturally sensitive, non-biased assessments.

Lynch (2006) stated that educators should avoid evaluating Black children against White standards; therefore, they should look at regional slang as a difference, not a deficit and realize

that learning difficulties may be due to cultural differences and should not be viewed as intellectual deficits. Lynch cautioned that if educators were not culturally adroit, their expectations acted as self-fulfilling prophesies because achievement reflected expectations.

The pervasive answer to the engagement question was that educators should use culturally responsive instructional practices. Thompson (2004) stated that educators should make classroom experiences relative to the real world and learners' daily lives. Tatum (2002) suggested there should be more texts that addressed African American learners and shaped their ideas and identity because too often texts were assigned that did not affirm their identity; therefore, they lost the motivation to read those texts.

Tatum's (2005) response to the disposition question was that the problems with African American learners may be correlated with the educators' perception of the intersection between ethnicity, poverty and schooling. There needed to be more positive images of African American learners in literature, television and professional research in order to counter these stereotypical perceptions; and high expectations for African American learners must be a part of educators' beliefs, statements and actions. Delpit and Dowdy's (2002) stance on teacher dispositions was aligned with the achievement concepts of internal environment and classroom access. She encouraged educators to create accessible classrooms for African American learners that allowed for greater movement and interaction and modeled various social styles of learning which demonstrated that all learning does not have to be individualistic, passive and quiet.

Although the achievement concepts were isolated and dissected across the individual researchers, the study group surmised that collectively the researchers were intentional about affirming dispositions that lead to culturally responsive instruction. This instruction was most effective in academic environments that consisted of contemporary and historical cultural influences steeped in rigor, relationships and relevance (Watson, 2006).

Providing Evidence-Based Professional Development

Reflection, Planning and Delivery

As we reflected on what we learned, a study group member described the need to guide African American learners in reaching their potential.

> The passion I feel for teaching students of color, particularly African American students, consumes me. The frustration of failed efforts on my part to successfully motivate and entice students to learn has at times overcome me. Cultural differences have often hit me in the face and made me wonder if a blonde grandma from Wisconsin is up for the job. I want to understand, to relate and to feel inside a darker skin than my own.

The statement above underscored the desire of educators to meet the needs of their learners and the frustrations felt when challenged by the cultural disconnects of different backgrounds and limited common experiences. This statement was the catalyst to fulfill our charge of creating a dispositional change in educators so that they could more effectively serve African American learners. We wanted a professional development experience that enabled educators to acquire, practice and reflect on new concepts and skills, as well as collaborate and interact with peers (Abdal-Haqq, 1996).

Initially, our goal was to share the knowledge we obtained through the research with our larger learning community, the Quality Teaching Network in Reading (QTN/R). We designed this evidenced-based professional development to align with a knowledge, skills and dispositional (KSD) frame in which participants discussed key elements of our research (knowledge), connected the data to their own practices (skill development) and identified their own need to analyze and reflect on their expectations, beliefs and values concerning African American learners (dispositions). From the success of the QTN/R professional development, we refined portions of our presentation to carry our message to a wider state and national audience. We presented at the Minnesota Reading Council

state conference and the National Urban Alliance (NUA) conference.

Literacy as Access: Setting the Context and Sharing the Research Knowledge

In the urban areas of Minnesota there is a high percentage of African American learners and these learners are taught predominantly by White teachers. Ladson-Billings (2005) commented that the teaching profession is filled with White, middle-class, monolingual, female teachers who will have the responsibility of teaching and working in school communities serving students who are culturally, linguistically, racially and economically different from them.

Because of these differences between educators and their learners, we could not simply conduct professional development activities about the achievement gap. We first demystified the concepts of diversity, equity, social justice and access. If we did not address these concepts with sensitivity, then this could lead to frustration with the delivery and dismissal of the evidence. To combat this concern, we decided to start our professional development sessions with an exercise in creating a common language of discourse. We wanted our participants to use the language of the research and not to feel inhibited by not knowing how to say something. We discussed the term *modal personalities*. The term modal personality comes from a statistical concept that simply means "most frequent"—traits that are most likely to be found in a sample of a population (Kelly, Oberg & Shade, 2001). We wanted our participants to understand that the United States' social structure consisted of the dominant culture, which is the culture that holds and has access to the power and sets the standards for what is considered *normal*, and the disenfranchised culture, which is the culture that is disconnected from or has limited access to the power (Gay, 2001). The disenfranchised culture must learn the pragmatic, navigational skills in order to access the power (Delpit, 1995). We charged that literacy skills (reading, writing, listening, viewing, speaking and thinking) were pragmatic tools that grant African American learners access to power, privilege and opportunity.

Once the audience understood these terms, they were more at ease to discuss race, culture and ethnicity. Much of this knowledge was new to the participants, but these cultural descriptors allowed the participants to talk deeply about the needs of African American learners as they viewed these learners through the lens of their own dominance and disenfranchisement. The participants comfortably discussed modal trait observations without thinking that they were over generalizing or stereotyping.

Dispositional Reflections and Instructional Skill Set Development

Our purpose was to explore beliefs about White identity development through dispositional reflection of African American culture. The participants reflected and responded to Howard's (1997) *White Identity Conceptual Frame*. This frame allowed participants to illuminate their thoughts, ideas and dispositions that assisted or impeded their ability to embrace culturally responsive instruction. We also used Kunjufu's (2002) *Multicultural Quiz*, which asked participants to identify Black historic figures over a timeline, in tandem with other historic White figures. The exercise showed participants gaps in their educational knowledge of African American contributions and assisted them in self-reflection about the development of culturally responsive instruction.

By using the frame and the quiz, the participants reflected on their beliefs, attitudes and dispositions about the affective and academic needs of their African American students. These instruments illuminated hidden biases, assumptions or prejudices that interfered with their ability to review the research and apply it to their own practice. We wanted our participants to have an opportunity to internalize and apply this research; therefore, we provided the achievement concepts matrix focused on curriculum, instruction, assessment, motivation, environment (internal and external), teacher dispositions and access for the participants to discuss in small groups.

In the small groups, participants highlighted strands in each category that indicated their teaching alignment and areas in need of further examination. This exercise and discussion

legitimized real life application or the need to integrate current cultural experiences into classroom learning. Participants' comments were strongly supportive of the research and instilled a commitment to use culturally responsive techniques, texts and resources within a climate of high expectation for all learners.

Conclusion

As we concluded our various professional developments on the local, state and national levels, we learned much about African American learners and how best to serve their literacy needs. We as educators must move beyond conventional reform and focus on our own dispositional stances and reflect on how these mindsets affect our learners. We recognized that intention without action is insufficient; therefore, we must be intentional about the curriculum, instruction and assessment to assure that culturally responsive practices are utilized with African American learners. In conclusion, strength and vitality reside in cultural diversity; and test scores and grades are symptoms, not causes, of the achievement dilemma (Gay, 2001).

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Preparing Teachers for a Multicultural Society: A Model for Teacher Education

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Abstract

Although teachers may strive to create inclusive, multicultural classrooms, they may lack the requisite knowledge and skills to successfully accomplish the task. Drawing on case study research that illuminates challenges encountered by White teachers of multicultural literature, I propose a comprehensive diversity component for teacher education. If teacher education programs make a concerted effort to provide their candidates a thorough grounding in multicultural content, specifically address methods of teaching it, weave multicultural and race-related content into all areas of the academic program and guide candidates through a multicultural immersion experience, teachers would be better equipped to educate students to live and work effectively in our diverse society.

Despite the rapidly increasing number of students of color in United States schools (McCadden & Rose, 2008), the vast majority of teachers remain white (NEA, 2004); and, unfortunately, it is likely that many of these teachers have had little personal experience with racial or cultural diversity and little academic experience around multicultural issues. Most of the preservice teacher candidates at my own liberal arts institution fit this description. If teachers are to effectively educate their

students to live and work productively as citizens in a diverse country and world, however, they require a multicultural education themselves. They need to know, for example, how to create inclusive curricula, be able to teach it in a variety of accessible ways and candidly discuss issues of power and privilege with their students (Florio-Ruane, 2001; McIntyre, 1997). Teachers have the power to make substantive changes in schools so that all students have the chance to succeed, but they need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to do so.

My recent study of four White teachers teaching multicultural literature to predominantly White students reveals that while teachers may express commitment to teaching multicultural curricula and perceive it as an excellent vehicle for teaching their (White) students about the diversity of our society, their beliefs do not always align with their practices. The research participants felt somewhat uncomfortable teaching literature that varied in perspective from dominant White culture because they had little or no academic or experiential preparation for the task. They were not as familiar with the texts themselves, nor with the racially charged themes that the texts often embody, as they were with the traditional (White, male) canon of literature taught most often in secondary schools. Thus, although the teachers attempted to discuss racial themes in the literature, these discussions tended to remain at a superficial level. Although it is not my intent to generalize the findings of this study to other teachers of multicultural literature, the experiences of these four teachers suggest that more comprehensive multicultural education in teacher preparation programs would be beneficial to the profession—and to students in the classroom.

Study Methodology

I conducted my research in a small-town, Midwestern high school with a predominantly White student demographic. All but one of the 85 teachers in the building were White, as well. To recruit my research participants, I sent letters to the 14 (White) members of the English department inviting them to be co-inquirers with me to learn more about the experience of

teaching multicultural literature in a homogeneous environment. To participate, volunteers had to teach at least one multicultural text to their students the following semester. Teachers were invited to contact their department chair if interested, then the chair forwarded names and contact information to me. The four teachers I studied represented a range of age and experience: Judy was in her 50s and had 25 years of teaching experience; Dave was in his 30s and had 11 years of experience; John was also in his 30s and had 9 years of experience; and Megan, in her 20s, was in her second year of teaching.

I formally interviewed each teacher three times about his or her beliefs and practices concerning the teaching of multicultural literature, tape-recording and later transcribing the interviews for analysis. I also observed several class periods as each teacher taught multicultural texts, taking field notes on a laptop computer describing classroom activities and communications and also reflecting on those descriptions using italics to visually differentiate reflection from observation. While observing, I focused specifically on the teacher's speech and non-verbal cues, including how he or she would contextualize texts, elicit discussion, address multicultural themes and issues and respond to student comments. In addition, I took note of how students seemed to respond to the teacher's practices. As soon after each classroom observation as possible, I revisited these notes, fleshing them out as my memory allowed. Finally, I studied participants' written curricula related to the multicultural text(s) they were teaching. Theses documents, although minimal, provided me with further information about teacher goals and strategies for multicultural literature instruction.

When data collection was complete, I created a preliminary coding system and assigned the data to relevant categories with the help of the qualitative software package NVivo. Several large, umbrella categories of analysis were implicit in my research questions, including beliefs, practices and preparation for teaching multicultural literature, but other categories emerged from the data. I identified initial thematic elements and coded data accordingly; but as I reread the data multiple times, I would modify the coding system slightly to fit my new understandings. NVivo allowed me to revise the coding freely

as analysis progressed. While coding, I first developed individual case studies of each participant and then conducted a cross case analysis, looking for themes that resonated with all of the teachers, as well as noticing striking divergences. Considering the themes together revealed a more holistic picture of what English teachers in one predominantly White high school think about teaching multicultural literature and how they go about the task.

Study Analysis

Each of the teachers I studied expressed a strong belief in the importance of teaching a diverse body of literature; these teachers were committed to exposing their students to the contributions of writers of color and broadening their world-views—especially because most of the students they taught were White and might not encounter much cultural diversity in other areas of their lives. With the exception of John, who had studied multicultural literature extensively in graduate school, however, these committed teachers felt unsure about practicing their stated philosophies. They read very little multicultural literature themselves in high school or college, had little or no background in race theory and attended very homogeneous (White) schools themselves. Admirably, they recognized that their students required a more inclusive education than they had, but they felt unprepared to deliver this instruction adequately.

All four of the teachers valued multicultural literature and stated that teaching texts by people of color was important. However, in the semester-long courses I observed, most of the curricula did not reflect this valuing. John's course was most "balanced." He taught five novels, two of them written by people of color. Judy and Dave each taught only one multi-cultural novel, and Megan taught a few multicultural poems. Although Judy, for example, talked about how important it was for her "sheltered" White students to see other cultures through literature, she still privileged the traditional literary canon and was not willing to displace "the classics."

Further, with the exception of John, the teachers in this study seemed to be universalists, not pluralists. Focusing on

similarities among cultures and individuals seemed to be the top priority (based on both stated beliefs and observed practices), while little attention was paid to fundamental differences in life experience for various groups and individuals and the underlying reasons for the difference. While Judy, Dave and Megan all acknowledged difference in their discussions of literature, they did not explore the concept with any depth, choosing to focus instead on "human" qualities like the feelings and emotions of characters of color. None of them explored issues of oppression thoroughly, nor mentioned the topic of White privilege. Megan, for example, was hesitant to discuss an author's race at all, arguing, "If I don't distinguish a White author when I present—and I usually don't—then why should I do so with a multicultural author?" In contrast, John commented, "If you read a Native American text with White kids and pretend like there aren't any differences, pretend that there aren't things to notice different from a White text, you are wasting a great opportunity for development."

Rather than helping students to think critically and grapple with difficult issues like White privilege and institutional racism, most of the teachers in this study allowed discussions to remain on a more superficial level. Dave and Megan, for example, attempted to raise provocative topics on occasion, but they did not follow up and encourage students to extend their responses; therefore, the topics quickly died. Dave's lack of probing into students' responses was consistent with his desire to remain on the periphery of discussion, refrain from "preaching" and avoid possible conflict arising from overtly political discussion. Ladson-Billings (2003) finds that when White teachers teach multicultural literature, they often fail to take up racial issues even when authors are explicit about racism in the texts. She contends that White teachers wish to avoid race talk of any kind. Furthermore, if teachers do mention cultural differences, Ladson-Billings says they talk about those differences only as being special characteristics to celebrate. Their race talk fails to interrogate the concept of race, and teachers do not engage in anti-racist pedagogy. Unfortunately, if teachers do not broach these important "political" topics and help teach students how to critique society, as well as concurrently adopt a "we-are-all-humans"

universalist stance, their students will only be able to conceive of racism as individual acts of discrimination. If they remain blind to the systemic inequality that is still pervasive in society, studying multicultural literature will not erase their negative attitudes about people of color. As Ladson-Billings argues, great multicultural texts are not enough to disrupt performances of whiteness. Curriculum won't matter if teachers don't change.

Saha (2000) also finds that teachers tend to dismiss race, and she explains the neglect of teachers to acknowledge and explore the power of race in society today as a lack of education; teachers simply do not know enough about race themselves to teach their own students much about it. Because most teachers are unprepared for multicultural, anti-racist teaching, colleges or departments of education need to respond to this need and create programs that better prepare their candidates to be culturally knowledgeable and sensitive. In John's case, he did not start interrogating race in the classroom until after extensive graduate study in multicultural literature. Only after thoroughly studying cultural and racial issues himself was he able to introduce cultural critique into his own classroom.

A Four-Part Diversity Component for Teacher Education

After analyzing the four case studies, I argue that if the teachers had more knowledge of multicultural content and instruction in teaching it, theoretical knowledge of how race operates in society and interaction with people who come from backgrounds different from their own, they would likely perform more effectively as inclusive, multicultural teachers and express more confidence in their pedagogy. Thus, to improve the capacity of programs to send out teachers prepared to instruct all learners to succeed academically and socially in our diverse society, I propose a four-pronged "diversity component" that should be woven throughout the standard teacher education curriculum:

- Multicultural content knowledge
- Pedagogical content knowledge

- Knowledge of race theory
- Immersion experience in racially diverse schools

Drawing on examples from my study, I briefly will explain each part of the proposal through the disciplinary lens of English education.

Multicultural Content Knowledge

Generally, the teachers in this study were not familiar with many multicultural texts. With the exception of John, all of them commented that they were not sure "what's out there" and, therefore, that trying to find a new book to teach was difficult.

John had more knowledge of multicultural literature than his colleagues because after several years of teaching, he took a leave of absence to go back to school himself and earn a master's degree in English. Because he was already interested in multicultural literature, he chose to take several courses in this area, including an independent study, as part of his program. Through these courses, he not only studied the literature itself, but also its cultural context and literary criticism. This in-depth knowledge enhanced his teaching greatly; he was able to help students through unfamiliar plot structures, bring in multiple critical interpretations, speak with greater understanding and confidence about the cultural perspective of the author and discuss the literature's themes, tone and social commentary in a way that the other teachers could not.

Certainly John, and the other three teachers as well, could independently seek out and read unfamiliar multicultural texts and find supplementary material and criticism on their own; however, teachers' schedules are already so full preparing for and teaching five classes every day, responding to student work, attending meetings and helping with extra-curricular activities, that they often cannot or will not find the time to do extensive reading and research on top of their regular daily activities. If teachers do not become familiar with multi-cultural literature in college, it seems unlikely that they will teach it extensively in their own classrooms.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In addition to knowledge about the content of multicultural literature, teachers also need knowledge of how to teach this specialized genre. Goebel and Hall (1995) argue that teaching multicultural literature requires different strategies because multicultural literature instruction is based on different assumptions than is literature from the traditional canon. Further, Hall (1995) explains that with multicultural literature, the teacher's "most demanding task is to make available to students contextual materials that will aid their negotiation of textual meaning" (p. 14), a task not nearly as important when White students are studying literature written by Whites. In an extensive study on teacher knowledge and teacher education in English, Grossman (1990) builds the case that even when teachers are well prepared in their subject areas, they require subject-specific pedagogical coursework to maximize their teaching effectiveness. Her study reveals that knowing the literature does not necessarily mean knowing how to teach it.

Grossman identifies four components of pedagogical content knowledge. The first is the knowledge and beliefs about the purposes for teaching a particular subject at various grade levels. Teachers' goals for teaching multicultural literature will reflect these overarching beliefs. For example, if teachers believe that the purpose of teaching multicultural literature is to build bridges between cultures, they will then most likely structure class activities and discussion to focus on human universals. In contrast, if teachers believe that multi-cultural literature should be a vehicle for cultural critique, their goals for student learning and, therefore, their pedagogy will look much different. Another component of pedagogical content knowledge includes curricular knowledge, or knowledge of what texts are appropriate for what grade levels (and within a school or district knowing which texts are commonly taught when) and knowledge of available resources for teaching particular texts. Teachers should be aware of the multicultural literature students have read in the past and most likely will read in future grades, and they need to be able to select texts that are challenging, yet readable for their students.

A third element of pedagogical content knowledge includes "knowledge of students' understanding, conceptions and

misconceptions of particular topics in a subject matter" (p. 8). In order to teach effectively, teachers must understand how students generally approach multicultural literature and where they most likely will experience difficulty. Teachers of multicultural literature need to understand that students often struggle when a story or novel deviates from the straight-forward narrative structure that is most often employed in "White" literature. In Native American texts, for example, because stories are often not told in chronological order and because the boundary between myth and reality is often blurred, students can have difficulty following the plot. When teachers are able to anticipate potential student confusion, however, they can provide appropriate support and explanation before students are overly frustrated. According to Grossman, "a final component of pedagogical content knowledge includes knowledge of instructional strategies and representations for teaching particular topics" (p. 9). Teachers need to know specific strategies, examples, analogies and activities that effectively illustrate the subject matter for their students. For example, teachers need to know useful, productive ways to address topics like the anger of people of color or White privilege. Unless these topics are approached in sensitive ways, students will resist the messages and tune out any potential learning.

Thus, specific instruction in how to teach multicultural literature is essential to provide teachers with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom. English methods courses, in addition to providing instruction on teaching literature generally, need also to address issues specific to teaching multicultural literature. All four teachers in this study could have benefited from professional preparation for teaching multicultural literature.

Knowledge of Race Theory

To be successful multicultural educators, teachers also need an understanding of the socially constructed nature of race and an ability to analyze racial inequity. Teachers have both the power and the responsibility to influence society and make the world a more socially just place; however, according to Gorski

(2006), too often "a reframing of multicultural education [occurs] that focuses not on eliminating the inequities and injustices that continue to pervade schools, but on human relations and celebrating diversity" (p. 63). If the underlying goal of multicultural education—"the elimination of educational inequities" (Gorski, 2006, p. 65)—is to be accomplished, teachers must engage in continual critical analysis of their own curricula and pedagogies, as well as analysis of the structures and practices of their institutions.

Like Cochran-Smith (1995), I believe that teaching is an inherently political activity that can instigate "major reforms" if teachers "embrace social change as part of the job" (p. 494). Possessing both in-depth knowledge of multicultural texts and knowledge and skills related to the teaching of them, while very important, are not enough for teachers to be able to do this important cultural work. In order to use multicultural literature as a tool for social justice in the classroom, teachers must also know about concepts including "hegemony, cultural capital, hierarchical positioning, privilege, production/reproduction (of culture, economic structure and relations and the like), equality of educational and economic opportunity, and marginalization, to name a few" (Armaline & Farber, 1995, pp. 46-47). They need to know how the institutions in our society work to the advantage of Whites and the disadvantage of people of color, and they need to know that the problem of racism is deeply woven into the structure of our society. They need to understand what Delpit (1995) calls the "culture of power," the culture that maintains power and controls success.

Rothenberg (1998) and Sleeter (1996) would argue that because Whites are part of this dominant culture, it is invisible to them and they need explicit instruction about its workings. We cannot expect White teachers of multicultural literature to go beyond a focus on human similarities or a surface treatment of cultural differences if they have no knowledge of race theory. Teachers must interrogate White privilege themselves and understand societal racism (and how it is more insidious than individual racism) before they will be able to share these concepts with their students. Because John learned about these issues in graduate school, he was able to help his students explore multicultural texts with greater depth than his colleagues.

Given the tremendous amount of content to learn and the difficulty of learning to think in a new way, preservice teachers need as much exposure to issues of diversity as possible. Too often, multiculturalism is addressed minimally in an "add-on" fashion within the confines of one course. While adding one course on race theory is certainly better than not addressing these issues at all, scholars (Fox & Gay, 1995; Kailin, 1999; Larkin, 1995; Subrahmanyan, Hornstein & Heine, 2000) recommend that a critical multicultural perspective be woven into the entire teacher education curriculum:

> All teacher education students should be exposed to cultural diversity in every stage of their field-based and practicum experiences, as well as using cultural diversity as the context and illustrative text for understanding, practicing, and demonstrating mastery of key concepts and skills in different courses. (Fox & Gay, 1995, p. 75)

However, Kailin (1999) notes that "because of the special complexity of the problem, future teachers also need courses that specifically examine the centrality of the problem of racism in American society and education" (p. 747).

Immersion Experience in Racially Diverse Schools

Preservice teachers need an opportunity to apply and practice in their own classrooms what they have learned in the college classroom. It is common knowledge that student teaching is the most valuable educational experience for preservice teachers because it provides a "real" context where students can stretch their thinking and hone their skills. While extensive coursework provides an invaluable knowledge base for preservice teachers, there is no substitute for hands-on experience.

Given the value of experiential learning, teachers—especially White teachers—need significant opportunities to interact with people from cultures different from their own and to experience diversity firsthand. Teacher education programs should not only address race theory in the classroom, but they

should provide teacher candidates with the opportunity to learn about cultural difference through field placements where minority students comprise the majority of the population. Tatum (1992) notes the importance of cross-cultural contact when she explains the typical stages of White racial identity development. Whites begin at the stage of Contact, which "is characterized by a lack of awareness of cultural and institutional racism, and of one's own White privilege…[and] often includes naïve curiosity about or fear of people of color, based on stereotypes learned from friends, family, or the media" (p. 13). Whites then progress recursively through four more stages until, ideally, they reach Autonomy where they internalize a "newly defined self of [themselves] as white" and see themselves as able to "confront racism and oppression in . . . daily life" (p. 17). Commenting on the initial stage of Contact, Tatum cautions that "those Whites whose lives are structured so as to limit their interaction with people of color, as well as their awareness of racial issues, may remain at this stage indefinitely" (p. 13). Thus, if we want preservice teachers to reach more advanced levels of identity development, immersion in a multicultural environment is key.

Further, Gomez (1996) believes that when prospective teachers are able to interact with people different from themselves, "positive personal relationships and investments in the lives of 'others' and their futures can occur" (p. 127). This personal experience can lead to greater reflection about cultural and racial issues raised in the context of a student's coursework. Gomez stresses, however, that these interactions must occur over a significant length of time and that the teacher candidates must be carefully supervised. Otherwise, multicultural field experience can reinforce negative attitudes instead of modifying them (Scott, 1995). Without guided reflection and the opportunity to "debrief" and discuss their experiences, preservice teachers in diverse schools may see situations that feed into negative stereotypes and subsequently process them only through the narrow lens of the dominant White culture. Seminars of no more than 15 students, facilitated by a faculty member committed to multicultural education, would be an ideal context for reflection because students could then learn from each other's experiences, as well as from their own.

Ideally, immersion in a multicultural environment should occur before student teaching. A prior experience working with culturally diverse students could serve to prepare candidates for student teaching by increasing their understanding of diversity in general. Knowledge about different perspectives and ways of interpreting the world could enhance the student teaching experience—and make candidates more student sensitive—regardless of student demographics. That said, the immersion experience should not occur too early in a candidate's education. As Haberman (1991) argues, if candidates are too young, they may lack the maturity necessary to process cultural and racial learning effectively. An immersion experience would not benefit someone who is unable or unwilling to think deeply about social justice issues. Thus, the immersion experience should be a requirement for upper-classpersons, after they have already been admitted to the teacher education program and have completed some professional coursework. Finally, in administering the immersion requirement, teacher education programs must be mindful of the danger for exploitation when Whites enter "diverse" environments. In choosing sites for immersion, faculty must consider what these sites will be gaining from the presence of their candidates. They must guard against a model where the candidates are simply voyeurs, soaking up "culture" and giving nothing in return.

The Responsibility of Teacher Education

My study of four White teachers teaching predominantly White students reveals significant gaps between what teachers say they believe about multicultural literature and how they actually teach it. Because Willinsky (1998) argues that practice *is* theory, I ask what accounts for the discrepancy between these teachers' "real" belief systems, those beliefs that reveal themselves in practice and the beliefs they contend to hold. Pattnaik and Vold (1998) argue that much of the responsibility for this inconsistency between stated beliefs and practices falls to teacher education programs that demonstrate the same contradictions between rhetoric and reality. Many colleges, for instance, maintain that preparing their teachers to

work in a diverse society is a top priority, yet they fail to incorporate multicultural education into their programs in a comprehensive, systemic way. If colleges do not take seriously their own discourse about preparing culturally sensitive and competent teachers, Pattnaik and Vold maintain that teacher candidates cannot be expected to engage in the kinds of critical thinking about race and diversity that leads to inclusive, socially just practice. In contrast, if teacher education programs make a concerted effort to provide their candidates a thorough grounding in multicultural content, specifically address methods of teaching it, weave multicultural and race-related content into all areas of the academic program and guide candidates through a multicultural immersion experience in K-12 schools, teachers will be better equipped to educate students to live and work effectively in our diverse society.[1]

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[1] The time available for teacher preparation is, of course, limited, and therefore much of this model's content must be woven into existing programmatic structures. For a description of how the model might look in practice, see Leer, E. B. (in process). Preparing (White) English teachers for multicultural practice: A teacher education model at work.

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Preservice Teachers: Teacher Preparation, Multicultural Curriculum and Culturally Relevant Teaching

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Abstract

This study is part of a larger study that uses mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative methods) to investigate preservice teachers' knowledge and understanding of multiculturalism and to prepare preservice teachers to work in diverse classrooms. The results indicate two findings: 1) that preservice teachers come from homogeneous backgrounds; and 2) Schools of Education must begin early in teacher education programs to integrate multiculturalism throughout their program of study. The implications of the results suggest that for true understanding of diversity and multiculturalism specific methods and strategies must be implemented through rigorous training in teacher education.

Preparing teachers for our postmodern world has become a major challenge (Banks & Banks, 2007). The field of teacher education, in general, has been slow in advancing and imaging teacher education in both its theory and practice within an existing postmodern paradigm (Banks, 2008). While society has changed drastically over the past four decades, many teacher education programs and K-12 school districts continue to frame and carry out their daily rituals within a traditional modernist model (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Due to numerous historically constructed reasons, these traditional models: (1) cater to the working world's demand for increased tracking

and de-skilling (Fine, 1991); (2) adhere to the values of capitalism and all its inherent ramifications (Shapiro, 1990); (3) perpetuate the cultural construction of teacher work and the understanding of the ways in which gender shapes classroom practices, leading to teaching as a White middle class and female-dominant occupation devoid of power (Apple, 1990); (4) discourage teacher education professors from dealing with the world of popular culture and utilizing the field of cultural studies as a form of pedagogy (Giroux, 1995); and (5) complicate the exploration of or admission of our own social and cultural deficiencies (Kanpol, 1995). These issues in and of themselves have evolved because of the changing structures of society. Thus, the research question, "How do we prepare preservice teachers to meet the challenges in diverse classrooms?" is investigated in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Banks' theoretical framework is a good fit for this study because he focuses specifically on developing a multicultural curriculum (Banks, 2008). Banks believes that one way to achieve greater understanding and more positive attitudes toward different groups is to integrate and broaden the curriculum to make it more inclusive and action oriented (Banks & Banks, 2007). In addition, as Banks has warned, using a "mainstream" benchmark against which group differences are measured promotes "a kind of 'we-they' attitude among mainstream students and teachers" (1988, p. 177). Banks' observation about multiethnic education seems equally applicable to the study of preservice teachers' learning and understanding of multiculturalism. Also, Banks asserts, "Ethnic content should be used to help students learn that all human beings have common needs and characteristics, although the ways in which these traits are manifested frequently differ cross-culturally" (1988, p. 175).

The Context of Study

A private Midwestern, liberal arts, Lutheran university with an open admissions policy was selected as the site for this study because of its strong, well-defined undergraduate teacher education program. This program consists of three core courses (Table 1) that are required in the teacher education program. All students entering the program are required to take an introductory foundation course (ED 203). Later in the program, each student enrolls in a multicultural course (ED 370); during the last (professional) semester, each student completes his or her student teaching (ED 485). One of the purposes of the multicultural course is to provide education students with an opportunity to examine and discuss classroom diversity and the multicultural attributes that students bring to K-12 classrooms (Colville-Hall, MacDonald, & Smolen, 1995).

Second semester freshman and first semester sophomore students take the Introduction to Teaching course. This course features a 40-hour field component completed in a public or parochial school setting. There are three sections in this course. One section is taught by the researcher, an African-American female; and the other two sections are taught by Caucasian males.

The multicultural course, taught at the junior level, is a three-credit hour, one semester course with two sections. One of the purposes of the multicultural course is to provide teacher education students with an opportunity to examine personal beliefs systems, discuss classroom diversity and multicultural attributes that students bring to culturally diverse classrooms (Kauchak & Eggen, 2005). A 40-hour field component is required.

Study Participants. I limited student participants for the present study to three courses: a foundation of education course, a multicultural course and student teaching. Students enrolled in the program were elementary, middle school or secondary education majors. They had completed rigorous prerequisites before admission into the teacher education program. In addition, participants had a 2.5/4.0 grade point average or higher and earned a passing score on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), Praxis I, according to standards set by the university education department and the

State of Indiana. Middle-class White females dominated the composition of all classes. In sum, I selected the specific courses for the present study to make comparisons of pre-service teachers' understanding of multiculturalism and to provide descriptive in-depth understanding of their dispositions.

Table 1 – Core Education Courses Used in This Study

Courses	Field Experience	Time	Comment
ED 203 Introduction to Teaching	a) observation, tutoring b) assisting teachers and teaching	40 hrs.	Initial field experience for students admitted to the teacher education program
ED 370 Home, School Relations	a) off-campus service learning b) large diverse student populations c) urban setting	40 hrs.	Emphasis on service-learning; involving cultural and socio-economic issues
ED 485 Student Teaching	a) practical application of theories b) methods c) lesson planning	12 wks.	Placement in school of appropriate subject matter

Characteristics of Study Participants. I asked 99 student volunteers to participate in the larger context of this project using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The participants included 36 males and 63 female students. This group of participants provides the sample framework for the present study. Student participants in the interview and focus group discussions were selected from the initial 99 participants. Anonymity of the participants was secured by using pseudonyms.

Methods

The Process: Interviews and Focus Groups: I interviewed six students of different ethnic backgrounds, two from each of

the courses used in the present study: the foundation of education course, the multicultural course and student teaching. I asked colleagues in the education department to select student representatives from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Participants selected for the study included: an African American student, an Asian student and a Latina student, while all other interview participants were of European descent, Caucasian. Another criterion for selection of participants included varied field experiences in diverse settings. In sum, the student selection process was broad, as I did not want to impose my own preconceived notions on student selection. My main goal was to be objective and not biased (Patton, 2002) during the interview. Therefore, colleagues assisted with the overall interviewing process, while I remained in the background as an observer and non-participant in the interview process.

Interviews and Observations. I conducted semi-structured, open, in-depth interviews (Mishler, 1986) and observed three education students, one from each course, in their field placement setting, diverse classrooms. Each participant's interview session was audio taped and sessions lasted approximately sixty to ninety minutes. The purpose of in-depth interviewing in this study is to understand the experiences of preservice teachers' learning and understanding of multiculturalism, to make meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 1998) and to enter into their perspective (Patton, 2002). I probed with follow-up questions and major multicultural themes to obtain insight into preservice teachers' beliefs, attitudes and inner experiences dealing with issues of diversity and multiculturalism. By recognizing/observing the limits on their understanding of diversity, I strived to comprehend preservice teachers' understanding of their actions and dispositions (Schultz, 1967). Thus, interviews and observations provided access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provided strategies to understand the meaning of that behavior. Interviews allowed me to put participants' behavior in context and provided access to understanding the participants' actions (Seidman, 1998).

Focus Group Interviews. I employed three focus group sessions, one per class, in informal settings. Each group consisted of seven or eight students; and each session lasted

approximately sixty to ninety minutes. The rationale for using seven to eight interviewees was to assemble a heterogeneous group of students enrolled in selected courses for the present study and to provide representatives of different genders, races, ethnicities and socio-economic statuses. I witnessed the interaction among the participants, which seemed to stimulate participants to state feelings, perceptions and beliefs that they might not have expressed if interviewed individually. Thus, the time frame of sixty to ninety minutes allowed each participant ample time to state ideas and comments in the group. I also audio taped each session. In addition, I asked participants in the present study specific questions, consistent with the guiding questions on culturally diverse learners and multiculturalism.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis of all data was an ongoing process. (Patton, 2002). As interviews were completed and information gathered, I recorded various aspects of the fieldwork: nonverbal cues, feelings perceived and body language demonstrated by the participants. Ideals emerged and patterns began to take shape. The fieldwork was initially generative and emergent, following the flow of the data (Patton, 2002). Data analysis took place throughout the process of data collection.

Analysis of Interviews/Focus Groups. A colleague in my department transcribed interview data, and I assisted with the process. We read transcripts while listening to tapes in order to verify information. This process provided an accurate picture of responses by participants. We analyzed each transcript through a process of open coding (for conceptualizing and categorizing the data), followed by axial coding for making assumptions and developing emergent themes. I organized data according to emergent ideas, and Patton's (2002) coding system, for content analysis that involved five steps: "identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying and labeling" the information from the transcriptions and field notes (p. 463).

Data Analysis

I summarized the preservice teachers' responses to the broad questions, interview protocol questions and focus group protocol questions using a few examples of participants' comments. I found a great amount of overlap across questions and the preservice teachers' responses, which became apparent through the analysis process. I categorized participants' responses into the topical areas of awareness, cultural knowledge, curriculum and experiences. Preservice teachers' holistic perceptions of multiculturalism are presented, their perceptions of how multiculturalism should be promoted in school settings, and how teacher preparation coursework in multicultural education will affect teaching of culturally diverse students. The emerging patterns of multicultural education characteristics are summarized.

I interviewed two preservice teachers from each of the three courses in this study. When asked to define the term *multicultural education/multiculturalism*, participants responded honestly. Preservice teachers' responses related multiculturalism to what is taught in the classroom (curriculum), being aware of differences, experiences and possessing cultural knowledge. The aforementioned terms represent emerging themes and patterns in the data sets. Student responses also indicate multicultural education and diversity include possessing cultural knowledge and incorporating multiculturalism into the curriculum by connecting with students in classrooms. Table 2 presents preservice teachers' interview responses to the question, "*In your own words, what do you consider multicultural education to be, and how would you define the term"?*

Preservice teachers shared their prior experiences with diversity and multiculturalism, and each participant mentioned attending predominately all White schools and having very little interaction with other races and ethnicities in the classroom. One student teacher stated, "I did not have much exposure to diversity. My school was predominately White." The students' responses mirrors the wider population of students enrolled in teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Table 2 – Responses to Protocol Question One "*How do you define the term multiculturalism*?"	
ED 203	a) . . . *any cultural ideas and things in the classroom, even though there might not be diversity, necessarily; having that presence in your classroom if you have a homogeneous or heterogeneous population.* (Student A, personal communication) [Theme, cultural knowledge] b) . . . *different cultures trying to educate students . . . their roots.* (Student B, personal communication) [Themes: curriculum, cultural knowledge, awareness]
ED 370	a) . . . *different ethnicities and backgrounds and learning to teach to the population of Caucasian, but learning to teach the Blacks and Hispanics in a way that is effective for their learning.* (Student A, personal communication) [Themes: cultural knowledge, curriculum and awareness] b) . . . *learning how to interact with other people that may not share the same cultural worldview, value or background as you. . . . learning about as many cultures as I possibly can to have a foundation of understanding.* (Student B, personal communication) [Themes: cultural knowledge, curriculum and experiences]
ED 485	a) . . . *culture is not defined by boundaries or structure*; *recognizing different cultures, managing, understanding and promoting tolerance and acceptance. Learning to connect with kids in my future field, and usually that means learning different methods that I may not have experienced as a child but are a way they are able to learn best.* (Student A, personal communication) [Themes: awareness, cultural knowledge, curriculum] b) . . . *teaching in a school with a lot of diversity . . . like religion, race and gender . . . teaching with more than one culture in the classroom, but also trying to teach in a classroom that is of one ethnicity. . . mostly about different cultures.* (Student B, personal communication) [Themes, curriculum, awareness, cultural knowledge]

In response to the second question, "*How did you construct your definition of multicultural education?"*, preservice teachers identified more than one factor that influenced the construction of their definition. For example, personal experiences, family (home), friends, the community and the news media contributed to the construction of their definition of multicultural education, while college courses (curriculum) and personal experiences were the most influential factors. Table 3 illustrates the preservice teachers' feelings about factors that affected the construction of their definition of multiculturalism.

Table 3 - Responses to Protocol Question Two
"How did you construct your definition of multicultural education?"

ED 203	a) . . . *being very uncomfortable and feeling discomfort the first time being the minority in a predominately African American or Hispanic school. These feelings were due to negative stories about minorities from family members, friends in the communities.* (ED 203 student, focus session) b) *I learned about stereotypes from family members, home and the news media.* (ED 203 student, interview)
ED 370	a) . . . *being uncomfortable working with a person of noncolor when they make it uncomfortable. I learned about racist from the neighborhood. I lived it.* (ED 370 student, focus group)
ED 485	a) I *worked with diverse students as a tutor. I taught English to students from Colombia and Mexico.* (ED 485 student, interview) b) *I was exposed to prejudice and stereotypes and I am very attentive and aware of different races, ethnicities and religions.* (ED 485 student, focus group)

I asked several participants this question. "A*s a result of having a field experience in a diverse school setting, are you different or the same?"* One participant enrolled in the diversity course, who mentioned "feeling uncomfortable being the minority," initially stated during a focus group discussion:

> I'm a White college student walking down the hallway with several eyes staring at me. The stigma of being the only one seemed to disappear after a few weeks at a diverse school. However, I have changed in many ways… I think I am more accepting and sensitive to other ethnic groups.

White student responses in the foundation of education course and student teacher section responses were similar to those of students enrolled in the diversity course.

> During an interview, one student teacher stated:
>
> After the initiation [two weeks], I felt a part of the class community; the students accepted and respected me. I was a part of the family, and I could feel the inner connection . . . they seemed to like and accept me regardless of my skin color. The experience did change me.

Other participants during the interview process expressed similar feelings. In comparison, an African American student summed up her experience during an interview:

> When I walked into the diverse school setting, I saw my own reflection . . . [This experience] . . . enhanced who I am and not really has changed [me] but made me better. Education and methods have changed, but I am the same person. Society can't change my thought process and the way I was raised.

The three minority students shared similar comments in relation to their experiences in diverse school settings.

During the interview and focus group discussion, pre-service teachers suggested their multicultural experiences were the most rewarding experiences because the schools had the following attributes: (1) a caring teaching staff; (2) classrooms like a family/community; (3) supportive teachers who encouraged students to take ownership of the learning process;

(4) curricula that integrated learning about other cultures and ethnicities (e.g. classroom readings, assignments and artifacts hanging in classrooms/school building); (5) promotion of self-awareness of cultures through exhibits and displays (e.g., posters, bulletin boards); (6) teacher influence on student values; and (7) instructional strategies and pedagogical principles that accommodate diverse students needs.

Another question, "*What is your perception of how multiculturalism should be promoted in school settings"?*, elicited additional comments from preservice teachers; see Table 4 and Table 5 for examples.

Table 4 – ED 203 and ED 370 Preservice Teachers' Responses to:
What is your perception of how multiculturalism should be promoted in school settings?

ED 203	a) . . . *if you have not been in a diverse setting you won't know how to act or react* … (Ahah, focus group) [Themes: experiences] b) *You can learn so much from those who are different than you*. (Mamber, interview) [Themes: cultural knowledge, awareness, experiences, curriculum]
ED 370	a) *It is equally important for students to go to a diverse school… to see that everything isn't just roses and all the kids don't learn the same way and everyone isn't getting straight A's.* (Beonie, interview) [Themes: experiences, curriculum, cultural knowledge] b) . . . *the passion to work with all children is required, if not, you should quit.* (Rriec, focus group) [Theme: experiences]

Table 5 - ED 485 Preservice Teachers' Responses to: *What is your perception of how multiculturalism should be promoted in school settings?*

ED 485	a) *It is important to be culturally responsive and sensitive to differences; understanding how different cultures may learn and to learn to respect certain aspect of those cultures.* (Robe, focus group) [Themes: cultural knowledge, awareness, curriculum, respect] b) *. . . the hardest thing to teach is values of different cultures.* (Eelua, interview) [Theme: curriculum] c) *The opportunity to be in a diverse environment . . . because you have only had one experience growing up [White], you won't understand other's point of view and what it is like to teach in a diverse classroom.* (Orell, interview) [Themes: experiences, curriculum] d) *Children of African American families who live in African American neighborhoods are not going to private schools aren't getting the best multicultural education. It's just African American history . . . they need more exposure to other ethnicities, other races, other people, besides Black people in history and teachers that teach outside the box. People who are like me don't necessarily get the best of their multicultural education . . . but a lot of African Americans live in poverty and places where they can't get that kind of education* (African American student, focus group). [Themes: experiences, curriculum, cultural knowledge] e) *It [multicultural education] should be a part of what is taught in class. Teachers should give students background information on what they are learning that relates to many different cultures.* [Themes: curriculum, cultural knowledge, awareness]

I asked preservice teachers to respond to the last question, "*How will your teacher preparation coursework in multi-cultural education impact your teaching of culturally and linguistically diverse students*?" The participants' responses suggested that a solid educational foundation in cultural knowledge and exposing students on campus to other cultures,

races, ethnicities and languages could help students visualize the appearance of future classrooms. Several students stated the multicultural preparation they had completed would impact their future practice positively. My analysis of preservice teachers' responses yielded the following categorical themes: cultural knowledge, awareness, curriculum (pedagogy and teaching strategies) and experiences. The majority of students felt that an emphasis on multiculturalism is necessary for the preparation of preservice teachers. The other participants discussed the importance of recruiting diverse students and faculty to campus as positive role models, noting that college life in the real world needs to feel like a "community."

Discussion and Data Analysis

I coined the term *multicultural pedagogical concepts* to refer to the themes underlying my data analysis. These themes represented the salient and repeated expressions of particular ideas held by preservice teachers related to their learning and understanding of multiculturalism in a teacher education program. These multicultural pedagogical concepts, as I refer to overarching themes, are analogous to some terms—such as practical theories, teacher education theories, informal theories and beliefs theories—that are used in academic literature (Pajares, 1992). Thus, I present the collection of multicultural pedagogical concepts obtained from the voices of White preservice teachers, identified through the analysis of data, existing theoretical/academic theories and Banks' (2001) theoretical framework on multicultural education. Similarly, my personal working definition of the term *multicultural pedagogical concepts*, developed through my work on the present study, is as follows:

> *Multicultural pedagogical concepts* are a set of practices, policies, beliefs and thoughts related to a diverse group, a diverse experience or phenomenon that informs the approach or technique a person (preservice teacher, student or educator) uses to interact with diverse students in the classroom.

In other words, there is no one, single unifying theory in this study, but rather evidence of multiple theories within their set of multicultural pedagogical concepts. This interpretation has implications for both teacher education and curriculum theory.

Multicultural Pedagogical Concepts. The collection of *multicultural pedagogical concepts* about preservice teachers' understanding and learning of multiculturalism is presented *en masse* so that the reader may consider them holistically. I discuss and make comparisons in relation to the introductory course, multicultural course and student teaching. I provide a detailed description of each theme, with a deep analysis for identification and illumination of preservice teachers' thoughts about multicultural education. I rely upon participants' interviews and focus group comments to illustrate, as honestly as possible, their personal meanings in reference to understanding and learning about multiculturalism. As I began to sort through data, I found it helpful to present participants' principal multicultural pedagogical concepts as a collection, as a whole, in order to discover connections among the concepts.

The most prevalent and prominent multicultural pedagogical concept for teaching and learning of multiculturalism is possessing *cultural knowledge* and *awareness* of cultures (see Table 6). This concept permeated all data sets presented in this study. Possessing *cultural knowledge* and *awareness* is a key theme for future educators' success in the classroom. As I reviewed the transcripts and other participants' documents, *cultural knowledge* and *awareness* emerged as the strongest driving concept of multicultural pedagogy; furthermore, it relates to the participants' ideas about teaching and working with diverse students. Cultural knowledge (awareness) is the acceptance of others by acknowledging differences and similarities and demonstrating an appreciation of differences. This acceptance and acknowledgement is accomplished through: (a) cultural experiences, (b) developing an open mind, (c) stepping out of one's comfort zone, (d) celebrating differences, (e) embracing all cultures, (f) respecting cultures and (g) providing a welcoming classroom environment. It is evident to me that in order to bridge the multicultural gap and achieve success in the classroom, the teacher needs to connect/bridge racial, cultural and language differences. Moreover, cross-cultural knowledge is important. This theme

is a strong fit with the second theme, *curriculum*, as well as with existing curriculum and multicultural theory in the theoretical area of critical pedagogy.

Table 6 - Multicultural Pedagogical Concepts: Cultural Knowledge and Awareness

Prevalent Multicultural Pedagogical Concepts: Cultural Knowledge (Awareness)	
Encompass Differences	*Acceptance*
Open-minded	*Acknowledgement of Differences/Similarities*
Out-of-Comfort Zone	*Appreciation of Differences*
Promoting Understanding of Differences	*Celebration of Differences and Similarities*
Respect	*Cultural Experiences*
Welcoming	*Embracing Culture*

The theme of *curriculum* was evident throughout the data analysis process. This multicultural pedagogical concept represents the idea of incorporating cultural knowledge and awareness through course content (Table 7). By the time preservice teachers have matriculated through the program and become seniors; the reality of lesson planning and standards becomes more evident to them. Preservice teachers want to integrate multicultural teaching with their pedagogy, which holds implications for teacher education. Overlapping themes related to *curriculum* presented by preservice teachers enrolled in the three educational courses are included in Table 7.

Table 7 - Multicultural Pedagogical Concept: Curriculum

Prevalent Multicultural Pedagogical Concepts: Curriculum	
Beliefs in Classroom	*Learning about Cultures*
Different Teaching Styles	*Learn about Different People*
Educating about Cultures	*Learning in Fieldwork*
Education of Students' Different Cultures	*Meet Needs of Every Child*
Interaction of Students	*Model Acceptance and Awareness*
Knowledge of each Students' Diversity	*Teaches About Others/Diversity*

The multicultural pedagogical concepts, Table 7, network across and throughout data sources. The overarching theme of curriculum is not new, but it suggests that preservice teachers' believe multiculturalism is an integral part of the curriculum. The idea of incorporating multiculturalism into the curriculum encompassed all the approaches outlined by Banks. Banks (2001) focused specifically on developing a multicultural curriculum, and he believed that one way to achieve greater understanding and more positive attitudes toward different groups is to integrate and broaden the curriculum to make it more inclusive and action oriented.

Banks (2001) defined four approaches to a multicultural curriculum, which was evident in the present study. For example, (a) the contribution approach: focuses on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural elements. Students enrolled in the foundational course elicited responses related to celebrations of holidays, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, contributions from Booker T. Washington or celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo. Students in the other two classes emphasized the importance of recognizing the experiences and histories of all students, which is important in creating a climate that honors and celebrates diversity. Participants in the interview also emphasized the importance of the teachers' behavior as a first step in reinforcing the commitment to equity; (b) the additive approach: addresses content, concepts, themes and perspectives added to the curriculum without changing its structure. Participants were eager to suggest that teachers take the leadership role in teaching about different cultures, becoming role models as they accept others who are different, meeting all students' needs and encouraging students to interact with each other; (c) the transformative approach: the structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Participants were adamant in talking about the standard that addresses diversity; however, they encouraged teachers to regress from the document called "state standards" and to change the curriculum to meet the needs of all students in recognizing cultures. In other words, the curriculum should not be so rigid that the teacher is afraid to change to accommodate students' needs and the idea of being open to learning about cultures; and (d) social

action approach: students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them. Many of the preservice teachers wanted classroom teachers to involve students in projects to address social justice, equity and civil rights issues.

The three other approaches—additive, transformative and social action (Banks, 2008)—were evident in responses and activities in which preservice teachers were engaged on campus and in the community. Typical examples include: (1) Additive approach—during the month of February, student teachers prepared lessons or units on African Americans; (2) Transformative approach—preservice teachers working at their field sites include lessons on events and issues from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives. Typical examples of this approach include an invasion from the east, through the eyes of Native Americans, and a Native American program with vendors on campus; and (3) Social action—preservice teachers' involvement in social action issues beyond the classroom setting. Participants addressed social and economic needs, advocated human rights and peace and engaged in activities that did not harm the environment. These activities included Partners for Peace, Student Action Leadership Team (SALT), Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, Diversity Concerns Committee and the Peace and Social Justice Committee. Participants in the present study are engaged in various types of knowledge (e.g. personal, cultural, academic and school), which can help them to better understand the perspectives of different racial, ethnic and cultural groups, as well as to develop their own versions and interpretations of issues and events (Banks, 2008).

As I noticed the development of the different stages as students progressed through the program from the introduction to education class to the multicultural and student teaching class, it became apparent to me that the only way to encourage students to become more "comfortable" with differences or working with diversity depends on the skills and insights the teacher brings to the classroom, such as culturally responsive teaching. Participants in the present study realized that they too were learners in their field placements in diverse schools and that they needed to be open to new information. All of the subthemes listed above suggest that in order to meet the needs

of students, teachers must be culturally aware and use the curriculum as a vehicle to ensure that *No Child/Student Is Left Behind* regardless of his/her background, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, disability, gender orientation, etc. In addition, preservice teachers in the present study are adamant in suggesting the need for teachers to share their time and talent fairly, to offer helpful feedback and encouragement to each student and to ensure that the curriculum is meaningful.

How can all this be accomplished? An effective curriculum can be seen as a lens with one side as a window and the other side a mirror. Are all students able to see themselves in the curricular mirror? Are all parts of the world seen through the curricular window? These questions emerged as I analyzed data sets. Another analogy is the microscope; an effective curriculum can be seen through the low power objective of the scope, which is only marginal/minimal in comparison to the high power objective as it is used to see the world globally. If preservice teachers understand the microscope analogy of using the highest power objective of the scope to view others and the world globally, they will be able to see diversity from another perspective, while being culturally sensitive to different groups.

Conclusion

Banks (1998) asserted that an important goal of teacher education programs might be to identify prospective teachers who "are able to acquire the knowledge, skills and perspectives needed to become insiders within the communities in which they teach" (pp. 14-15). It seems as though preservice teachers who display dispositions of patience, passion, caring and tolerance are the most likely candidates for understanding multiculturalism, diversity and new learning. Teacher education programs in partnership with school corporations should address the career needs of teachers as they face challenges in diverse classrooms. In order to track the path of graduates, teacher education programs should have follow-up programs to support sensitivity to cultural diversity in classroom settings.

Further research is needed to address the possible influence of factors such as prior experiences with diversity, family background, personal experiences, school experiences and individual dispositions toward teaching multiculturally, as well as teacher education programs focusing on prior beliefs and attitudes regarding teaching diverse students. Whatever the dynamics, it is evident to me that an intense teacher education program can influence preservice teachers' learning and understanding of multiculturalism and diversity. Teacher educators must develop a collaborative partnership with former students and with school corporations to ensure the continued development of knowledge and constructive beliefs leading to an understanding of diversity, which leads to students' academic success.

Limitations

I conducted this investigation only on preservice teachers in a private Midwestern university education program. Thus, this study is limited to the program at one university. The sample is not representative of all undergraduate education preservice teachers, so the findings can only be generalized to preservice teachers at this university and other representative institutions with similar preservice teacher populations. The resulting sample size although small, represents the majority of students in the program and consists of all the classes that meet the criteria for the study.

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