"I feel your pain": Reflections for teacher educators on misguided views of diversity by preservice teachers

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Abstract

This qualitative case study explored the impact of teaching approaches designed to develop Critically Reflective Thinking (CRT) for preservice teachers in an urban, secondary teacher preparation program. Despite concerted use of CRT within course-based lessons, online discussions, and case studies, participants consistently equated their personal "diversity" with the experiences of their students. Our findings speak to the need for teacher preparation that explicitly challenges beliefs regarding diversity even when delineated efforts encourage critically reflective pedagogy. Without this concerted focus, teachers will continue to essentialize the experiences of their students. Our findings will inform teacher educators in the design of *both* pedagogy *and* the self-examinations necessary for critically reflective thinking, problem solving, and the decision making necessary in urban schools.

Introduction

Mid-July, 2009, world news headlines captured the enormity of unrest among Iranians protesting the outcome of the June election. Subsequent Twitters from a subset of US politicians echoed a history of essentializing from a predominately white, middle class group of Americans as they equated their reactions to the 2008 US presidential election with media depictions from the Middle East. These proposed parallels not only

diminished the gravity of Iranian events, but reflected gross misunderstandings from those claiming to "commiserate" with the experiences of others.

While our findings are clearly less poignant than "Tweets" claiming resonance with an international election, the perceived camaraderie with others reflects a misalignment evident in our findings. Specifically, the beliefs of our participants consistently overshadowed deliberate attempts by teacher educators to guide Critically Reflective Thinking (CRT) in a group of preservice teachers working in an urban school setting. Despite the use of CRT within the context of university course work, online discussions, and case study reviews, four study participants consistently equated their own experiences with "diversity" with the themes from course-based activities and with the lives of their high school students from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

The following thematic question guided this research: "At the conclusion of a year-long preservice teacher education program designed to foster critically reflective thinking, do program graduates view learner diversity in ways that align with the intentions of the teacher preparation programs as evident in whole-class discussions, small-group computer-mediated discussions, and in post-student teaching and first-year teaching interviews?" The pedagogical approaches were based in theory and research on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), case pedagogies using both whole-class and online dialogue, and through critically reflective thinking (Wade, Fauske, & Thompson, 2008).

Our findings speak to the need for teacher preparation that explicitly challenges assumptions of preservice teachers' understandings of diversity beyond efforts that promote critically reflective practices. Without such challenge, novices often essentialize the experiences of others, assuming that all students in a given category share similar attributes and focusing on the unitary aspects of the category rather than the diversity within it (Erickson, 2009). Our findings will prove useful to teacher educators as they design curricula that address *both* the tools *and* the self-examinations necessary for critically reflective thinking, problem solving, and decision making.

Theoretical Framework

Critically reflective thinking and critical reflection have been defined in a variety of ways in teacher education research (Rodgers, 2002). Commonalities include understanding dilemma identification, or problem framing, from multiple perspectives by questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, routines, rationalizations, and unexamined explanations (Loughran, 2002). Conceptions of reflective thinking, such as those of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983), focus on problem framing. Dewey (1933) suggested that effective reflection requires open-minded and critically rigorous ways of thinking. A stance of open-mindedness allows teachers to formulate tentative hypotheses, which they then test with the aid of other professionals and theories. This phase of reflection requires intense and focused analysis, which Dewey saw as distinguishing reflective thinking from other kinds of thinking.

To Schön, problem framing (or *problem setting*) is "a process in which, interactively, we *name* the things to which we will attend and *frame* the context in which we will attend to them" (p. 40). Schön further suggested that effective teaching is concerned with more than problem framing, requiring teachers to adapt or change based on reflection. Reflection leading to change is an important characteristic of critical reflection (Howard, 2003; Larrivee, 2000).

Dewey's (1933) and Schön's (1983) conceptions of reflective thinking focus on multiple perspective problem framing where all available data are used to seek and evaluate solutions. Although Schön's conception moves toward reflection that includes a change component, these conceptions are not necessarily *critical* in the political sense of the word. Van Manen (1977) defined critical reflection as using criteria of justice and equity to consider the political, moral, and ethical consequences of teaching actions. Others have emphasized that to be critical, results must transform curricula and practice or alter the status quo (cf. Brookfield, 1995).

Most prior research with preservice teachers has found little evidence of critical thinking and reflection, whether it be in written case analyses (cf. Harrington, Quinn-Leering, & Hodson, 1996), whole-class case discussions (cf. Moje & Wade, 1997), online case discussions (cf. Wade, Fauske, & Thompson, 2008), or other types of reflection activities such as journal writing (Leland, Harste, & Youssef, 1997; Risko, Roskos, & Vukelich, 1999) and action research (Gore & Zeichner, 1991). Typically, these pedagogical tools are used in isolation, either in a stand-alone course or without

accompanying field experience in diverse contexts (Middleton, 2002; Weisman & Garza, 2002).

Studies that have shown some evidence of critically reflective thinking and subsequent changes in practice have included a combination of pedagogical tools and field experiences with diverse learners (Milner, 2005; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2006). Further, research on student success in schools suggests that teachers' beliefs about students lead to differential treatment and expectations (Middleton, 2002). In particular, how teachers regard students' language, race, gender, and socioeconomic status have a profound effect on students' success in school (Comber & Simpson, 2001; Weisman & Garza, 2002). When teachers believe that students' cultures and language are deficits, they tend to seek solutions to "fix" students, without questioning or altering the existing curriculum, teaching methods, or school policies that result in segregated classrooms and exclusion from success in school (Banks, 2002; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; Sleeter & Grant, 1999).

Milner (2003, 2006) emphasizes that diverse learners are not problems to be fixed and that teacher education must include a critical reflection component that considers both learner needs and pedagogy. In the present study, the goal of CRT was to enable preservice teachers to challenge deficit thinking, question taken-for-granted assumptions about students, and gain a greater understanding of a wide range of students across diverse settings.

The present study was specifically designed to develop preservice teachers' understandings of learner diversity through effective teaching practices in urban settings.

We hoped to develop a program that combined pedagogy in conjunction with diverse field experiences and instruction with faculty, including a faculty member of color, in ways that would provide support for the development of critically reflective thinking and teaching practices.

Research Methods and Data Sources

Case studies (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994) employed qualitative data to study the professional development of four teachers within an urban teacher education program. Independently, team members read interview transcripts, work samples, and online discussions. Through a process of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) initial coding categories were identified. A complex matrix was created that sought to reveal similarities and differences between the focal candidates (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Participants were interviewed immediately after their year-long licensure program and during the fall of their first semester of teaching. The interviews were semi-structured in that they used a predetermined set of ten interview questions, yet were flexible enough to allow for more informal interaction to occur (Wengraf, 2001). The interviews were taped and transcribed.

Our study focused on four white, female preservice teachers, ages 22-40, in an undergraduate teacher education program at a western university. Hannah and Holly were social studies teachers in a middle school. Valerie, a dance teacher, and Bonnie, an English teacher, both taught high school. The experiences of these preservice teachers were part of a larger study that investigated the development of critical reflective

thinking. Our data from this study represent views on how participants reflected and acted on the learner differences within the context of course-based critical reflective cases and in their reflections on teaching while working in secondary level schools. Our primary data sources were interviews and online discussion posts, both of which investigated participant views about teaching for diversity in terms of: planning, instruction, classroom management, motivation, assessment, action research, and addressing the needs of English Language Learners.

Online discussions took place weekly using the online learning environment tools provided by the university. The online discussion posts took many forms; some were open-ended questions about course readings or field experiences, others were controversial statements about which the participants had to persuasively respond. Some of the online discussions centered on cases. Students were asked to respond to the case itself and also to reply to a peer's response. All online discussions were intended to elicit critically reflective thinking and to provide opportunities for students to engage in the CRT process collectively, challenging and questioning one another's perspectives and assumptions.

In addition to the interviews and online discussion postings, we occasionally turned to other data sources to provide context and clarity in our analysis. Supplementary data included course syllabi, lesson plans, completed assignments, and the instructor's field notes. Although none of these sources were central to our analysis, they helped us better understand the bigger picture of the course and the participants' experiences in learning how to be critically reflective.

Findings

As part of an undergraduate licensure program, the participants in this study completed course readings and a range of activities designed to challenge the ways in which they not only examined their teaching, but critically investigated how their beliefs regarding students from diverse communities were impacted by their experiences. Through CRT practices, our study was intended to extend past conversations on the experiences of white preservice teachers in their development and reported ability to respond to their students and classroom communities.

To begin, course readings showcased the experiences of other, predominately white preservice teachers in ways that illustrated beliefs, expectations, and intentions of others like themselves (Intrator, 2006; Olmedo, 1997). Course readings were designed to intentionally challenge students and to increase their awareness that their thinking was not atypical or somehow "bad" but, instead, reflected a stance that included engagement in reflection that was more "critical." The process of critical reflection, therefore, gave participants a way to move beyond their guilt and discomfort to understand that most preservice teachers are struggling in the same ways.

Case studies and online discussions were designed to engage preservice teachers in the sometimes difficult conversations about their own beliefs, biases, assumptions, and practices. Students read and responded to a series of cases written by the instructor based on the real, lived experiences of other preservice teachers with whom she had worked. These case-based discussions provided a venue to learn to challenge and question not

only themselves, but their colleagues as well. Further, CRT case study investigations allowed a less threatening, less personal way to begin the process. Cases were then revisited throughout the semester in an effort to examine growth and development of CRT over time (Wade, Fauske, Thompson, 2008). Our investigation and analysis revealed four themes—contradictions, expectations for equity, responsibility, and change and reform.

Finding I - Contradictions in Thinking

Our data identified **contradictions** between participants' preconceptions regarding learners and actions taken when confronted with learner differences in their classroom practices. That is, within the context of their online discussions and interviews, participants expressed sensitivity to and an awareness of their preconceived ideas about students' abilities. They often spoke passionately about injustices when examining heated topics in course case studies. For example, in a series of controversial cases including two entitled "Aaron" and "The Lovers," participants examined issues related to gender inequity and power differential in classrooms. In the case of "Aaron," participants were asked to critically reflect on a situation in which a preservice teacher was forced to acquiesce on a student athlete's grade and follow the biases of his mentor teacher. In "The Lovers," participants responded to a case in which two high school students were continually engaged in what the preservice teacher in the case study felt were inappropriately intimate behaviors for the classroom. In this case, the parents and the administration both exerted power over the preservice teacher, supporting the students' behavior, which effectively disempowered the preservice teachers with students,

colleagues, parents, and administration. Although these cases were specifically written to elicit critical conversations, and often did, their impact did not carry over into participants' later reflections on teaching practice.

Within the body of their online discussions of the case studies, participants were quite capable of pinpointing the explicit origins of perceived injustices. In a case emphasizing the intersection of race and socioeconomic status, Bonnie was aware of how Maria, a teacher in one case study, was influenced by her unexamined assumptions and limited experiences. Maria, a white, middle class teacher in a highly diverse high school, had limited experience with diverse contexts and adopted the negative views of students that her mentor espoused. She did not think to question or examine those beliefs and how they impacted her own interactions with students. Bonnie remarked, "Maria's biases are influenced by her preconceived notions of her students" (Bonnie, case 2). Holly agreed, "Maria has let her mentor teacher poison her outlook towards her students by painting a picture of them as violent, hopeless misfits" (Holly case 2). Both Bonnie and Holly understood levels of injustice within the context of the case study of Maria and could clearly see the origins of those injustices. However, they did not push their reflection further and did not make suggestions for change.

Finding II - Expectations and Equity

Participants highlighted the impact of their **expectations** regarding student performance as well as their interactions with their students in their classrooms. That is, within the context of their online postings, participants delineated when expectations impacted outcomes for students within hypothetical environments. As noted by one

participant, "Everyone deserves the best education we can give them." A second participant responded, "National standards are not helpful for low achieving students." For these participants, **equity** equated with fairness. However, it was less clear how participants believed fairness was manifest and for whom within classrooms and schools.

Finding III - Who is responsible?

Online discussion posts revealed a level of conformity that reflected a desire to keep the educational system intact, demonstrating a level of rigidity that keeps decision-making relatively bound by school-based conventions. That is, study participants reported that students were ultimately **responsible** for their academic success. Students' (i.e., K-12) individual choices were viewed as key to their success. Participants failed to see the limitations, and at times, the contradictions in their reasoning regarding student choice. Specifically, they were generally able to name systemic problems that contribute to limited access and success for many students from underrepresented communities and reported a generic awareness of the limitations faced by many students within the education system. What appeared less obvious in their reflections was participants' awareness of the factors contributing to inequities and how those practices and beliefs are entrenched within the status quo (i.e., if people make the right choices, their lives will be better). As Bonnie reported, "…ultimately it is the students' responsibility to participate in class" (Bonnie, case 1).

Finding IV - Agents of Change and Reform

Participants viewed themselves as agents of **change and reform**. They reported that not only were they responsible for change but they also viewed themselves as more

capable of reform efforts when compared with other educators. Hannah commented, "Reform is possible…but it's not easy…simply a matter of willingness to change" (Hannah, post 10). In practice, however, the manifestations of these reports were generally negligible. For some participants, reflections on their actual student teaching experiences defined "change" in a literal sense with regard to daily reflections and lesson plan adaptations. Change from their viewpoints was evidenced in case study analyses and in action research projects that included basic instructional or curricular adaptations. That is, as with the majority of their efforts within student teaching, change was perfunctory and functionally basic.

On a larger scale, study participants tended to exaggerate the simplicity of their potential as future reformers. For example, as Holly remarked, "Reformers don't just go with the flow when something needs to change" (Holly, case 1). She went on, "You reached a child, you made a difference, you changed a life" (Holly, post 8). Perhaps the most essentialized view of impact came from Bonnie who remarked, "10 minutes at the end of the day…make the changes that reflection dictates" (Bonnie, post 10).

Our findings reflect those of other research investigating the struggles of white preservice teachers to understand urban classroom settings that differed from their experiences as students (Garmon, 2004; Milner, 2006; Page, 2009). That is, as is often typical (Garmon, 2004; Page, 2009), our study participants used their own experiences to bridge their understanding of diversity and "struggle" to the needs/experiences of their students. Bonnie, a 37 year old mother, often equated her abilities to manage raising her children, complete school full time, and overcome her family's experiences with divorce

with the contemporary struggles of others. While clearly Bonnie's story reflects a "full plate," her narrative is not the same of that of her students or the events portrayed in class discussions and case studies.

Implications

What our findings revealed as unique, is a fine-grained understanding of how white students relate their histories and personal struggles with their urban students in ways that are not only limited but detrimental. In their defense, our participants were not particularly closed minded in their self examinations and they readily understood the factors within institutions that contribute to access for some individuals. Further, our participants were quite aware of the conditions and practices that contribute to deficit perspectives.

Where the lines of reasoning became more blurred for our participants was in their inability to distinguish between their personal life struggles, and those of the students in their classrooms and schools. They possessed little recognition of the factors in their own lives as white, middle-class women who rely on a relatively narrow range of experiences that differed from those of their students. Specifically, each of our participants could speak about big picture injustices and recognized them within the cases of other teachers (like themselves), but when within the context of their classrooms/field experience they did not see themselves through such "critical" lenses. Rather, they perceived their students' experiences to be much like their own, thereby failing to recognize how the struggles their students of diversity were substantively different from

their own as typical white, middle class, women in positions of relative power and privilege.

Specific CRT strategies used as pedagogical tools in our program helped our study participants name explicit practices that are racist, sexist, and discriminatory. The case studies and the CRT strategies demonstrated participants' thoughts regarding depictions of what they understood to be examples of racism. Our data also revealed that while participants were able to make basic, surface level connections from their course-based content to their experiences in depth and breadth, they were either unwilling or unable to identify beliefs, assumptions, and practices they could name in others when the "reflection" was their own.

These findings are significant in that they revealed critical incidents where our study participants acknowledged institutional barriers and practices that they understood to limit success in schools and school-related settings. Of greater significance however, are findings that demonstrated the points where our study participants absolved themselves of perpetuating the status quo through a handing off of personal responsibility for change and reform. Our data revealed the limitations of CRT when our study participants reached a conceptual wall in their ability to clearly understand the factors that impact academic success for students whose experiences extend past their own "struggles" and limitations. The theme of "working hard" reinforced their notion of success in overcoming their own experiences with diversity.

While some components of our curriculum and field experiences allowed our participants to articulate the factors that contribute to or limit success, they often found

satisfaction in "getting" the struggles of those from diverse communities as the recipe for change for their students. Unfortunately, these perceptions ultimately place responsibility and ownership for change on students and families who are ultimately deemed responsible for their own lives. This passing off of responsibility and ownership illustrated the resurgence of an assimilationist perspective in ways that reified the notion of individual determination, hard work, and pulling oneself up as the variables influencing one's future (Suárez-Orozco, 2000).

The Limits of "Getting It"

While participants felt strongly about injustice, in a broad sense, they were heavily influenced by their past beliefs regarding students. Study participants often adopted a default position based on their own experiences with diversity, particularly when referencing the content of highly charged case studies. Holly reported, "I have not been exposed to racial diversity…I grew up on the east bench [an economically stronger community]…" (Holly, post 7). She went on, "I don't know if theory and research will match the realities of the classroom…I haven't spent enough time in the classroom to know for sure" (Holly, post 10).

Additional online postings highlighted reported parallels between personal struggles with "diversity" and those of their classroom students. That is, participants expressed an awareness of how their personal experiences shaped their understanding of contemporary learner diversity both in terms of how they responded to course case studies, as well as in their reactions when working within diverse school settings.

Moreover, there was an undercurrent suggesting participants felt that reported commonalities in their personal experiences, including upbringing, and exposure (or lack thereof) to diversity were critical and necessary for their success when working with diverse student populations.

To some degree all participants cited case studies as useful in providing tangible, cognitive, and conceptual anchors that allowed them to link their experiences with those of their students. For some, critical reflection was evident though discussions that argued for broad-based institutional change. However, while viewed as an important goal, interview data revealed little evidence of how that change could take place.

It's All About Experience

Further analysis of our data unearthed possible factors that impacted participants' ability to discuss how they will take the necessary leaps from discussions of learner diversity to actions that will impact their teaching practices. Experience was a major theme that participants believed will increase opportunities for active decision making. Our participants viewed time teaching as *the* factor that would provide them with the skills to be change agents. Candidates believed the development of a critical stance was only possible through exposure to classrooms over time.

Making Change Personal

While seemingly straightforward on the surface, the factor that appeared to provide a more defined conceptual bridge for participants were the experiences of a faculty member of color whose life stories made conceptual arguments more tangible for project participants. Without exception, study participants viewed the influence of a

faculty member of color as positive. Holly noted, "Rachel [the instructor] did bring a very cool viewpoint" (interview). We learned about how Rachel tried to be mainstream, and did not embrace the culture of her family; for example, by not using her native Spanish at home. Rachel's connections between her own life and those of the student participants struck a chord…put[ting] a face to the stories we try to relate to" (Valerie, interview). However, what appeared to be missing still was a deeper level of understanding about how these differences create more than superficial distinctions between white middle class women, and individuals from more diverse communities. The concepts simply did not resonate beyond surface level distinctions.

Significance

Our findings reflected minimal evidence of critically reflective thinking among preservice teachers when course work and reflections based on experiences targeted specific areas related to of race and language. While our participants articulated the *tools* they use for critical reflection, these reflections often resulted in generalized understandings of diversity with limited attention to nuanced differences in language, ethnicity, culture, and power. Further, our participants defined CRT as the technical or practical skills affiliated with teaching and were limited in their attention to more in-depth analyses of critically reflective practices related to the socio-political implications within daily practice. That is, they struggled to define how they would implement more in-depth practices in their teaching over time. As one participant noted, without a "diverse" teaching environment, it is not possible to use critically reflective practices

(Valerie, interview). Project participants agreed that critically reflective thinking was necessary for good teaching but acknowledged time, work in a diverse community, and experience would provide the opportunities to implement their knowledge of these skills. This finding illustrates an extremely simplistic view of the complexity of teaching as it relates to racism, power, and privilege.

As was the case for our study participants, many preservice teachers were open to being informed about racism, power, and practices related to white privilege. Case studies, online discussions, and experiences with a faculty member of color informed the ways in which critical topics were shared with beginning teachers in our study. However, these efforts must extend further. It is essential that teacher educators move white preservice teachers' understanding of complex constructs that extend beyond basic definitions. Without an understanding of the embedded nature of racism, power, and privilege, responses remain perfunctory and are limited to generalized understandings that are minimized within the context of daily teaching (Johnson, 2006).

Our findings indicate that as teacher educators, it is not enough to expose white preservice teachers to the concept of critical reflective practices. While our efforts were deliberate in their attention to curriculum adaptations, varied field experiences, and online discussions, these practices are rather superficial and reinforce a formulaic view of responding to complex issues (Skerrett & Hargreaves, 2008).

Curriculum adaptations, field experiences, and discussions of topics about "others" fail to impress upon novices the embedded nature of racist practices, white privilege, and issues of power. If these deeper levels of understanding do not take place,

white preservice teachers assume parallel experiences that are in no way aligned with those of their students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Without an understanding of individual histories and institutional practices that alienate and discriminate in obvious and less obvious ways (to white observers), white preservice teachers remain *observers;* those who study artifacts of existence. Without deliberate and necessary uncomfortable challenges, they maintain the role of those who complete metaphorical field trips that provide information about issues that are often detached and highly complex. While preservice teachers may learn the fundamentals tools designed to expose issues of white privilege, power, and racism, our findings demonstrated limitations in the degree to which our participants' beliefs and actions reflected substantive changes.

Next Steps

Data from our study underscore the need for white teachers who understand their potential as more than technicians for change. Instead, we promote a view that white teachers participate as allies for change in complex educational systems where they actively advocate for their students and communities. This process is complex and requires honest, perhaps blunt, conversations about the ways in which teachers contribute to practices that perpetuate superficial responses to changing communities. Teachers may reach these broader goals in two ways: 1) through examinations of the origins and pervasive continuance of racist practices within daily teaching; and 2) through deliberate actions to take a stand in ways that brings together other allies. These efforts afford white

teachers the opportunity to become active in their CRT and expand their roles by supporting leadership efforts to improve teaching and learning for all students (Kivel, 2005).

In response to its urban schools emphasis, teacher educators at our institution engage in conversations that identify how teacher educators must first examine *their beliefs and practices* as a means of changing how they work with preservice teachers (Burbank, in press). Like our preservice teachers, we are not immune from a position of arrogance and an assumed understanding.

A monthly book club with faculty from across our campus includes examinations of topics of study that address whiteness and privilege. These topics guide discussions where text themes challenge participants to reflect on their own teaching practices and their own racist beliefs as a career-long process for self-reflection that is layered and developmental. Texts reviewed thus far include Gary Howard's 2005 text, *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools* and Mica Park's 2009 text, *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school.*

For some faculty our book club investigations serve as a first step to understanding the shifts in the student population within our community. For others, the discussions provide opportunities to reflect on how our belief systems impact the way we teach and how we respond to an increasingly diverse population of prospective teachers. Similar to the stages of awareness discussed by Howard (2005), we recognize that our faculty varies in their roles as activists and that getting to the heart of change occurs in stages. That is, some individuals possess an understanding that collective discussions on

teacher education unearth the rationale for changing our teacher education programs. For these individuals, meetings and discussions provide a space where we define terms, understand terrain, and offer means to reflect on current practice. For others, there is a newfound awareness that past attempts at good will or modified curricular emphases are limited in scope and magnify a deficit perspective. Still, for others, our collective discussions speak to how we translate into practice the more theoretical aspects related to research on multicultural education, white privilege, social justice, and racism (Burbank, in press). Deliberate self-examinations on the part of our faculty are designed to shift how we approach our work with students as they examine the same issues in their teaching, and to underscore the vast differences between the lives of white educators and those whose lives differ from theirs.

The book club and related professional development are part of a larger, college-wide effort to transform teacher education. In this process we examine potentially harmful practices that promote a deficit view of preservice teachers and reinforce a hierarchy of privilege among teacher education faculty. If not deliberate in *our* critical reflective practices we may perpetuate the practices of viewing others (our white preservice teachers) from a deficit perspective thereby absolving ourselves from the responsibility of critically examining our own practices (Brandon, 2003).

In Summary

Our study has important implications for the field of teacher education as we strive to develop more complex and supportive practices for educating teachers who are

responsive to the diverse needs of students. Previous work indicates that teacher educators must create opportunities for critically reflective thinking that challenge preservice teachers within safe, collaborative, supportive, and trusting contexts *over time* (Bates, Burbank, Capps, & Ramirez, 2008; Howard, 2003; Schulte, 2000). Without deliberate, context-embedded attention to issues of white privilege, power, and racism, our students simply adopt skills that are generally superficial and limited (Page, 2002).

Our findings illustrate that while methods for improving critically reflective practice are essential, teacher educators must determine whether pedagogies and field-based experiences unintentionally formalize opportunities for preservice teachers to rehearse extant understandings of diversity that lack depth and are no more than slight variations on past rhetoric and historical practices. We simply cannot assume that concerted pedagogical efforts and diversified field experiences automatically impact the CRT of our students. As teacher educators, *our* self-reflections must be equally vigilant in the CRT we espouse for our students.

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