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**EXAMINATION OF DISPOSITIONS AND PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY:  
THE IMPACT OF A TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE PROMOTING CULTURALLY  
RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY**

by

**DEUSLENE LEITE BASTOS**

**DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to the Graduate School**

**of Wayne State University,**

**Detroit, Michigan**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**2011**

**MAJOR: CURRICULUM AND  
INSTRUCTION**

**Approved by:**

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**Advisor**

**Date**

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## DEDICATION

*Para a minha mãe que me ensinou a importância de família, persistência e que nada é impossível.*

To my mother who taught me the importance of family, persistence and that anything is possible.

*Para o meu pai que foi o modelo de respeito, generosidade e honestidade, mesmo se isso resultasse em perda financeira.*

To my father who modeled respect, generosity, and honesty, even if it meant losing money.

To my children Hugo and Jaciane who make me proud for having a gift with people.

To my grandchildren, Johnny and Coleton, who I hope will value knowledge.

To my sisters Maria Helena, Wilma, Vitória, and brother Mauricio who never had the same opportunities in education that I had, and yet respected my drive to pursue “another degree”, even when they could not understand why I needed one.

Para todas as Latinas que são “high context” escrevendo para leitores que são “low context.”

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Agradeço a todos, com muito carinho,

Lanny

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures .....	xi
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Problem Statement.....	7
The Need for the Study.....	8
Research Purpose.....	8
Research Questions.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Chapter 2: SCHOLARLY FRAMEWORK.....	11
Approaches to Schooling Diverse Children .....	11
Assimilation.....	12
Cultural Pluralism and Multicultural Education.....	16
Cultural Pluralism.....	19
Back to Basics.....	20
Negative Consequences of Assimilation Ideology .....	22
Teacher Beliefs and Students’ Learning.....	23
Impact on Teacher Practice and Professional Growth.....	24
Teacher Education and Multicultural Education .....	26
Teachers and Multicultural Classrooms .....	27
Limitations of Typical Coursework.....	29

Teachers and Change.....	30
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.....	31
Multicultural and Reconstructionist Education.....	33
Teaching Cultural Relevance.....	36
Elements of Teacher Education Courses Affecting Change.....	40
Summary of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.....	43
Research Questions.....	44
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY.....	46
Research Design: Rationale.....	46
Site Selection and Informants.....	47
Description of ED-754.....	48
Data Collection.....	53
Data Analysis.....	58
Summary.....	59
Chapter 4: TEACHERS AND TEACHER PREPARATION.....	61
Overview of Participants.....	61
Concerns about the Curriculum.....	62
Impact of Standards on Teaching.....	63
Teacher Preparation.....	64
On-the-Job Training.....	66
Non-Teacher-Preparation Experiences that Proved Useful in Teaching.....	67
Teacher Talk about Discipline.....	69
Using Hands-on Approaches.....	71

Useful Aspects of Teacher-Education Preparation.....	71
Gaps in Preparation for Teaching.....	74
Addressing Diverse Classrooms.....	77
Tools to Deal with Student Discipline.....	78
Ethnicity and Discipline Methods.....	79
Professional Development for Diversity.....	79
Summary.....	80
Chapter 5: SCHOOLING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS.....	81
School Strategies to Deal with Demographic Changes.....	81
Changing the Teaching Focus.....	81
Professional Development for Teaching Diverse Learners.....	82
One-Time Professional Development Produced Little Change.....	84
Diverse Students as Immigrants, Aliens, and Outsiders.....	88
Teacher Talk About Schooling Diverse Students.....	91
Goals for Students.....	92
Roles Teachers Play in Schooling.....	95
Ways to Make Connections.....	97
Teaching Strategies found Successful for All Students.....	101
Differences in Teaching Strategies.....	103
Active Learning through Hands-on Approach.....	107
Ideologies Made Evident in Teacher Talk.....	109
Concerns About Schooling Diverse Students.....	112
Concerns with Teaching Reading.....	112



Concerns about Equity.....	117
Summary.....	120
Chapter 6: TEACHERS' DISPOSITIONS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS .....	121
Teachers' Dispositions Toward Schooling Diverse Students.....	121
The Context of Changing Demographics .....	121
Ways Teachers Approach Differences .....	124
Attitude toward Language Maintenance.....	128
Differences in Teachers' Dispositions Toward Diverse Students .....	131
Differences in Teacher Talk about Students.....	132
Differences in Attitude toward Students.....	133
Differences in Teachers' Views on Schooling for Diverse Students .....	134
Differences in the Teaching of Reading.....	135
Differences in Needs in Diverse Students .....	136
Teachers' Reflections on Cultural Affiliations and Diverse Students.....	139
Awareness of Privilege.....	140
Lack of Awareness of Privilege.....	143
Reflective Teaching: Using a Cultural Vantage Point.....	145
Assimilation Ideology and Practice .....	146
Pluralist Ideology and Practices.....	150
Demonstrating Praxis.....	156
Summary.....	158
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	159
Teacher Preparation .....	159

Adequacy of Teacher Preparation .....	160
Prior Teaching Models Ineffective .....	160
Gaps in Teacher Preparation.....	162
Importance of Multicultural Education .....	166
Teachers and Schooling for Diverse Students .....	166
ED-754 and Teaching Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.....	167
Impact of Assimilationist Views .....	169
Impact of Pluralist Views .....	172
Meeting the Needs of Diverse Students.....	173
Lack of District and School Understandings About Diversity .....	174
Issues of Discipline.....	175
Teaching From a Cultural Vantage Point .....	177
Teachers’ Awareness of Privilege (or Not) .....	177
Incorporating Praxis in Spite of District and School Practices.....	177
Limitations to Generalizability .....	178
Opportunities for Additional Research.....	178
Summary.....	181
Reflection: Personal Academic Experiences as a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Student .....	182
Appendix A: Wayne State University IRB Approval .....	186
Appendix B: Interview Protocols.....	187
Appendix C: Analysis Worksheets: Joy Compared to Alice, Beverly, and Julie.....	188
Table C-1. Alice’s Lesson Compared to Joy’s Lesson.....	188
Table C-2. Beverly’s Lesson Compared to Joy’s Lesson.....	189

Table C-3. Julie’s Lesson Compared to Joy’s Lesson.....	190
References .....	191
Abstract.....	207
Autobiographical Statement.....	208

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. ED-754 Course Outline .....	50
Table 2. Overview of Participants .....	62
Table 3. Impact of Standards on Teaching Practice .....	63
Table 4. Gaps in Teaching Preparation.....	75
Table 5. Goals for Students .....	92
Table 6. Ways to Make Connections.....	96
Table 7. Concerns about Reading.....	113
Table 8. Actions Taken to Address Concerns about Diverse Students .....	137
Table 9. Teacher’s Level of Awareness Knowledge and Application .....	138
Table 10. ED-754 Assignments Course-Takers Found the Most Useful .....	180

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Language Arts Group.....	102
Figure 2. The Social Studies Group.....	104

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

American schools have been traditionally viewed as the avenue to assimilate children of other nationalities into the American society by teaching them to think, behave and value ways that would help them fit into a presumed mono-cultural society (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2003). During mass immigration from 1870 to 1920, teachers - often white middle-class women - encouraged immigrant children to drop the use of their home language to learn to speak proper English and act like the white middle-class to assimilate into the American culture. I encountered this mindset when I arrived in a white neighborhood in western Michigan as foreign student at the age of fifteen. As a non-speaking newcomer, the burden fell on me to learn English as soon as possible through what some educators term a *sink or swim* experience. Even before I departed Brazil in 1969 to travel to the US, a missionary friend of the family, who hosted me during my stay, prepared me with the advice that a positive cultural experience in the US could depend on my ability to follow the old proverb, "While in Rome, do as the Romans." Shortly after arriving in Michigan, assimilation was a consistent message, even if it was wrapped in a bundle of welcoming smiles and served with delicious hot chocolate on my first sledding experience with a friendly welcoming party. After twenty years of teaching in the same neighborhood that once welcomed me as a non-English speaker student, I developed a unique perspective about the critical challenges of, and opportunities in, schooling culturally and linguistically diverse students. This perspective comes not only from my experiences as a bilingual immigrant student but also from being a parent of two second-generation immigrant children in a K-12 school system, and a professor of multicultural courses to experienced teachers.

Changing demographics have created challenging situations in school. While the student

diverse population is increasing (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000; Cushner, McClelland & Stafford, 1996), the diversity of teaching population is decreasing (Banks, & Banks, 1997; Turnball, Turnball, Shank & Leal, 1999). Culturally diverse students comprise one-third of all students enrolled in public schools, corresponding to an increase of one million English-language learners during the past ten years who now comprise 5.5 % of the total school-age population (Clair & Adger, 1999), and these students vary in age, religion, socio-economic power, and education levels (Wasson & Jackson, 2002). Projections indicate that by the year 2020 this figure may increase to 40 % resulting from immigration rates, aging trends, and higher birth rates for Asian and Latino communities (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1996; Phillips & Cabrera, 1996 and Kagan & Garcia, 1991, cited in Wasson & Jackson, 2002).

This circumstance presents a problem because typical pre-service teachers are White, monolingual, middle-class females with limited or no exposure to children from a experiences with a variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and economic backgrounds (Zimpher & Ashburn, 1989; Villegas, 1991; Smith, 1998). This problem becomes more serious because regardless of their ethnic background, teachers tend to uncritically and often unconsciously hold beliefs and attitudes about the existing social order that reflect dominant ideologies that interfere with their abilities to effectively teach diverse learners and are harmful to many students (Bloom, 1991, cited in Bartolome, 2004; Davis, 1994; Freire, 1997, 1998; Gomez, 1994; Gonsalvez, 1996; Haberman, 1991, cited in VanHook, 2002; Macedo, 1994; Sleeter, 1992).

Immigrant students are keen observers of people's actions and incidents, perhaps due to their having to rely on these skills to survive during the early stages of second language learning. Drawing on these skills I have observed that teachers in general invest incredible amounts of

time teaching children, while under tremendous pressure measuring up to expectations of administrators and curriculum standards. In spite of their dedication and diligence, many teachers of my acquaintance express frustration with those students who are not doing well in their subjects, even as these teachers fail to recognize how cultural differences impact student-teacher interactions. Because the role of culture in schooling is ignored, teachers are often unaware of the way that the school culture, beliefs, assumptions and expectations impact teachers' roles in teaching and learning, particularly their differential and unequal treatment of students (Sleeter, 1992). Even more disturbing, in informal or professional developments aimed to improve learning, teachers or administrators rarely discuss culture as related to teaching or learning, or as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior" (Spradley, 1980, p. 6).

Understanding the impact of culture on teaching and learning is important to teachers, particularly because a cultural mismatch between student's home culture and their school culture can often lead to misunderstandings and conflicts and these can negatively impact students' ability to learn from the time they spend in the classroom (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000; Sheets, 2005). "Culture" implies an integrated system of learned behavior patterns that encompass characteristics of the members of any given society as such "culture" refers to people's total way of life. Culture deeply influences thinking and behavior, such as affecting what people consider good, admirable, proper, ideal and normative to life as well as how people move, express themselves, show emotion, define and solve problems, as well as how they organize cities, economic, and government systems (Hall, 1976). No aspect of human life remains untouched and unaltered by culture, and yet, "it is the least studied aspect of culture that influence behavior in the deepest and most subtle ways" (Hall, 1976, p. 14). In fact, though some



researchers recognize the role of culture in education, traditional ways of addressing the topic often seemed done in superficial and fragmented ways, (Grant & Sleeter, 1997), with no examination of the deeper meaning of culture and the intangible values and beliefs, the aspects that really matter (Hall, 1986, p. 14).

One of the ways that cultures differ is by what anthropologists call high context and low context (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1984; Oosterwal, 1995). Context, the key factor in the theory of *high context* and *low context*, relates to the framework, background, and surrounding circumstances in which communication or an event takes place, and it helps understand the powerful effect that cultural knowledge has on communication (Hall, 1976). Understanding cultural differences has always been an important part of teacher education preparation for diversity, but currently it has become even more relevant because immigration records show that many culturally and linguistically diverse students who come from Middle East, Asia, Africa, Mexico, Central and South America come from cultural roots considered *high context*, while teachers from North America (including much of Western Europe), on the other hand, come from *low-context* cultures. High context groups are described as relational, collectivists, intuitive and contemplative, who prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement and are typically less governed by reason than by intuition or feelings and in a sense of taking a wide range of tangible and intangible information while they act in context. Such high context cultures, which emphasize interpersonal relationships, developing trust is the most crucial function. Low-context cultures, described as logical, individualistic, and action-oriented, are different. These contexts value facts, directedness, and problem solving by lining up the facts, evaluating them sequentially, and following with action. Because school culture across the United States reflects the individualistic values of the dominant European American culture,

such as classroom organization and management usually derived from those of the mainstream institution in which they have been schooled (Rothstein-Fisch & Trumbull, 2008), it comes to seem only natural to define student success according to Eurocentric values, filtered through their low-context lenses. Ultimately, if teachers are unfamiliar with the cultural beliefs and funds of knowledge that students bring to school, they are likely to view high context students in negative light, precisely what some researchers refer as a *deficit* model.

Not surprisingly, research on achievement of African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and low socioeconomic students indicates they are failing at alarming rates. Since the 1970's, 40% of all 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students are reading below basic reading level, 64% of Hispanics and 69% African Americans read below grade level (Slavin, 2000). High school dropout rates among minority students are extremely high, with a mere 57% of Hispanics ages 25 and older holding a high school diploma. This compares to 88.4% of non-Hispanic whites in the same age group having graduated from high school (Wasson & Jackson, 2002).

Sadly, efforts to address school failure are not producing significant change. On one hand, cultural pluralists, for example, attempted to remedy the situation through multicultural education which aims at school reform and restructuring the curriculum to improve learning by fostering pride in minority groups, by reducing prejudice and stereotypes, and by empowering non-mainstream students to participate and benefit from a democratic society. On the other hand, the core curriculum movement promoted an assimilation ideology through a uniform curriculum, which ignores the contributions of the non-mainstream groups. Not surprisingly, after 30 years or more of educational reform, a significant and persistent achievement gap between White, predominantly middle-class students and their poor and/or non-White peers persists (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2001)

and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report that between 1970 and 1988 the achievement gap between European American and African American students was cut in half and the gap between European American students and Latino students decreased by one third; but since then achievement gap has either grown or remained stagnant. For instance, in mathematics and reading, African American and Latino students at the end of high school demonstrate skills equal to those of European American eighth graders (Sheets, 2005, p. 169). Thus, it is evident that neither the multicultural models nor the core curriculum have addressed the issue of school failure for this population.

School failure is rarely students' fault. Some scholars believe minority academic achievement and high school "drop out," suspension, and expulsion rates cannot be addressed in primarily methodological and technical terms apart from the material, social, and ideological conditions that have shaped and sustained such failure rates (Bartolomé, 2004). Igoa (1995) notes that "a thorough investigation of the child's environment, intellectual or emotional failures are often found to be a result from undercurrents between the child and adult and/or the institution wherein the child feels unloved, (Wickes, 1988), unchallenged and disempowered." (p. 8). Others suggest the reason may be that schools reproduce the existing asymmetrical power relations among cultural groups (Trueba, & Bartolomé, 1997; Sleeter, 2003). Cummins, 1986; 1989; 1996, 2001) suggests that the reason schools fail to successfully educate many minority children, and efforts of school reform have stalled results from the relationship between school and minority communities especially inadequately addressing the needs and backgrounds of diverse groups. All too often, empirical data relating to patterns of educational underachievement data that challenge the current ideological mindsets may be systematically ignored, dismissed, or misattributed to the student deficiencies (Cummins, 1986, 1989, 1996, 2001). Thus, scholarship

suggests that teachers are an important part of the puzzle to make strides overcoming many negative factors affecting culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, achieving equity for all students requires that schools become inclusive and equipped with teachers who understand the complexities and impact of culture in teaching and learning so that the students come to be viewed as an opportunity, instead of a problem.

### THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a growing concern that far too many preservice teachers lack adequate preparation to deal with culturally and linguistically diverse students. In fact, research shows that most teacher education students enter schools prepared to work effectively with only one socioeconomic group – a white identified middle class – the mainstream or dominant culture (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; VanHook, 2002). Teachers' misconceptions are reported to affect their ability to recognize their own responses to the role of culture in their teaching, undermining confidence in their efforts to teach multiculturally (Sheets & Fong, 2003). Though teacher education programs for multicultural classrooms vary across the United States, curriculum guidelines are inconsistently applied, and teachers cannot apply multicultural knowledge. Since traditional mainstream institutions reflect an assimilation ideology, often teachers lack high-quality opportunities for guided practice in self-reflection (Gay, 2003). Such practice would allow teachers to examine the role of culture in schooling, and consequently become aware of the way that their own cultural code, beliefs, assumptions and expectations impact their own teaching and their students' learning. Finally, teachers' perceptions of students based on race, class, and gender, often born of teachers' cultural and ethnic backgrounds and knowledge, influence their expectations for student behavior and academic performance (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sleeter, 2001).

## THE NEED FOR THE STUDY

National investigation about teacher education programs for diverse students recommends that all teachers should be prepared to address the social, cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds of the entire spectrum of American schools e.g., (Bhargava, Hawley, Scott, Stein & Phelps, 2004). This study responds to the need to document the way teachers are prepared for diverse classrooms. One author noted that true barriers to creating diverse classrooms are the obstacles perceived by teachers. One goal of teacher education is to help teachers reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs which impact the perceived barriers, in order to remove barriers in integrating diversity into the curriculum (VanHook, 2002). Research shows that teachers need opportunities to reflect on both personal assumptions in the interactions and communication processes which occur in the classrooms, as well as to examine the way these underlying beliefs about students and their abilities support current inequities (Sobel & Taylor, 2005).

## RESEARCH PURPOSE

Starting from the deep-seated belief that good teachers can help students overcome many obstacles students face in their education, this research examines a course in teacher education focused on reflective practice. I was fortunate to have had teachers who believed in my potential, held high expectations for me, and persisted by investing in my education by giving me the tools I needed to pursue college. These positive experiences with teachers inspired me, with a sense of urgency, to contribute to the knowledge base and research with the hope to ultimately affect teachers' practices and improve the education of many immigrant students not currently well served in American schools. This passion behind my work with multicultural education in the community led me to teaching a multicultural course to teachers in a west Michigan college

(described in detail in Chapter 3). I often wondered how teachers who took a multicultural course for diversity used their knowledge in their classrooms. Because I often wonder about the long term impact of this course on teachers' practice, the purpose of this research is to examine changes in teacher candidates' multicultural attitudes and knowledge after taking ED-754, and how those changes are reflected in their teaching practice (Capalla-Santana, 2003). My own cultural knowledge based on my experience as an immigrant student, twenty years of teaching middle school, and four years of teaching teacher education supports this endeavor.

In what follows two key terms appear. First, "multiculturalism" is used often by participants colloquially. Scholars, however, mean:

A philosophical position and movement that assumes that gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, and the values, the curriculum and the student body. (Banks & Banks, 1997, p. 435)

Second, diversity proved to be shorthand for *culturally and linguistically diverse students*, and therefore will be used to address this unique group. By culturally and linguistically diverse students, I mean students who are culturally as well as linguistically different from the mainstream, including first- or second-generation immigrant students, students who speak English at school and a first language at home, students who speak conversational English and have not yet reached native-like language proficiency, African American students, Latino students, Native American students, even American students who hold on to ethnic affiliations.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As detailed in Chapter 3, where these ideas emerge from a synthesis of framing scholarship, these questions guide this research:

1. How do teachers talk about their teaching and preparation for teaching?
2. What are teacher's dispositions toward multicultural education? That is, how do they talk about - explain, describe, characterize - multicultural education?
3. What opportunities have teachers had to reflect on their own cultural affiliations, their cultural awareness about those not like themselves, and their teaching as implicitly imbued with a cultural vantage point?
4. How does their sense of themselves and their teaching "measure up" to the forms of multicultural education "levels" in ED-754 and in Freire's sense of praxis?
5. What salient variations exist between former students participants and non-former students matched for teaching experience and background?

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study has the potential to benefit teacher education program, schools, policy makers, parents, and students. The study contributes to the knowledge base of multicultural education by applying education that is multicultural and re-constructionist, as well as providing opportunities to gain deeper insights into teachers' preparedness and ability to teach diverse students. The study will benefit those seriously interested in going beyond philosophical discussions, and the awareness level of multicultural education, in order to examine a setting intended to engage in a level of transformation, which many suggest can change the way teachers teach, administrators lead, and students achieve. The process of this study can serve as a model approach in which teachers have the opportunity to self-examine their views and practices, and take action to transform their paradigm to become more effective in a multicultural context.

## **CHAPTER 2: SCHOLARLY FRAMEWORK**

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of traditional approaches for schooling of culturally and linguistically minority students, including tensions between assimilation, cultural pluralism, multicultural education and the core curriculum movement. Discussing concerns with assimilation demonstrates how this ideology has driven assumptions, beliefs, and teaching practices in a way that harms culturally diverse students, because it prevents non-mainstream students from benefiting from the equal opportunity education. In fact, though assimilation ideology claims to provide equal opportunity for learning, it not only prevents students from learning, but also acts as a shield to teachers' professional growth. I argue that assimilation affects teachers' treatment and expectations, and ultimately students' academic achievement. Highlighting concerns with teacher educators' role, as well as demonstrating current efforts in teacher preparedness, suggest the limitations of mandated curriculum guidelines, theory-centered pedagogy – which leads to teachers' resistance, and lack of practical knowledge about reflective teaching. Next, by presenting culturally responsive pedagogy I argue for the need to prepare teachers who are aware, knowledgeable, and competent to understand and teach all children of various backgrounds. I cite studies that use elements of education that are multicultural and reconstructionist, as a way to consider elements of teacher education that affect change. Finally, I support this argument with studies that describe academic success for culturally and linguistically students.

### **APPROACHES TO SCHOOLING DIVERSE CHILDREN**

In order to better understand how teachers reached their current disposition toward diversity pedagogy, it is important to review the historical development of approaches used to



address the schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse students. There have been three central approaches – assimilation, cultural pluralism and cultural mediation – predominate.

### *Assimilation*

Assimilation, defined as the “gradual process whereby cultural differences (and rivalries) tend to disappear” (Gordon, 1964, p. 66). In this process, newcomers were encouraged to give up their languages, customs, and methods of life which they brought with them and adopt instead the language, the habits, and customs of this country, and the general standards and ways of American living (Gordon, 1964, p. 100).

The goal of assimilation expressed itself in two main themes in the American experience: Anglo-conformity and the melting pot. Assimilation, symbolized as a “melting pot,” surfaced at different historical periods with slightly different emphasis, influenced by the degree of appreciation or fear of new immigrants. The melting pot theory, traced back to a French settler in New York J. Hector de Crevecoeur, was based on the vision of the United States not only as land of opportunity, but as a society where individuals of all nations gave up old ways and adopted new ones (Takaki, 1989). This process would occur as “a biological merger of the Anglo-Saxon peoples with other immigrant groups and a blending of their respective cultures into a new indigenous American type” (Gordon, 1964, p. 85).

The arrival of dark-skinned immigrants challenged these sentiments, stirring up dormant xenophobia, anti-Catholicism, and anti-Semitism. Such reactions were expressed through the organization of the Know Nothing Party from 1830-1840s who strongly opposed the Melting Pot Theory, claiming that there was already a national character based on northern European cultural values (Gordon, 1964). The melting pot, however, was upheld, adopted and updated by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner (1920) through his *frontier thesis* grounded in determination

and individualism, characteristics unique to those who experienced “Americanisation” through experiences as they ventured west in the wilderness (Takaki, 1993). Turner referred to this experience as fundamental in the economic, political and social characteristics of the American people and in their conceptions of their destiny (Turner, 1920, cited in Takaki, 1993). The melting pot ideal flourished during the 1900’s, after a follower of Judaism in Britain playwright Israel Zangwill expressed the philosophy that all races, languages and histories eventually would melt and transform into the making of the American (Gordon, 1964). Though Zangwill himself believed that different cultures would enrich the nation with their cultural contributions, favoring cultural tolerance, he felt that newcomers would have to give up part of their ethnic identity. But following Zangwill, when the term “melting pot” gained popularity, the results of its proclaimed “melting” character have been assimilationist (Laubeová, 2000).

During mass immigration from 1870 to 1920, schools were viewed as the avenue to assimilate children of other nationalities into the American society by teaching them to think, behave and value ways that would help them fit into a mono-cultural community (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2003). At this time, teachers - often white middle-class women - followed the practice of the day by encouraging immigrant children to drop the use of their home language to learn to speak proper English and act like the white middle-class to assimilate into the American culture.

Critical to understanding why immigrants would be so quick to give up their heritage is the examination of the psychological pressure that was placed on immigrants to do so. William Greenbaum (1974) suggests two overriding reasons why assimilation occurred so swiftly in this country. Most important is the fact that the main fuel for the American melting pot was *shame*. The immigrants were best instructed in how to repulse themselves; millions of people were

taught to be ashamed of their own faces, their names, their parents and grandparents, and their class patterns, histories and life outlooks. This shame had the incredible power to make us learn, especially when coupled with hope, the other main energy source for the melting pot – hope about becoming modern, and about being secure, about escaping the wars and depressions of the old country, and about being equal with the old Americans (Cheng, Brizendine, Oakes, 1979).

Though consequences from this “self-hatred” brought debilitating consequences for ethnic groups, such as family disorganization, and juvenile delinquency, which in turn brought incessant attacks on their culture, their language, their institutions, and concept of themselves (Gordon, 1964), this ideology still became deeply ingrained in American life and has shaped people’s attitudes toward minorities, our legal system, our government policies, and our educational system, until the present day (Oosterwal, 1995).

“While the assimilation model has been the dominant perspective in sociological studies of ethnic relations, it has been the subject of much debate and theoretical challenge” (Hirschman, 1983). Some referred to this “romantic view” as both unrealistic and racist, because it focused on the Western heritage and excluded non-European immigrants (Laubeová, 2000). Failing to recognize the way this “melting” or “unmelting” occurred, one critic noted:

While Protestant descendents of Germans and Scandinavians can, if they wish, merge structurally into the general white Protestant subsociety with ease, Jews, Irish Catholics, and Polish Catholics cannot do so without either formal religious conversion or a kind of sociological “passing” – neither process being likely to attract overwhelmingly large numbers. Negroes, Orientals, Mexican-Americans, and some Puerto Ricans are prevented by racial discrimination from participating meaningfully in either the Protestant or the white Catholic communities. (Gordon, 1964, p. 129)

Thus, the impossibility of “melting” into a mythic pot became increasingly evident. A determined effort toward a counter ideology was developed by cultural pluralists, scholars and intellectuals working in New York City during the 1910’s (Wacker, 1979), who rejected the assimilationist premise with anti-“melting pot” arguments such as those of Elwood Patterson Cubberly (Vaughn, 2001), and critics who “frequently pointed out that assimilation could not be forced upon people without destroying their self-respect and identity” (Wacker, 1979, p. 4).

History suggests that in every society where oppression occurs, sooner or later, the oppressed come to struggle against those who oppressed them (Freire, 1992). In the early years of the twentieth century such efforts against oppression were frequently ignored as a “cry in the wilderness” (Banks (1988a). However, African Americans, one of, if not the most oppressed groups in America, became leaders in social and human justice (Morris, 1999), thus becoming instrumental in the ideological and strategic shift from passivity and perseverance in the face of adversity to self-determination, cultural consciousness, and political power (Gay, 1983, p. 560, cited in Sleeter, 1991). Under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Malcom X, hundreds of ordinary people gave their lives for the emancipation cause during the mid-1960’s Civil Rights Movement. African Americans, through their successful use of mass nonviolent direct action played a key role in overthrowing institutional oppression in the Southern Jim Crow regime (Morris, 1999).

Taken together, these efforts led to a widespread sense that some other approach needed to be formulated to replace the assimilation ideology, which Young (1990) viewed as clearly linked to cultural imperialism “a form of oppression associated with the imposition of the cultural meaning of the dominant group on all groups” (Howe, 1997, p. 70), thus setting the stage for cultural pluralism.

### *Cultural Pluralism and Multicultural Education*

Drawing its energy and inspiration from a context of social protest, cultural pluralism theory emerged, which contrary to assimilation recognized that ethnic groups provide a sense of identity and psychological belonging, therefore allowing two or more “distinct groups within a society to function without requiring any assimilation of one into the other” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Through the symbol of a “salad-bowl,” cultural pluralists maintained that each ethnic culture would play a unique role, contribute and enrich the American society (Vaughn, 2001). Based on these ideals, pluralists targeted restructuring schools in order to provide equal opportunity for all students, based on the assumption that in order to increase children’s success, immigrants and others whose experiences and ways of life differed from those of the mainstream had the right to value their experiences, and maintain their ethnic identity (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003). Thus, multicultural education emerged as an educational ideal, through various phases, each offering possibilities for implementing cultural pluralism (Vaughan, 2001).

Multicultural education came to be thought of as an educational reform movement designed to restructure schools and other educational institutions, so that students of all social-class, racial, cultural, and gender groups have an equal opportunity to achieve (Banks & Banks, 1997). The evolution of multicultural education followed *four phases* (Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 10-11). The *first phase* of multicultural education emerged when educators initiated individual and institutional actions to incorporate the concepts, information and theories from ethnic studies into the school and teacher education curriculum. These early ethnic studies movement specialists of particular ethnic groups - Carlos E. Cortez (Mexican Americans), Jack Forbes (American Indians), Sonia Nieto (Puerto Ricans), and Derald W. Sue (Asian Americans) -

discussed the history, perspectives, and world view of groups, examined their social status, and advanced their interests, highlighting their capabilities and achievements (Banks & Banks, 1997). This phase offered in-depth study of oppressed groups for the twofold purpose of empowerment and developing both pride and group consciousness of the minority group, as well as opportunities for members of dominant groups to understand the perspectives of others (Banks & Banks, 1997).

Subsequent phases extended the first. The *second phase* of multicultural education promoted an awareness that the single-group idea was not sufficient to enable many minority students to achieve in schools at comparable levels to mainstream counterparts. A slow shift toward a new approach began and this approach looked at issues with a broader lens, such as the total school environment and educational equality. A *third phase* occurred when other groups, who viewed themselves as oppressed, demanded the incorporation of their histories, cultures and voices into the curricula of the schools, colleges and universities. The current and *fourth phase* of multicultural education involves the development of theory, research, and practice as they interrelate circumstances connected to race, class, and gender (Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 10).

Empowerment became central to multicultural approaches. Sleeter and Grant summarized different approaches to teaching about diversity by highlighting different conceptions of empowerment (1988), the development of skills and capabilities needed to succeed in schools and society (Sleeter and Grant, 2003). Such an approach is evident in a situation where the learner group is rather homogeneous and of a different background than the teacher, and this approach aimed to make content more congruent with the culture of the child. Though the way a teacher uses this information may vary, such an approach may be useful in transmitting much culture-specific information, appearing to honor pluralism; however, it could also promote

assimilation (Banks & Banks, 1997).

The second approach toward empowerment integrates into the curriculum concepts of social acceptance and humanness for all people, the reduction and elimination of stereotypes, the power of love, unity and harmony, and information to help students feel good about themselves and their people (Sleeter, 2001). The curriculum encourages a comprehensive, integrated process to address individual differences and similarities, contributions of the ethnic groups represented in the class, and accurate information about various ethnic, racial and gender, disability and social class groups. Instructional practices included cooperative learning activities, role playing, and bringing guest speakers who represent the diversity in society to show all students that they too can be successful (Banks & Banks, 1997). Concerns emerged suggesting that this approach made inner and interpersonal well-being much more a concern than social change (Sleeter, 2001). Also, while this approach offers possibilities of addressing varied learning styles, its main limitation is the potential to create a false sense of transformation, focusing on the superficial aspects of culture, such as foods, heroes, and holidays (Banks & Banks, 1997).

Third, *single groups studies* (Sleeter & Grant, 2003) provides an umbrella term for units that focus on particular groups, such as Black studies, Chicano studies, or women studies. These programs intend to teach students about the history, culture, and contributions of the target group's oppression and how oppression works today, as well as teach about the culture the group developed within oppressive circumstances (Sleeter, 2001). Though this can be a very useful approach in providing knowledge about individual groups, as well as in promoting identification with and solidarity among members of the specific ethnic or gender target group, it does little to address the structure of power in learning environments; that is, it does not work toward social change.

### *Cultural Pluralism*

In reaction to the lack of transformational power of previous approaches, a *reconstructivist multicultural approach* advocates reorganizing the educational system and process to promote equal opportunity and cultural pluralism. Equal opportunity holds that each student should be given equal opportunity to learn and succeed by viewing one's difference in a way that it does not hinder a person's ability to dream of and reach her or his goals (Sleeter, 1989, p. 144). Through this approach, "students are empowered as individuals by achieving and receiving validation for who they are, and are empowered for social change by having lived a pluralistic model" (Sleeter, 2001).

The last and most promising approach is *education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist*, which builds on the previous approaches by raising teacher education students' consciousness to prepare them to engage in a larger social struggle for liberation, empowering them to critique and challenge oppressive social conditions and to envision and work towards a more just society (Grant & Sleeter, 2003). I will return to this approach in a subsequent section. For now, it is sufficient to say this approach is grounded on a critical pedagogy paradigm based on the assumption that while schools can reproduce patterns of institutional discrimination, they could instead prepare students to be citizens who practice a social justice ideology, the cornerstone of democracy (Freire, 1970).

The umbrella of multicultural education offers possibilities for positive outcomes, but not without its limitations. Traditional models hold a common goal of achieving educational equity and excellence for all students by encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills, as well as the principles of democracy (Banks & Banks, 1997). A strong multicultural approach further fosters pride in minority groups, helps minority students develop insight into their



culture, reduces prejudice and stereotyping, and promotes intercultural understandings (Rubalcava, 1991, in Ogbu, 1991). Some critics of multicultural education, however, believe that though it may improve learning for some minority students, it is not an adequate strategy to enhance the academic performance for those who have not done well in school, and therefore “will do nothing to raise the achievement of the groups expected to benefit from it” (Coddling & Bergen, 2004, p.15), these messages hold these beliefs partly because many multicultural models are rarely based on ethnographic or empirical studies of minorities’ cultures (Ogbu, 1991). Though considerable progress seemed just around the corner in the early 1990s, changing political climates derailed multicultural aims.

### *Back to Basics*

Multicultural education lost its momentum, after the protest and emancipation context of the 1960s, when conservative historians challenged multicultural education of the 1990s, presenting it as “a gesture of protest against the Anglo-centric culture,” and a serious threat to U.S. society and public schools for its perceived separatist consequence (Schlesinger, Jr. 1998). Pluralists were accused of abandoning the principle of pluribus unum in favor of the principles of pluribus plures, which conservatives interpreted as abusing and distorting history in the name of building self-esteem (Ravitch, 1990, in Howe, 1994). Misreading cultural pluralist motives, one wrote:

The cult of ethnicity has reversed the movement of American history, producing a nation of minorities – or at least of minority spokesmen – less interested in joining with the majority in common endeavor than in declaring their alienation from an oppressive, white patriarchal, racist, sexist, classist society (Schlesinger, Jr. 1998, p. 118).

As a solution, conservatives returned to an outdated model to promote assimilation

through a uniform ideal, a mythic image, of what keeps American society “cohesive” and “whole.” Through the misleading term “cultural literacy,” Hirsch proposed a packaged curriculum consisting of a set of reading and writing skills, historical names and events, geographic places, patriotic songs, proverbs, nursery rhymes, and myths, which he considered essential cultural background knowledge. Hirsch’s scheme represented only the perspective of the dominant Western Euro-centric national and world literature, and proposed it be delivered through traditional teacher-centered methods (Hirsch, 1987). Hirsch’s curriculum implied (by their absence) that non-mainstream students bring little meaningful cultural knowledge to what should count as U.S. “cultural literacy.” Additionally, he suggested that assimilation is the best alternative, as well as “the only opportunity for disadvantaged children,” even from the perspective of the individual who must pay the extra price (Hirsch, 1987; Schlesinger, 1998, p. 16). Thus, began a narrowing of educational possibilities for a diverse citizenry.

For instance, attempting to level the playing field, national tests have inadvertently fallen into the trap of supporting endpoints that are indistinguishable from assimilationist goals. For example, the essence of the standards movement seemed developed and implemented through the Core Knowledge Foundation across the nation (Hirsch, 1996). This version of core knowledge reached its peak through the enactment of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2001) which many believed produced harmful effects (Neil, 2003; McIntosh, 2001; Kozol, 2007; Suárez-Orozco, 2007). Among the deleterious effects of this legislation are those related to teaching practices, especially over-reliance on teacher-directed instruction (Herman, 1991; Padrón & Waxman, 1993), such as lecture, drill and practice, student seatwork, worksheets and remediation, and “teaching to the test” (Stephen, Varble, & Taitt, 1993, p. 9; Kozol, 2007). Freire (1970, p. 73) rejected such teaching practices, (referred by some as “banking,” or

“depositing,” produce students as the depositories and the teacher as the depositor) because these practices equate with empty vessels to be filled by the teacher. In such model, knowledge is “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1970, p.72). All too often such approaches guide students to adopt the ways of the dominant culture without valuing students’ cultural understandings, a form of domination (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, when teachers rely on method of transferring information (Lipman, 1998) where students “receive, memorize, and repeat,” termed “pedagogy of poverty” (Stephen, et al., 1993, p. 9), students are placed in a passive state which deprives them of developing those very critical inquiry skills needed to challenge false representations and deficit views of themselves propagated in society.

In spite of pluralists’ efforts through proposed multicultural goals, models and reconstructed curricula, (Banks & Banks, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 2003), the assimilation ideology prevails (Banks & Banks, 1997). Some scholars from marginalized communities have critiqued the embedded interests and world views of dominant narratives in curriculum for historically distorting, ignoring, and undermining oppressed groups (Sleeter & Grant, 2003). Other have expressed concern over its insufficient content to prepare students for the new millennium (Block, 2007), and its failure to recognize that knowledge is dynamic, changing and constructed within a social context rather than neutral and static (Sleeter, 1991). Policies and practices that claim to help the *disadvantaged*, instead have the opposite effect of preserving a hierarchy of knowledge that contributes to a self-fulfilling prophecy of student’s silence and exclusion from classroom interactions, concerns which I highlight in the next section.

#### NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF ASSIMILATION IDEOLOGY

As had been the case with earlier versions of assimilation, this ideology has been central

to the lack of progress in providing equity, which produces negative effects not only for those not in the mainstream, but for those in the mainstream as well, who lack the knowledge to appreciate the value of non-mainstream way of life. In this section I highlight the way that assimilation ideology impact students' learning, and teachers' practices and professional growth.

### *Teacher Beliefs and Students' Learning*

Regardless of their education background, teacher candidates often enter teacher preparation program, with little exposure to diversity (Smith, 1999). In fact, they hold beliefs and attitudes about the existing social order reflected in dominant ideologies (Shutz, et al., 1996), and these interfere with their capabilities to effectively teach diverse learners, and could be harmful to so many students (Bartolomé, 2004).

Beliefs influence how teachers teach, understand and implement multicultural education (VanHook, 2002). In fact, “Bandura (1986) and Dewey (1933) inferred that beliefs were the most significant predictors of the decisions that individuals make throughout their lives” (Cited in VanHook, 2002, p.6). One example of a dominant belief that appears to be “deeply rooted in an American ideology of individualism” is that each individual determines his or her own situation (Farley, p. 66, as cited in Bartolomé, 2004), inferring that African Americans and Latinos have the same opportunity as White Americans and are therefore responsible for their own disadvantages. It is not surprising that in the last decade “the perceived and much publicized ‘failure’ of linguistic-minority students is attributable to the students themselves, their culture, their home life, or their linguistic ‘deficit,’” (Meskill, 2005, p. 740). Such tendencies of overgeneralization about family backgrounds leads to differentiated instruction aimed at retraining students viewed as deficient and in need of remediation (Sheets, 2003; Valencia, 1997). Similar assumptions about parents, whose behaviors do not conform to the norms of the

dominant culture of schools and of larger society, lead to solutions being erroneously located in better parenting training or parent education programs (García & Guerra, 2004), instead of better teaching practices. Thus, often stereotypes shift responsibilities onto those left of the conversation about educational matters.

Teachers' beliefs about students lead to differential expectations and treatment based on race/ethnicity, social class, and gender differences (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001). High correlation exists between successful academic performance of minority students and teachers' attitudes and beliefs, knowledge of cultures and application of cultural information (Sleeter & Grant, 1988; Banks, 1988; Gollnick & Chinn, 1986). Also, overall low academic performance of minority and linguistic minority students correlate with less-than-optimal learning environments, low-level academic content, and poor teacher-student relationships (Callahan, 2005). Such practices result in student placement in low-track classes to compensate for students' perceived deficiencies (Samway & McKeon, 1999, cited in Major & Brock, 2003), instead of targeting teachers' underestimating of minority students' academic abilities, or practices of presenting them with less challenging and demanding curricula (Capella-Santana, 2003). Teachers bear much of the responsibility to produce higher level educational outcomes and their perceptions of students matter deeply. Clearly, teacher education programs and administrators controlled teacher development activities could focus on debunking stereotypes and myths that underpin teachers' practices.

#### *Impact on Teacher Practice and Professional Growth*

Hidden assimilation ideologies underpin practices, preventing teachers from receiving much needed professional development about culturally responsive teaching. When deficit views of students and families prevail, educators are absolved from analyzing their assumptions and

critically examining whether their teaching methods are equally effective for all student populations (Trueba & Bartolomé, 1997). Lack of reflection about these matters continues to harm students. When teachers assume nothing is wrong with the system or themselves, they demonstrate unwillingness to change, complacency and/or resignation that they can do no more to educate all students. All of this keeps teachers from looking beyond traditional solutions for real and meaningful change (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

Ultimately, teachers need on-going professional development to become aware and competent to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. Current research on second-language acquisition suggests that “students need to develop competency in the first language because it is the foundation for the development of their second language” (Capella-Santana, 2003, p. 1). When research about language-minority students is absent or ignored, teachers tend to encourage students to give up their home language in order to learn to speak English by placing them in mainstream classes without having the “grammatical foundation” (Collier, 2008, p. 11; Cummins, 1980; Crawford, 1997). Rushing into English only settings often causes students to fall behind the academic level of their peers (Delgado, 2008). Eventually lack of success limit language-minority students’ educational opportunities, contributes to academic achievement gaps, and reduces the likelihood of becoming fully bilingual (Capella-Santana, 2003). In addition to preventing students from learning the tools they need to be successful in the education system, research into the normalization of linguistic newcomers suggest that inequities persist even after they have linguistically assimilated, not only because of normalization (McCarthy, 2002), but also from being required to adopt subordinate social, economic, and racial roles (Reeve, 2004), which consequently impact academic performance.

Teachers need professional development to help them develop the ability to use multiple

lenses to interpret multicultural behaviors derived from cultural attributes. When teachers are not prepared to use multiple lenses to interpret multicultural behaviors, their monocultural lens hinders their ability to understand different cultural attributes (Hall, 1986) or to appreciate the resources or the funds of knowledge students hold (Moll, Amanti & Neff, 1992). Teachers need models for learning for viewing teaching and learning as in interactive processes (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Some studies report that teachers may misinterpret and prohibit certain culturally bound behaviors that enhance students' learning opportunities, such as those "who come from cultures where human interaction and cooperation are highly valued" (Oray, 1989). For instance, Shade (1989) reported that teachers who had limited knowledge of Mexican American students' cultures accused them of cheating when the students shared their work with classmates (a culturally accepted behavior in the Mexican culture) and discouraged them from using this learning strategy (Capella-Santana, 2003).

These gaps in teachers' skills teaching an increasingly diverse student body have implication for teacher education.

#### TEACHER EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Despite the on-going efforts toward curriculum guidelines and coursework preparation based on the theoretical framework that is available to teacher educators, they still encounter persistent challenges in preparing teachers for diverse classrooms. This section focuses on these challenges in order to make a case for proposed approach to achieving equity in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Teacher education remains the most important route to potentially change traditional teachers' monocultural backgrounds and community affiliation toward becoming culturally sensitive to students' backgrounds or communities (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch & Greenfield,

2000; VanHook, 2002). Teacher candidates enter teacher education programs without the knowledge needed to effectively teach all students, and if research findings suggest that this knowledge can be acquired, teacher preparation programs must help teacher candidates acquire this knowledge (Major & Brock, 2003 p. 8). Teacher educators have a responsibility not only to prepare teacher education students to be culturally responsive, capable of responding to the educational needs of a diverse population and practicing teaching grounded in the knowledge, skills and application in the educational field (Bhargave, et al., 2004), but also to “continually monitor the effects of their best efforts to provide growth opportunities for White preservice teachers as they prepare for active engagement in teaching in a diverse society” (Horton & Scott, 2004, p 7).

#### *Teachers and Multicultural Classrooms*

Studies of the effectiveness of current multicultural programs recommend that all teachers should be prepared to address the social, cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds of the entire spectrum of American students by making multicultural and bilingual education an essential component of the teacher preparation program (Walton, Baca, & Escamilla, 2001). Research suggests, however, that, in many instances, teachers and teacher candidates do not possess this knowledge, consequently leading to misconceptions that affect their ability to recognize their own responses to the role of culture in their teaching (Sheets and Fong, 2003). In some cases, even well-intentioned educators experience culture clashes and create classroom environments that systematically deny some students meaningful opportunities to learn (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1995). For example, consider a study done with teachers-in-training (n=68) about their ability to reflect on their individual beliefs as obstacles to the implementation of a diversity curriculum. Sixty out of the sixty-eight students possessed little or



no ability to recognize and accept diversity (VanHook, 2002). Another study (n=100) revealed that teachers admit they do not know how to use multicultural education practices, are not motivated to learn them, and do not feel that it is their responsibility to teach multicultural education practices (Gallavan, 1998), or do they feel compelled to carry the burden of solving the country's political and social problems through multicultural education (Hernández-Sheets & Fong, 2003).

In spite of mandates and curriculum guidelines for multicultural teaching, current efforts in teacher preparation for multicultural classrooms often fail to produce desired outcomes. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) developed Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Education in 1977, and required all of its members to implement components, courses, and programs for multicultural education in teacher education, including programs to facilitate the development of multicultural coursework (NCATE, 1987). In a survey of 59 accreditation reports, Gollnick (1992) found that only eight (13.6%) of the institutions in full compliance of the multicultural education components, or able to apply the National Standards of Academic Excellence equitably to all students (cited in VanHook, 2002). Also in spite of the abundance of theory, commendable goals in promoting tolerance, and respect for diversity and even some success in achieving equal opportunity for all students, a survey by the Association of Teacher Educators suggests that preservice teachers are not being prepared to teach in multiethnic, multicultural settings (Buttery, Haberman, & Houston, 1990). These findings suggest failures in undergraduate programs in teacher preparation (VanHook, 2002).

The need to improve teachers' education about culture is widely acknowledged (Banks, 1995; Hollins, 1996; Irvine, 1992; Lucas, Henze & Donato, 1990), particularly the urgent need to move from a conceptual stage of diversity and multicultural training to direct service

applications, with opportunities to engage in specific culturally appropriate skills (Hernandez, Sheets, & Fong, 2003). “Many teacher educators, (e.g., Florio-Ruane, 2001; Zeichner, 1996) have struggled with the complex challenge of preparing prospective teachers from the dominant culture to teach students whose backgrounds differ from theirs” (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 8). Many difficulties experienced by teacher education programs are related to limitations in multicultural courses.

### *Limitations of Typical Coursework*

Some difficulties in realizing desired outcomes in teacher preparedness for multicultural contexts are related to the abundance of theory, time constraints (Garcia, Wright & Corey, 1991), the lack of empirical research that links approaches to successful school-based practices and teacher preparation in multicultural education (Garcia & Guerra, 2004), the way courses are taught, and the lack of concrete tools for curriculum applications, such as dealing with classroom cultural conflicts and creating culturally appropriated assessment tools (Bhargava, et al., 2004). Let us examine the typical multicultural coursework.

Typically, multicultural education courses are taught through specialized courses, according to scholars’ high expectations of theoretical understandings of diversity ideologies (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990; Gay, 1994) considered “solutions to improve the quality of schooling for more students” (Hernández-Sheets & Fong, 2003, p. 1). Compelled to fulfill this expectation, professors attempt to cover a broad spectrum of topics in one semester, such as theory, elements of culture, socialization of ethnic groups, gender, teaching the urban child, teaching English-language learners, disabilities through research, community and cultural-immersion experiences, and field experiences (Grant, 1994; Sleeter, 2001). There is some evidence that college coursework can be effective in changing teachers’ attitudes about multicultural and inclusive

issues (Taylor & Sobel, 2002). But due to the very limited exposure to diversity, one semester remains insufficient teacher education students with adequate knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in a multicultural society (Garcia, et al., 1991).

Teacher preparation for diversity requires long-term commitment and persistence toward change. “Preparing teachers to internalize the role of culture in teaching-learning process and providing them with the skills needed to sustain and apply this knowledge in classrooms has proven to be ‘easier said than done’” (Sheets & Fong, 2003, p.1), particularly to help them to see and understand children from diverse backgrounds as “children of promise rather than children with deficits” (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 9). Some researchers say that it is partly due to the fact that teachers often enter multicultural courses with multiple levels of understanding of diversity (Wasson & Jackson, 2002), frequently grounded in very different philosophical and theoretical perspectives (Sleeter, 1992, in Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Others blame teacher education pedagogy, which acknowledges the importance of diversity, but fails to challenge teachers’ beliefs and attitudes that have developed as a result of membership in the mainstream culture, to discuss language and learning, or the influence of power and privilege in teaching and learning (Kidd, Sánchez & Thorp, 2004; Bhargava, et al, 2004). Studies show that conversations challenging teachers’ beliefs are “difficult, uncomfortable, or simply foreign to many educators” (Sobel & Taylor, 2005, p. 2).

### *Teachers and Change*

Research findings show that the attitudes and lifestyle patterns of preservice teachers are extremely resistant to change (Grant & Secada, 1990). Researchers report that “many preservice teachers resist the painful process of confronting their own prejudices” (Horton & Scott, 2004, p. 6), others expect professors to tell them what to do by giving them a packaged curriculum on

how to teach “others,” rather than explore the impact of their attitudes, on multicultural teaching (Cooney & Akintunde, 1999, p. 6). In fact, one study shows that even when courses include culturally responsive pedagogy (Major & Brock, 2003), some teachers remain resistant, unable to show understanding of difference, privilege, and the problems with a deficit discourse. Take the case of one student, Shanna:

Despite her ethno-linguistic minority heritage, she did not reveal a personal frame of reference for diversity or empathy for the ethno-linguistically diverse students in K-12. Most importantly, she did not demonstrate ability to critique and question course issues reflectively so that her thinking could move beyond the superficial and surface-level (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 16).

Teacher educators emphasize that teacher candidates deserve the opportunities and guidance to develop the skills and dispositions they need to be effective teachers of children from diverse backgrounds before they graduate from their teacher education programs (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 25). Yet, survey results from Bhargava’s study (2004) indicated that although students felt that they had opportunities to participate in varied cultural experiences, few engaged in the cultural experiences (Bhargava et al., 2004). Thus, preparing teacher education students with limited exposure to diversity to function effectively in cross-cultural settings as well as to interact harmoniously with people from cultures that differ from their own remains a central challenge to teacher education programs (Wasson & Jackson, 2002).

Teaching a culturally responsive pedagogy suggests a way to answer the call for teacher education programs that prepare capable teachers of diverse students.

#### CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Guiding pre-service and in-service teacher education students toward a paradigm shift,

which would require abandoning a harmful assimilationist ideology and consider a social reconstructionist one seems to be a daunting task. Nonetheless, such a paradigm shift seems possible by teaching a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally responsive teaching is based on the premise that a) a multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply interconnected; b) teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors; and c) teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how and to whom (Gay, 2003). Providing culturally responsive pedagogy emerges when practices are derived from reflection on assumptions, knowledge and experiences with diverse learners, these not only produce skills and behaviors whereby teachers learn to interact appropriately and effectively with members of different cultures, but also provide the ability to teach in ways to bridge the gap between learners' home cultures and school culture. Thus, culturally relevant pedagogy produces learning for all students (Gallavan & Putney, 2004).

Freire (1970) emphasizes that in order for teachers to be committed to transformation they need to understand that education is never neutral and resolve this moral contradiction (Freire, 1970). This is a charge not only for teachers, but for schooling as well. Reconstruction stems from a critical pedagogy paradigm, making schools key players in removing barriers toward education. According to Sleeter, (2001), schools can play a significant role toward achieving equity. It can serve to reinforce and legitimate the status quo as well as enlighten and emancipate, working with rather than against indigenous efforts for liberation (Sleeter, 2001). Teachers must internalize the conviction that through their beliefs and actions, they either maintain the status-quo and perpetuate inequities, or choose to engage in social change (Bartolomé, 1998; Major & Brock, 2003; Smith, 1999).

In order to serve the needs and interests of all students, particularly students from groups that have not done well, the U.S. educational system has a moral responsibility to eliminate all forms of oppression, especially cultural imperialism (Howe, 1997). As one author noted (author, year, page numbers): “In order to realize this ideal, low expectations, negative stereotypes, biases, prejudices, and cultural misconceptions held by teachers must be identified, challenged, and reconstructed (Pohan & Aguilar, 2001), one of the goals of education that is multicultural and reconstructivist.”

#### *Multicultural and Reconstructionist Education*

As introduced earlier, Grant and Sleeter (2003) suggested multicultural and reconstructionist approaches seemed to guide teachers through the process of understanding the role of culture in schooling, to raise teacher education students’ consciousness, to prepare them to engage in a larger social struggle for liberation, and to empower them to critique and challenge oppressive social conditions, and to envision and work towards a more just society. Reconstructivists argue for changing *education* since “school is the major primary social institution outside the immediate family, and perhaps religious institution, in which young people spend most of their time” (Grant & Sleeter, 2003), and since the population is diverse, it would naturally lead to *education that is multicultural*. Such an approach entails reorientation of schooling to address differences and injustices, based on race, social class, language, disability, sexual orientation and gender, both locally and globally (Sleeter & Grant, 2003).

Teachers who are committed to their profession are often burdened trying to fix “the problem” of failing language-minority students. Critical pedagogy argues that “these goals could only be achieved through emancipation, a process by which oppressed and exploited people became sufficiently empowered to transform their circumstances for themselves by themselves”

(Tripp, 1992). This process is accomplished through conscientization – the development of critical awareness – a deep level of consciousness and critical thinking that enables learners to experience *praxis* or put thought into action (Freire, 1970). Such *reflection* and *action* provides a way for teacher education students to learn about and become aware of themselves and the world, such awareness results in liberation from oppression and empowerment for themselves and learners to truly transform teacher student interaction. In essence, deconstruction involves breaking down the myths of “the superiority of Whites” that Hirsch promotes in his Core Curriculum, and replacing it with an accurate history often excluded from the curriculum (Freire, 1970). As one author expressed:

When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.” (Rich, 1986)

Thus, teachers’ attitudes and beliefs toward students considered “disadvantaged” can be changed to a more positive view when teacher education students use people’s history as a starting point. (Freire, 1970). For example, teachers could show that the wealth of the US derives partly from the contributions of Latinos, such as the sweat and blood of copper workers of Chile, tin miners or Bolivia, the fruit pickers of Guatemala and Honduras, cane cutters of Cuba, oil workers of Venezuela and Mexico, pharmaceutical workers of Puerto Rico, ranch hands of Costa Rica and Argentina, West Indians who died building the Panama Canal, and Panamanians who maintain it (Gonzalez, 2000).

Educators who truly wish to communicate meaningfully with all of students and families must transcend their own education. Of particular importance is educating teachers to identify and consider cultural attributes that students bring into the schooling. Such attributes include

understanding the meaning and value that students associate with school learning and achievement, since these play a significant role in determining students' affiliation with learning and performance in schools (Hall, 1986; Ogbu, 1991; Oosterwall, 2008). As Freire said, "Love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others" (Freire, 1970, p. 89).

Plurality related to awareness and is not synonymous with the "separatist consequence." Instead, plurality encourages teachers to engage in educational practices that are multicultural and reconstructionist, because prior forms of schooling already clearly fail too many children. Parekh (1986, cited by Gay, 1994) sets the overall tone of multicultural education as good education for all children, because not only does it accord recognition to diverse groups and their contributions in the US, but also because it offers a bridge for making meaningful connections between the life experiences of ethnically diverse students and schooling in a democracy (Gay, 1994). Banks advocates that multicultural education provides a vehicle for schools to recognize the importance of educating the hearts as well as the minds of students. Additionally, he suggests that it should provide a basis for students to think deeply about citizenship in a pluralistic society and encourage students to engage in action to extend the principles of freedom, equality and justice (Banks, & Banks, 1997). Smith (1999) recommends reconstruction because it offers teachers an opportunity to shift their paradigm from a traditional assimilation model, harmful to students, to one which challenges teachers to reflect on their moral responsibility to examine their beliefs, attitudes and assumptions, inequities and oppression:

My point here is that our mission statements should express the moral imperative that we are not preparing teachers to teach in the world as it is, but we are preparing teachers to change that world. (Smith, 1999, p. 149)



### *Teaching Cultural Relevance*

Several researchers studied viable approaches to teach that cultural relevance even if it takes time for change to occur. Cabello and Burnstein (1995) examined the beliefs and practices of novice teachers in racially, culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and concluded that “change can only be achieved gradually and longitudinally through continuous reflection about theory and practice in conjunction with knowledge about and experience with diverse learners” (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 9). In this section, I highlight empirical studies demonstrating that when teachers do reflect on theory and practice, as well as knowledge and experiences with diverse learners, results show promise.

Transformation of beliefs and practices require *sociocultural consciousness* (Banks, 1996, cited in Villegas, & Lukas, 2002), “understanding that people’s way of thinking, behaving or being are deeply influenced by such factors as race/ethnicity, social class, and language” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 22). In a study 69 teachers across three elementary schools participated in 33-hour professional development project during two years focused on issues of diversity and equity. Results showed that awareness of the school culture was essential and “teachers who see themselves as non-racist, caring and equity-oriented begin to realize that many issues contributing to the achievement gap are embedded in systemic practices and role definitions” (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 7). In fact, as teachers became more aware of their assumptions and expectations through staff development, they could then begin to redefine these roles and explore ways to serve as change agents for school-wide reform (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 7).

Preparing teachers for cultural responsive pedagogy involves carefully planning multicultural courses, or professional development opportunities for reflective practice. One

study about how to enhance program and curricular experiences, examined the diversity attitudes and beliefs related to race, gender, age, and ability among undergraduate health education majors at a mid-sized southeastern university (Wasson and Jackson, 2002). They used a multicultural training model (Pedersen, 1988) which integrated self-awareness along with two other critical variables: awareness, knowledge and skills. Study results suggested that before teaching multicultural issues, educators should consider themselves as learners first and start with their own self-awareness (Wasson and Jackson, 2002, p. 2). As such, teachers need opportunities not only to examine, but also to renegotiate their race identity and its relationship to social dominance if transformations of personal and social dimensions are to take place (Sobel & Taylor, 2005). Howard explains that educators, particularly those who are white, need to look within themselves and realign their deepest assumptions and perceptions regarding the racial marker with their Whiteness. He emphasizes the need to understand how the dynamics of past and present dominance has been shaped by myths of superiority, and to sort out our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors relative to race and other dimensions of human diversity (Howard, 1999). Wasson & Jackson's observation that students who participated in the study were "more aware than empowered suggests that most are in the process of developing awareness of the multiple levels and faces of diversity," therefore, making it imperative that "teacher educators provide adequate time in the curriculum for teacher-students to develop critical awareness" (Wasson & Jackson, 2002, p. 11).

Critical awareness, though a significant step in changing teachers' beliefs and attitudes, remains insufficient. One of many the challenges of preparing teachers many teachers to use culturally relevant pedagogies stems from the fact that their own education was grounded on assimilation ideology, with little exposure to diverse learners (Smith, 1998). Thus, teacher

education programs must provide opportunities for teachers to gain knowledge and cultural understandings that interweave, and evolve over time via cross-cultural interpersonal experiences (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gadotti, 1996; Wiseman, 2001). In this way, teacher candidates experience *praxis*, an ability to reflect on the theories of learning behind effective teaching practices they observe, in order to develop their own practices about teaching diverse learners (Major & Brock, 2003, p. 18).

For teachers to produce culturally *relevant* pedagogy, teachers depend on understanding the funds of knowledge students and their families bring to school (Villagas & Lucas, 2002; Moll & Greenberg, 1992). And such teaching proves critical to improving the academic achievement and growth of diverse students (Darder, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sheets, 1995). A fourth-grade teacher broadened, enriched the curriculum by making it more relevant and meaningful for her students, when she invited their parents to share teaching responsibilities. By bringing to the classroom and sharing with students their cultural knowledge, experiences, history, and traditions of their countries of origin students were “highly motivated by their parents’ teaching contributions and used that information in the development of challenging writing projects in their second language” (Capella-Santana, 2003, p.2). Also, Moll and Greenberg, (1992) found that teachers were able to better motivate and facilitate their students’ academic achievement when they used their students’ families and community resources in the development of thematic units that meaningfully connected academic and community life (Capella-Santana, 2003). Additionally, six prospective teachers, who took a course that emphasized ethical issues related to educational equity and participated in their first fieldwork experience, positively modified their beliefs regarding reasons for diverse learners’ academic underachievement (Ross & Smith, 1992). At the beginning of the study, the six participants blamed diverse learners for their failure

to succeed; at the end of the study, they indicated other factors, such as the school curriculum and teachers' practices, as significant contributors to diverse students' academic success (Capella-Santana, 2003, p. 5). Tran, Young, and Di Lella (1994) reported a reduction in teacher candidates' negative stereotyping attitudes about Europeans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans after the candidates took a multicultural education course that included cross-cultural activities in which the participants had to interact with members of other cultures (Capella-Santana, 2003, p. 5).

Other researchers succeeded in showing how multicultural education which incorporates interactions with diverse communities enhances teachers' awareness of complex issues affecting students' academic success. For example, one study had one of three cohorts of preservice teachers ( $n = 42$ ) engaged in collecting stories from families of children with whom they worked. As part of their course work and field experience, they were expected to develop a relationship with a family whose culture was different from their own. "Their assignment was to listen to and gather family stories and to use the information and insights to reflect upon their own cultural awareness and to plan learning experiences designed to be responsive to the family beliefs, values practices and goals" (Kidd, et al., p.7). Researchers reported that as participants "learned what families valued, they developed or modified plans to provide a sense of cultural continuity between home and school," which Sánchez and Thorp (1998, cited in Kidd, et al. 2004)) point out "are essential knowledge for validating children's cultural identities" (Kidd, et al., 2004, p.7). Furthermore, when teachers have this knowledge, they can invest in developing positive relationships with families and community – demonstrating clear connections with student families and communities in terms of curriculum content and relationships (Schimdt, 2005). All of these examples demonstrate how culturally responsive pedagogy which involves carefully

planning multicultural course including reflective practices, produces positive academic growth for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Considering the urgency of preparing teacher education students for the challenges facing the schooling of diverse students, and teachers' resistance to a change, it has become critical to identify those elements successful teacher education programs that have affected change.

#### *Elements of Teacher Education Courses Affecting Change*

Reflecting on twenty years teaching middle school, four years of teaching diversity courses for experienced teachers and working on school improvement teams, I came to the conclusion that when planning teacher preparation coursework and professional development, it is important to consider how teachers make curricular decisions. With the increasing pressure from legislation to improve learning, teachers continually make instructional decisions based on their immediate needs to comply, survive, conform, or meet time constraints (Finley, Marble, Copeland, Ferguson, Alderete, 2000). All too often, teachers do not rely on research as a source of knowledge; instead relying on knowledge that is largely private and tacit, coming from personal, lived experiences underpinning teachers' practical knowledge (Cole and Knowles (2000). To counter this and for teachers to value of culturally responsive pedagogy, the content of multicultural education courses should involve preservice educators learning experiences constructed to juxtapose one's life experiences with cultural diversity (McCall, 1995 and Morales, 2000, cited in Bhargava, et al, 2004 ).

How do teacher educators challenge the traditional assimilation ideologies without losing teachers in the process? Garcia & Guerra (2004) suggested not making teachers the center of the problem. Instead, they discussed "culture in the context in which we all operate, not just a phenomenon affecting culturally and linguistically diverse populations," but as an aspect of the

larger society (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 162). These practices require that teacher educators provide courses that allow opportunities where honest discussions can take place.

One highly effective approach is to apply the *listening-dialogue* approach in pre and in-service teachers interaction, which can be academic, goal-directed, small-group conversations (known as instructional conversations), rather than lecture (Freire, 1970). As one author noted:

A well designed multicultural education course in which teacher candidates from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds freely discuss multicultural issues, in addition to fieldwork experiences in culturally and ethnically diverse settings, appear to promote positive changes in teacher education candidates' multicultural attitudes and knowledge (Capella-Santana, 2003, p.8).

Dialogical methods are not easy for teachers whose paradigm is based on competition, individualism, and self reliance, such as mainstream American culture. (Oosterwall, 1995). Nevertheless, addressing these cultural orientation differences are critical, because many culturally and ethnically diverse students in our schools come from cultures defined as collectivists (Hall, 1976, p. 39).

A collaborative action research and development project involving three universities in the Southwest, along with a group of seven experienced bilingual teachers. The project hoped to deepen teachers' understanding of cultural differences and the role of culture in child-rearing and schooling, with a view to improve instruction for immigrant Latino students (Trumbull, Rothsteing-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000). In particular, the project sought to integrate effective intercultural communication training with elements of effective staff-development drawn from multicultural education and general education (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Researchers found Freire's problem-posing method useful in this study. Teachers received a set of four scenarios,

two home-based and two school-based dilemmas, to establish baseline understandings of teachers' awareness of an individualism and collectivism framework. The researchers hoped teachers would find the individualism-collectivism framework useful for understanding cultural patterns and identifying new ways to build cross-cultural bridges in the classroom (Trumbull, et al, 2000). Results of the post-assessment revealed a fairly dramatic shift from teachers who have a generally individualistic orientation toward the pre-assessment scenarios to an orientation that reflected an understanding of both individualism and collectivism in the post-assessment scenarios. Teachers rated the workshops highly, particularly the scenarios, the dialogue, and the work in small groups. Participants suggested allowing more time for sharing and discussing, to expand their knowledge about the model and its applicability in their classrooms and schools (Trumbull, et al., 2000). Thus, pursuing a dialogical approach, which may be unfamiliar to individualists, proved effective (Freire, 1970).

The ultimate goal for teacher educators is to prepare teachers who can use reflection to develop cultural awareness, knowledge and skills, as well as demonstrate the ability to act as cultural mediators. For teachers to become useful in the role of cultural mediators, they first need to identify their own cultural identity (Zeichner, 1993), as well as the cultural identity of their students. Then they can find ways to mediate across these differences for the benefit of the each learner and the classroom community (Greenfield, et. al, 2000). Some researchers found that “engaging preservice teachers in an exploration of their own cultures can help structure multicultural courses with a personal infusion of cultural history” (Bhargava, et. al, 2004, p.21).

Students cannot achieve if they do not develop the academic tools to become successful. When teachers take into consideration their students' cultural/ethnic backgrounds and are able to develop appropriate curricula, they foster the academic success of minority students (Capella-

Santana, 2003). Therefore, pre-service and in-service teachers need to become knowledgeable about how to use active teaching methods (Schmidt, 2003). Just as teachers need to learn to bridge the gap between two paradigms, students need to learn to complete assignments individually, and collaboratively, such as in small groups, or pairs with time to share ideas and think critically about the work. Teaching practices, therefore such as cooperative learning, critical thinking, peer mentoring and review, the recognition of multiple perspectives, all of which draw on this idea that students can learn through meaningful interactions with their peers, rather than solely with the teacher. Research clearly shows that, when teachers seek to deepen their understanding of cultural differences and the role of culture in child-rearing and schooling (Greenfield, et al., Raeff, 2000), they are in a better position explore the effectiveness of their practices for various cultures.

#### SUMMARY OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Teachers need release their strong hold to assimilation ideology in order to be open toward a new paradigm in teaching, which is difficult, but possible with culturally responsive pedagogy. Culturally responsive pedagogy emerges from practices derived from reflection on assumptions, knowledge and experiences with diverse learners producing skills where teachers learn to interact effectively with different cultures and teach in ways to bridge the gap between the learners' home cultures and school cultures. Grant and Sleeter (2003) suggested that multicultural and reconstructionist approaches seemed the most promising because it guides teachers toward social consciousness so that they may address inequities in schooling through teacher education and language-minority students empowerment and transformation.

Teacher education programs must include critical awareness, a critical step that cannot be overlooked, followed by knowledge and skills that evolve over time through cross-cultural



interpersonal experiences (Wiseman, 2001) all of which can be accomplished through a well designed multicultural course which teaches teachers how to build on the funds of knowledge, history, stories, experiences and traditions that students and families bring to school, all of which produce positive academic growth for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Literature on elements that elicit change shows that process in teacher education coursework is just as important as content. Diplomacy through dialogical methods show to be effective methods in facilitating teachers' development of the ability to understand the role of culture in schooling, as well as the ability to recognize difference in cultural attributes in order to become cultural mediators between home culture and school culture as well as in the classroom has a positive impact of changing teachers' dispositions toward diverse students as well as improves academic achievement.

My first attempt at culturally responsive pedagogy occurred when I was hired in 2000 to teach a graduate level class at a west Michigan University, detailed in Chapter III. After reflecting on the literature with my former bicultural student and teacher perspective, I began to wonder if the elements of this multicultural course might be deemed worthy to be considered culturally responsive, and if, in fact, it was sufficient to prepare teachers for multicultural classrooms. Thus, based on this synthesis of framing scholarship, five central research questions emerged.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do teachers talk about their teaching and preparation for teaching?
2. What are teacher's dispositions toward multicultural education? That is, how do they talk about - explain, describe, characterize - multicultural education?
3. What opportunities have teachers had to reflect on their own cultural affiliations, their

cultural awareness about those not like themselves, and their teaching as implicitly imbued with a cultural vantage point?

4. How does their sense of themselves and their teaching “measure up” to the forms of multicultural education “levels” represented in ED-754 and in Freire’s sense of praxis?

5. What salient variations exist between course participants non-participants matched for teaching experience and background?

In Chapter 3, I develop a methodological strategy to examine the course from the vantage point of participants as a way to evaluate the course further compare course-takers to match to non-takers.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This research examines a course in teacher education focused on reflective practice, with the purpose to contribute to the knowledge based with hopes of affecting teaching practices and improve the education of immigrant students. In order to better understand the design and purpose of this study, I describe in detail the goals, assumptions, course content, as well of the profile of participants from this region in the Great Lakes. To judge the impact of the course, non-course-takers will also be interviewed to highlight differences between the course participants and non-participants. In order to determine the effectiveness of a course, I develop a methodology strategy that examines the course from the point of view of the participants. The research design is organized around critical pedagogy described in detail in the next paragraph.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN: RATIONALE

Because this study revolves teachers' dispositions, beliefs, attitudes and abilities to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, the research design utilizes the principles of a critical paradigm, one designed to enable critical consciousness to expose hidden meanings, assumptions, and patterns of oppression that underpin schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse students (LeCompte and Schensul, 1997). The *critical* view of schooling assumes that, while schools can reproduce patterns of institutional discrimination, they could instead prepare students to be citizens who practice a social justice ideology, the cornerstone of democracy (Freire, 1970). A critical researcher focuses on how the history and political economy of a nation, state or other systems dominate political, economic, social, and cultural expression of citizens, especially those of non-mainstream groups. LeCompte and Schensul (1997) characterize this approach to research (p. 59). Critical theorist believe that people are impacted by the

structure of domination, and occurrences within and between individuals are a consequence of their given material and historical condition. People read their worlds using differential access to knowledge regarding historical context, political, economic, and social conditions.

The researcher and the researched participate in their research as active teachers/learners to educate, analyze, and ultimately transform conditions. In fact, a critical researcher investigates the sources and dimensions of inequality in systems, functions as intellectual advocates and activist by using tools for dialogue, intervention, political action, or policy change to bring about change. Based on the critical paradigm “the ethnographer should enter a study situation with the view that they be expected to be instrumental in implementing change” (LeCompte & Schensul, 1997, p. 56). This paradigm seems especially well-suited to my research study because of the particular approach taken in the course I taught at “West College” (a pseudonym), especially the course’s explicit focus on changing teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, and practices about teaching diverse students.

#### SITE SELECTION AND INFORMANTS

West College’s mission is consistent with the community’s conservative values, and sense of responsibility to prepare students to become useful citizens who care about transforming and improving society. In fact, like many parts of the country, schools in the mid-west reflect conservative middle class values (Payne, 1998). West College boasts of a total enrollment of 23,000 students: 20,000 are identified as White Non Hispanic, 1,175 Black Non-Hispanic, 663 Hispanic, 621 Asian/Pacific Islander, 147 American Indian/Alaskan Native, 15 Pacific Islander, and 373 Other. Teachers who attend the graduate school of education are mostly European-American, monolingual English, middle class, between 30 to 50 years of age with various levels of teaching experience and exposure to teaching diverse learners. After teaching in west

Michigan for more than 20 years, it seemed apparent (to me) that teachers in this area are hard working, caring, individualists, sincere about making a difference in the lives of children.

*Description of ED-754*

From 2000-2004 (for eight semesters), I taught ED-754 at West College, a college attracts teacher education students who seek a good liberal arts education and more specifically, traditional teacher education program. West College reflects values of European immigrants who settled in the region to escape religious persecution in hope to find a good place to raise a family and preserve their way of life. They brought with them a strong sense of good work ethic Protestant, white, middle-class values. Though the profile of students is changing, teachers' demographics still reflect the traditional original values.

Early on, I followed the historic practice of lecturing, enriched by projects designed to provide cross-cultural experiences. Course objectives aligned with goals of West College [pseudonym] school of education: "We develop professional educators who are:

- Reflective decision makers
- Committed to student learning and achievement
- Experienced in providing appropriate instruction for diverse populations
- Effective implementers, managers and monitors of student learning
- Cognizant of the roles schools play in society
- Collaborative participants within the educational community

The course description encompassed linguistics, psychology, sociology, education, and speech research, as well as background scholarship, controversies as well as practical implications of the challenges presented by language and ethnic differences within American schools. Course objectives included:

- To create a sense of awareness of the complexity of the lifestyles of the largest minority groups in the United States.
- To analyze language and value differences of language minority groups as it compares with the language of the dominant group as well as their classroom implications.
- To examine ethnic differences as well as classroom applications in the school setting.

As with many multicultural courses, offered for three hours of graduate college credit, ED-754 included weekly readings, research guidelines for a cooperative oral presentation on a particular ethnic group, interview questions for cultural interviews, guidelines for cultural experiences, and a final exam. With slight variations, the agenda below shows the course content consistently used in the eight semesters. I added a cultural heritage analysis, assignments aimed at helping students understand the diversity in their own lives, one video about the historical context of intolerance in the United States, a few video clips, interactive activities, critical incidents, poetry, and class discussions, as indicated in the agenda for the course (Table 1).

The focal point of my organization included explicitly taking into consideration that students often arrive at the study of diversity issue with different levels of awareness and with little theoretical foundation. As a novice professor, I elected not to spend too much time on theoretical aspects, but to embed these in meaningful practical application efforts. The textbook - *Annual Editions, Race and Ethnic Relations* - contains a collection of articles related to the major ethnic groups in the US. The articles varied from year to year, but all of them were current and relevant useful in providing awareness of critical issues related to the major ethnic groups reflected in American demographics. The first three classes encompassed the topics culture, ethnicity, race, language, identity, followed by immigration issues and the politics of language.

Coming from the critical paradigm, I selected lecture topics that would challenge students' beliefs, assumptions, and teachers' practices in the schooling of culturally and linguistically

Table 1. ED-754 Course Outline

Date	Topics and Readings	Items Due
Week 1	Course Overview: Syllabus, textbook, assignments, oral presentations, guest speakers, and evaluations. Social Context of Education, demographics, socioeconomic status, language	Teacher Survey
Week 2	Immigration Issues in Education: G. Oosterwall: Approaches to Diversity in Education Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Article 2: Racial Restrictions in the Law of Citizenship Article 7: Migrations to the Thirteen British N. American Colonies Article 8: The New Immigrants	
Week 3	Video: The Shadow of Hate: The History of Intolerance in America: Reading: Unit 10 Cultural Heritage Analysis	
Week 4	Racism and the Educator's Role Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 1, Article 4: Brown et al. vs. the Board of Education Video Clip from "Separate but Equal," (The Doll Experiment)	Reaction paper to "The Shadow of Hate"
Week 5	Racism and the Educator's Role Pritchey Smith: "Who Shall Have the Moral Courage..." Article 5: Black America ; Article 6: Black Progress	
Week 6	Model Presentation: Hispanic Americans: "The Emergency of a Minority and Struggle for Identity" The Politics of Language Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 4	Reflection paper from P. Smith's article
Week 7	Presentation: African Americans: "The African American Experience and the Impact on Learning" Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 5: Article 19: 10 Most Dramatic Events in African American History Article Review 22: The Color of Justice	
Week 8	Presentation: Native Americans Lecture/Discussion: "The First Americans, from Removal to Reservation" Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 3, Articles # 12, # 13, # 14	Cultural Heritage Analysis
Week 9	Presentation: Jewish Americans Lecture/Discussion: "A Religious Ethnic Community" Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 9, Articles # 36, # 37, # 38	
Week 10	Presentation: Asian-Americans Lecture/Discussion "The Model Minority and Exclusion from the Melting Pot" Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 6, Articles # 25, # 26, # 27	
Week 11	Presentation: White European Americans Lecture/Discussions: White Europeans Americans: "A Successful Case of Pluralism." Readings: <u>Race and Ethnic Relations</u> : Unit 7, Articles # 28, # 29 # 41	Cultural Experiences & Interviews
Week 12	Presentation: "Successful Multicultural Teaching Practices," A Model Program for Middle School /James Banks Integration of Ethnic Content	
Week 13	Presentation: "Folklore in Education and Cultural Preservation." Informal Data Analysis of Cultural Experiences/Interviews	
Week 14	Course wrap-up – Evaluations	
Week 15	Cultural Celebration	Food, Stories, Poetry
Week 16	Final Exam	

diverse children, illustrated by personal stories of my immigrant experience.

One set of assignments that were uniquely designed to guide reflection are worth mentioning. First, a video produced by Southern Law Poverty Center – *The Shadow of Hate, The History of Intolerance of the U.S.* – provided the context for teachers’ understanding challenges that many had never faced as part of the white majority. Second, following the viewing, the class read a story written by Pritchey Smith – “Who shall have the moral courage to heal racism” – wherein Smith shares his experience being confronted with racism for the first time in the 1959 at the University of Texas. Pritchey takes the reader through his reflection and paradigm transformation from a farmer to a college student who finds himself standing in a boycott as naïve bystander who had never before been exposed to racial conflict, to an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement (Smith, 1999). Pritchey calls teachers to confront their biases and assumptions honestly and reflect on their role as teachers to become anti-racists. I packaged these two assignments together, and asked teachers to reflect on Pritchey’s message. Third, to complement the reflective approach, teachers who were from the dominant culture were also given an opportunity to reflect on their cultural heritage, which placed them in the historical context in which they could see themselves, their families, and community affiliations in a different light when compared to children of immigrants who may have been (or were) victims of oppression. I made a point of providing time to discuss those issues in groups. During class, it seemed these tasks proved a powerful way to provide a context for discussion and reflection for teacher education students. Taken together these activities seemed to prepare students for cross-cultural experiences inherent in upcoming assignments such as cultural interviews and cultural experiences.

In order to investigate teacher practices and beliefs, this study followed qualitative methodology guidelines according to Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, (1999). Studying this



learning context addressed Spradley's criteria for making a site selection. First, simplicity seems assured because only one course was examined from former students' vantage points. Second, these participants are accessible to me because many have maintained connections since taking the course. Third, because I am already something of an insider relative to the course, albeit its professor, my interest in the course seemed more like a natural curiosity than an obtrusive interference. Fourth, the research I propose is permissible, especially since it related to my learning how to do a better job of teaching such a course and since it does not stray into my evaluating the work of other teachers, and all interactions with teachers occurred outside their work places. Finally, because the study depends on active teachers engaged in frequently recurring activities where they interact and educate students from diverse communities, only participants whose everyday teaching is of this sort were recruited. (Spradley, 1980, pp. 45-52)

Decisions about the research context (especially its participants) were guided by my experience working with teachers in this area, as well as my awareness and knowledge of the diverse backgrounds represented in the teaching population. Ultimately, teachers who agreed to participate in this study were offered an opportunity to talk about their teaching, and I investigated diversity of beliefs and teaching practices.

Participants in this research come represent both those who took ED-754 and others (matches for teaching experience and background) who did not. As such, I used *purposive sampling* to recruit participants from a variety of settings these mirrored the area population's conditions and values (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 40). Participants in the study were teachers with a variety of teaching levels and teaching experiences. I selected volunteer participants to be interviewed from two different exposure levels. I invited 5 participants who took a teacher education class aimed at preparing teachers for diversity delivered from 2000-2004 at a West

College which I addressed as TEPC (Teacher Education Preparation for Diversity). It is not necessary to interview many key informants to obtain a large amount of information about a subject (Schesul, Schensul & LeCompte (1999). Thus, I sought key informants who are well informed about the course whose teaching involves interacting with English Language Learners. Since this is a comparative study, I also selected participants who have not taken this course. My original plan was to match course takers and non-course takers for experience. In practice, however, I found it more appropriate to match them not only for experience, but for compatibility of lessons as well.

My goal is to recruit a sample of ten teachers, with various levels of teaching experience, by matching teachers from among former students to non-former students with similar experiences, until I have five pairs who agree to participate. Recruiting the informants began with a phone call or an e-mail to those perceived to fit into the description of key informants. I also selected participants who have not taken ED-754 course or from among my extensive professional connections, by using a snowball sample, simply by asking each former students if she or he would suggest a teacher in their building who might be willing to participate who have not taken the ED-754 course or one like it (to their knowledge). Recruiting the informants began with a phone call or e-mail, where I explained such things as the time demands: about one and half hours to set up and conduct a first interview, a second interview of about an hour –and other information that the Internal Review Board requires for recruitment. Formal consent of research participants occurred at the first interview held at a site convenient to the participant.

#### DATA COLLECTION

Primary data were collected through two semi-structured interviews. Guided by the advice of Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999), an exploratory interview is intended to

expand the researchers' knowledge of areas about which little is known, by in-depth interview based on the theoretical framework and explore the main domains and the contextual factors related to the study (p. 122). According to the developmental research sequence for ethnographic inquiry, ethnographic data analysis is a process of question-discovery, in which the researcher discovers questions from the field data compiled in the first phase of the cycle (Spradley, 1980, p. 33).

The first interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, transcribed and typed, and later transcribed word for word. It focused on the teachers' background for teaching for former students explicit focus on their pre-course sense of themselves, their description of the course, provide space to engage in discussion of how the course changed them. Non-students provided similar information focusing instead on any opportunities they have had to engage ideas explicitly privileged in ED-754. The second interview, about an hour long, (audio-taped and later transcribed) focused on each teacher's current classroom practices with diverse learners, and use information from the first interview to draw connections between classroom practices of teacher-education coursework or other teacher development and activities. Woven into the second interview were opportunities to expand on what was learned in the first interview as a way to provide member checks of interpretations.

I collected the data through the use of two sets of semi-structured interviews, the questions suggest topics upon which interviewees can expand or move into new directions. Thus, answers were open-ended, fully expanded at the discretion of the interviewer and the interviewee, and enhanced by probes (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p. 149). The first interview focused on participants' demographic, degree and teacher preparation background information, their sense of their students in the last three years, their sense of a teacher's

responsibilities for teaching students from diverse communities, their description of multicultural education, their description of professional development activities they participate in, and a description of their own students and students' needs and challenges. Interview questions were developed to explore participant's perceptions deeply to draw connections between beliefs and teacher preparation.

Importantly, one cannot wait to have collected a large amount of data in order to analyze it. Therefore, the questions for the second interview were adapted based on discoveries made during the first interview, to ensure maximum opportunities to gather in deep meanings of teachers' understandings of their students and teaching practices.

The second interview focused on their teaching. This interview consisted of two parts: First, to collect evidence of their teaching practices students were asked to bring an exemplary lesson, one that they think would reach all students, with teaching materials, such as texts, handouts, visual aids and activities. In this interview, this lesson was described in detail, not only by focusing on the goals, objectives of the class, but also the way it flows minute by minute, what questions students ask, what questions they ask students, how they make decisions about what to do next, and specifically why they do things a certain way. To create a *quasi-observational* interview scenario, I would have a poster board so that they would use as a blackboard, to write down what they would write on the board. Insert: Teachers chose the best way to share their lesson. Some brought detailed lesson plans, some brought samples from students' work and others just spoke in detail about the lesson. I allowed teachers to decide the best way to share the lesson.

This type of interview allows teachers to do a talk-along about what they do in the class, which can be an especially important way to see inside a teachers thinking about teaching. When

the description was done, I moved toward the second part which would ask them to describe how this lesson meets the needs of all students from diverse communities, then, explicitly guide them to refer back to teacher preparation or professional development activities. Additionally through this guided lesson, I eventually explored their notions about the extent to which this lesson meets their sense multicultural education and how they account for being from a particular community when some of their students are from another.

Finally, using course syllabi from ED-754, I performed an analysis of how the course changed over time. This also allowed me to understand the context within which each former student participated. Thus, a more detailed examination of ED-754 emerged as a research finding.

These data provided sufficient information to examine teachers' understandings about application of concepts and activities targeted in ED-754, what they were actually doing in their classrooms, what they were leaving out, and how their teaching practices differed from those who did not take the class. I also had sufficient information to compare their practice with recommendations from the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy, resulting from critical self-reflection.

With participants' permission, all interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy of recording. Using digital recording technology, I recorded the interviews through a computer using software that allowed me to transfer the interviews into a flash drive and a CD for added preservation of the data. CD's were labeled and placed in a locked file cabinet in my home office and data stored in a password-protected personal computer not used for my own teaching work. Using electronic recordings improves storage issue one as well as reduces other costs, such as recorders, tapes, batteries and so on (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, 1999, p. 145). To

minimize loss of confidentiality I used information sheet for consenting participants since assigned consent form would be the only permanent record of participants. Names in a temporary list of participant contact information were after the second interview.

As Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte recommend, it became critical that the researcher conduct the interview as a normal conversation, paying attention to the tone of voice, and expressions in asking my questions, such as avoiding reactions of surprise or disgust, and observing the cultural norms that dictate what is considered appropriate. After living and teaching in southwest Michigan for over twenty years, I am aware of residents' cultural norms related to effective communication, and therefore, I feel confident in my ability to respect these norms while conducting an in-depth interview (Schensul, Schensul and LaCompte, 1999, p. 136). Establishing trust is critical in this study. Therefore, particular care needs to be given to ensure that participants do not feel that their teaching practices are being questioned or judged. To establish a trusting climate, I stressed my neutrality prior to the beginning of the process through words like "discovery," or "gaining insight" into their teaching, consistently reminding them that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and that I expect teachers to take a variety of approaches all of which have strengths. To enhance neutrality I engaged colleagues in graduate school to provide additional outsider insights and perspectives into the research process to enrich the interpretation of the data and the clarity of its description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation was built into the data collection and the various sources of data by having five course-takers and five non-course-takers, and via the analysis of the curriculum. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer review by the methodologist increased credibility of the study. Because an ethnographic approach uses the researchers as an instrument of data collection, it is natural that data analysis be filtered through the eyes of the researcher. In response to Spradley's concern

that “the more you know about a situation as an ordinary participant, the more difficult it is to study is as an ethnographer” (p.61), effort was made to separate stereotype, opinions and judgments from interviews. Thus, extra care was given to avoiding personal biases in the process of interviewing, and data analysis, especially in reporting data that may not agree with anticipated outcomes.

### DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, a word-for-word record of their responses, and then analyzed, as recommended by Spradley (1980), to maintain the integrity of the data. I transcribed the study myself in order to maintain accuracy in capturing the nuances and richness of the narratives. In the audio transcription, I looked for patterns and cultural themes by following Spradley’s model for analyzing qualitative data. Next, I included a semantic domain analysis – “a systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among the parts, and their relationship to the whole” (Spradley, 1980, p. 85). For example, in analyzing the data transcription I might find patterns or themes, such as “parts of an inclusive lesson,” or “parts of student body.” The purpose of the transcription’s domain analysis is to identify patterns of sameness and prepare the data for a taxonomy analysis. Taxonomy analysis is a way to explain how things are organized, which is one way to discover cultural meaning (Spradley, 1980). The goal is to a) look within domains to determine the finer grained sub-domains within the domains. and b) how these relate to one another then how domains relate to the larger themes and within themes to one another and so on to work out how things “hang together” for these data. A componential analysis followed to work out nuances as well as variations across domains, e.g. compare students/non-students students to one another, non-students to one another. Repeated readings ruled out competing interpretations of the data

(Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Finally, a search for themes – relationships among domains and for how they are linked to the cultural scene as a whole – completed the analysis to reveal major findings (Spradley, 1980).

The study demonstrates effort to comply with the advice from researchers on issues of validity and reliability. Internal validity “the extent to which scientific observations and measurements – such as surveys and interviews – authentically represents the reality in which the people studied live – as they define it – or the degree to which the response obtained from respondents are a valid reflection of how those respondents felt and thought about the topic (Schensul, et al 1999). According to Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999, p. 275), as to external reliability of this study, it is possible that independent researchers to discover the same phenomenon or generate the same constructs as in the original study, if done in the same settings.

#### SUMMARY

In summary, the purpose of the study was to understand teachers’ ability to reflect on their beliefs and attitudes towards culturally and linguistically diverse students, as well as their ability to make teaching relevant for all students. Trustworthiness will be build into the data collection process, through interviewing five former teachers as well as non-former teachers and by attention given to key criteria suggested by Lincoln & Guba, (1985), as well into the way the study is carried out, which altogether serve as a way to strengthen the credibility of the findings.

In what follows, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 encompass study findings, and Chapter 7 relates these findings to the research literature framing this research study. Chapter 4 describes the teachers, their preparation for teaching, and their concerns with their teaching preparation. Chapter 5 details findings related to schooling culturally and linguistically diverse students, including school responses to changing student demographics, how teachers talked about diverse



students, and concerns teachers had with schooling diverse students. Chapter 6 illuminates teachers' dispositions toward and cultural awareness of diverse students.

## **CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS AND TEACHER PREPARATION**

Teacher participants, both those who had taken ED-754 and those who had not, provided a rich sense of the teaching challenges facing today's teachers in districts with increasing numbers of students from reduced socioeconomic circumstance and from among English-language learners. As will become apparent in what follows, though teacher found a wide range of teacher-education coursework, on-the-job training, and out-of-school experiences useful for teaching diverse students, not all teachers found their preparation adequate to changing times. In fact, teacher participants expressed concerns about gaps in their preparation. Let us, then, turn to an overview of participants before detailing additional findings about teacher preparation.

### **OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS**

As illustrated in Table 2, participants' level of preparation, grade-level assignments, and years of experience varied. Participants included five course-takers and six non-takers. Ethnicity information came from interview conversations. Three participants mentioned African affiliations (one a course-taker), but no Latinos/as participated in the study. Eight participants hold Masters' degree and three only a Bachelors' degree. As for specific training relevant to culturally and linguistically diverse students, five participants took the ED-754 class, taught by the Principal Investigator. Three participants took classes beyond ED-754. Beverly pursued her ESL endorsement after taking ED-754, Lenora took one ESL teaching methods class, and Denise took a couple of classes related to diversity a few years after ED-754. Nine teachers taught Middle School for at least part of their teaching career, with one having 5-10 years of teaching experience, four 10-20 years, and five 20 or more years. All but two participants (both non-course-takers) participated in two interviews. In the second interview, participants shared

Table 2. Overview of Participants

Participants	Ethnic Background	Degrees	Diversity-Related Classes	Teaching Level	Experience
<b>Course-takers</b>					
Beverly	German-Scottish Am.	B.A/B.S ESL	ED-754/ ESL Endrsmnt	Elem. S. 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	12 yrs
Julie	Jewish-Am.	M.A	ED-754	M.S.; H.S.	20-30
Lenora	African-Am.	M.A	ED-754 & 1 ESL Methods	Elem. 5 <sup>th</sup> grade; M.S.	34 yrs
Alice	Dutch-Am.	M.A	ED-754	M.S.; H.S.; Alternative	10-20
Denise	Polish-German Catholic	M.A	ED-754 2 Other Courses	Elem. School - K-4	10-20
<b>Non Course-takers</b>					
Katie	German-Irish Am.	M.A + 60	None	Elem. School 4 <sup>th</sup> ; M.S.	20-30
Eleanor	Dutch-Am.	B.A	None	M.S.	20-30
Luke	European African	M.A	None	H. S.; M.S.	5-10
Joy	Dutch-Am.	M.A	None	Elem. 5 <sup>th</sup> and M.S. 6 <sup>th</sup>	20-30
Grace	Scotch-Irish-Welsh- Am.	M.A	None	Elem.; M.S.	20-30
Jazzy	African-Am.	B.A.	None	Elem.; M.S.; H. S. Special Ed	33 yrs

lessons. Here, two explained language arts lessons (grammar, reading), one used a math lesson (how to tell time), five demonstrated Multicultural Education lessons, and one covered understanding the correlation between report card grades and teachers' comments.

### *Concerns about the Curriculum*

No noteworthy differences existed between course-takers and non-takers in regards to their concerns over the curriculum, with course-takers and non-course-takers show concerns over the curriculum. Three course-takers (Alice, Lenora and Julie) and a non-course-taker (Eleanor) talked about deficiencies in the curriculum, which impacted their preparation and students' inclusion. Lenora noted that in her school culture was ignored. Alice, a course-taker, and Eleanor, a non-course-taker, both recognized the curriculum was written from a European perspective. While Eleanor criticized the curriculum for being irrelevant for today's kids and exclusive of ethnic groups, she did not have the energy to change it. Course-takers, Lenora and Alice, changed their teaching to include the voices of oppressed authors and cultures, a practice

that changed her life and her teaching. Julie, a course-taker, thought efforts in her district to improve education by adopting a computer-based curriculum ignored students' need to have relationships with their teachers.

Non course-takers, on the other hand, held divergent views. Joy defended the curriculum, describing it as “improving,” citing the example of the inclusion of a Chinese family. Lenora considered these efforts superficial and inadequate. Other non-course-takers expressed frustration with their curriculum. Grace found a lack of clarity about what to teach children. Jazzy could not justify changing the curriculum back and forth, explaining that she could not develop strategies to teach it, and did not see the point of testing kids when they cannot read.

Table 3. Impact of Standards on Teaching Practice

Course-takers	Impact of Standards on Teaching	Non-Course-takers	Impact of Standards on Teaching
Beverly	No mention	Katie	I had to change the way I teach
Julie	Teaching to the test minimizes creativity. Teachers do not use stories anymore.		Curriculum leaves out ethnic groups, not relevant, has continuity but no purpose
Lenora	We had to teach with a syllabus They almost told you what to say; no creativity	Luke	No comment
Alice	My teaching took a nose dive after common assessments	Joy	Uses reading selection determined by standards. No comment about the impact. Believes curriculum is improving.
Denise	Teach-assess-teach-assess. She thinks it's overwhelming. She has minimal opportunities to reflect on teaching.	Grace	Students lost International Day, they need to bring it back
		Jazzy	No mention of standards except: “What's the point of testing a 6 <sup>th</sup> grade kid on curriculum if the kid cannot read!”

### *Impact of Standards on Teaching*

Almost all teacher participants found that the standard movement impaired their ability to teach their best. But, no difference existed in teachers' willingness to follow the standards or curriculum adopted by their school (Table 4). Course-takers and non-course-takers complied with using standards as their guide. Denise and Katie both mentioned that teaching had become

reduced to a “teach, assess, teach, assess” cycle. Ultimately, no substantive difference existed in how the two groups reported the impact of standards on their teaching.

Let us begin, then, with teachers’ thought about their preparation for teaching.

#### TEACHER PREPARATION

Participants showed mixed feelings about their preparation. This section encompasses teachers’ sense of being prepared, or not, as well as details their on-the-job training for teaching, the contributions of non-teacher-education experiences to their preparation, gaps teachers reported in their preparation, and how teachers talked about discipline preparation. Two teachers felt well prepared. Grace said, “As the years progressed I began to realize that I had been well prepared” (Grace, p. 1). Lenora also replied similarly, saying: “For my teaching preparations, I think I was well-prepared, but that’s the type of teacher that I was too. Very, very organized and I would use my summers and vacation times to come up with other ideas to better prepare me for classes (Lenora, p. 35). However, Beverly found her preparation “wonderful and in some ways it was not adequate” (Beverly, p. 1), as did Luke:

In some ways going in I felt prepared, but intimidated at the same time. How rough are these kids going to be? How...uh...what challenges am I going to have reaching them?.

(Luke, p. 6)

Lenora, who said she felt very prepared in her teaching preparation, admitted experienced teachers taught her how to do lesson plans (Lenora, p. 3).

Many participants (course-takers and non-course-takers alike) claimed to have been prepared through a broad, general teacher education program with basic classes, a curriculum that was based on theory, teaching methods that emphasized reading and reading methods, with most preparation based on brain research, or how the brain works. Joy said she had considerable

emphasis on reading and math for (p. 1), and Luke had emphasis on math and computers (Luke, p. 2, 3). Three non-course-takers claimed to have benefitted from a hands-on teaching approach from the beginning (Joy, p. 1; Katie, p. 4) and had opportunities to teach multi-age, multi-level youth, and getting students excited about projects, thematic units, and student-driven writing (Katie, p. 1-2). Katie boasted about her program being special because of various aspects of hands-on teaching approach:

It was a fabulous program which took me to England to Bristol College with a group of other students, and at that time, uh, we were in the British infant schools, and it was multi-age teaching and it was based, very, very much on hands-on activity approach, interest level, the classrooms had, I believe I had, kindergarten, first- [and], second-graders together, and the whole purpose of us going there was to learn to teach to children, uh, getting them excited, but many projects, many hands on, the writing was they wrote every single day and their writing came from them.. (Katie, p. 2)

Joy also mentioned appreciating similar practice opportunities, such as going into the classroom like an internship situation, and attending a mini-student teacher session for 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades (Joy, p. 1).

One participant stood out from the others because he had a degree in a well known, acclaimed, state university, then went on to pursue a twelve-month intensive Teaching Certificate and Masters program designed for people without an undergraduate education degree (Luke, p. 2, 3).

Jazzy also taught mostly through a hands-on approach to her Special Education students aimed to prepare them for work (Jazzy, p. 13). She reported that she did value a particular class that helped prepare her to teach her students with special needs:

I took a lot of psychology, which was a great help for me with my students... 'cause I had to have that, to understand the different backgrounds... And the different...oh, my goodness, that the different exposures to abuse, all kinds of things, and that background in psychology did help, I will say that much for it. (Jazzy, p. 1)

### *On-the-Job Training*

Participants reported learning to teach via on-the-job training, something common to teaching practices. Though participants' level of preparation varied, most claimed to have benefitted from similar teaching preparation courses and mentoring. Most teachers reported gaining deeper understandings during student teaching and being a teacher's aide in early elementary classes (Joy, p. 1). However, Beverly argued that it was not possible to be completely prepared for teaching:

I think probably being a teachers' aide was one of the most valuable things, because you are actually in the classroom seeing what was happening, and student teaching. My student teacher, or my supervisor teacher...when I was a student teacher, she let me go to parent teacher conferences and participate; she let me lead a conference. (Beverly, p. 1)

But she reported that her students' parents felt that her own lack of parenting experiences hurt her ability to relate to children's issues.

Similarly, Eleanor gained experience through student teaching and being a teacher's aide on (p. 2), and Joy benefitted from observing early elementary classes (Joy, p. 1). Some teachers expressed appreciation for help from experienced teachers. Two participants received help about how to write lesson plans by other experienced teachers. For instance, Lenora reported, "I was hired to teach about 2 weeks after I graduated" (p. 3), and Jazzy commented "I was completely lost with that. So I had to learn that as I went. And I really feel that education for educators does

not really do the job” (Jazzy, p.1). Lenora felt nervous on her first day and found that the kids helped her. “They would raise their hand and say ‘I think we pledge to the flag now,’ or ‘I think you should be calling our names now,’ they meant attendance” (Lenora, p. 4).

In addition to this preparation for teaching, participants received help or enrichment experiences that proved useful in preparing them to teach students from mainstream and diverse circumstances.

*Non-Teacher-Preparation Experiences that Proved Useful in Teaching*

In addition to academic and job preparation, participants reported experiences that helped them become better prepared for the classroom which range from living in the 70’s, student teaching abroad, being involved in theater, personal counseling and religious beliefs. For example, Eleanor mentioned living in the 70’s during the desegregation era, and teaching in Guatemala, as useful experiences:

I remember when I was in high school that was a time in 69-70 that was a time when schools were desegregated and bring us together. And...it was very uncomfortable... for us as students and ...and for students coming in. (Eleanor, p. 3)

At that time Eleanor wondered how these kids could leave their schools where they grew to love and took such pride in, and be bused half across the city. She said, “They were angry. And riots broke out and fights broke out throughout [local] schools at the time” (Eleanor, p. 3). She did not understand why White kids did not get a response when they invited the Black kids to after-school activities, and other events that were part of the racial conflict (Eleanor, p. 10). Later, she claimed her eyes were opened through conversations she had with her African American roommate (who became her roommate in Guatemala), where they compared notes on experiences they had during desegregation (Eleanor, p. 11):



When we went to Guatemala, it was... what I want to say... a real experience because my being around African American people was very, very limited. Well, there were five of us girls that went down and one of them was African American and I ended up living with her. She taught me....oh, what I want to say...color blindness, I guess...fantastic person. Not that I was brought up a racist or anything...my parents were very loving and open to all cultures. And we were exposed to cultures at church...but very limited. But just meeting these people out there, getting first-hand experiences, first-hand stories, made me start appreciating and enjoying other cultures. (Eleanor, p. 9)

Luke, who had many talents, mentioned his experience with theater as a resource in helping people grow as well as teaching incarcerated boys for three years (Luke, p. 13). However, he reported that one of the most beneficial things for him in the classroom was the personal counseling sessions where he learned to understand issues impacting the kids:

I knew better things, like oh these kids may be just hurting. That's why they're lashing out. I'd come to them a different way and say okay, well, I know you're hurting. I cannot have that behavior here; you need to find something different that, Let us you take care of your needs but you can also take care of the classroom needs as well. So, ironically my best preparation for that was from counseling. Not from, job experience or school experience. (Luke, p. 7)

Jazzy also mentioned drawing on the strength of her grandmother, who was challenged with being emotionally impaired and always having to keep her emotions in check, while dealing with failed relationships while running a business (Jazzy, p. 24). However, there were times when she depended on her spiritual conviction to help her through tough times:

God...I said "I am mad," I do not know what to do with this...He said "Hold him closer,

hold them tighter”...and sure enough, hold them tighter works. ‘Cause when they’re upset, and they are acting out, is when they are really hurt, and that [is] what they really need. So coming down, you [have] got do this, you’re gonna’ get time out, or you are going to go here....that’s not going to work for some kids. They already had the worst that anybody could possibly imagine! (Jazzy, p. 2)

Teachers’ found a variety of experience helpful, but also reported deficits in several areas of their preparation.

#### *Teacher Talk about Discipline*

Talking about discipline, teachers’ lack of preparation for multicultural settings brought some teachers added problems and frustrations. Luke, for example, lacked an ability to handle discipline issues and he recognized needing “accountability tools,” especially in the area of classroom management, to teach students academic success:

My first two years, at least one of those two years, I struggled with many conversations with administration about my teaching. I think it had a lot to do with classroom management. Like shut up. I do not know if that’s the same as accountability tools or if it falls within, or what it falls within, but I think it leads all back to classroom management: whether I had control of that classroom or not; whether or not students were buying into what they needed to do; whether or not I had the right things to motivate them, to guide them towards what they needed to do to be successful students. (Luke, p. 6)

Luke found that the constant in his conversations with his administrator about how he was handling the classroom was this deficit:

[The administrator would say:] ‘Well, this is not matching up,’ or ‘you should do more of this’ that really had me feeling like I needed more in that area. And even if I did not have

those conversations, they were still a struggle; they were still wanting a solution, a more productive environment for me and the students. To have more students feeling like, or to at least have a, I do not know, if students feel warm to – a at least for me – to see more students achieving, to see more students be successful, finding what they need in the classroom environment, to come in and do their job, and do well on them [assignments] and learn to be productive citizens. (Luke, p. 5)

Jazzy felt that societal blame fall mostly on students who were supposed to pull themselves up (by the bootstrap) (Jazzy, p. 12). But Jazzy thought otherwise, that part of the problem involved teachers who really did not care. For instance, she reported that when discipline issues occurred, in her absence, no one spoke about how a teacher might have handled the classroom. Instead, “If something goes wrong, they blame the kids” (Jazzy, p. 12).

Lenora reported being sympathetic to other teachers who were trying to do better, saying: “I watched Caucasian teachers just struggle and some of them really wanted to do well and wanted them to learn and they would turn to us for help” (Lenora, p. 20). For example:

Teachers tried to [discipline] students in the Caucasian way in a Caucasian culture and they are not used to being disciplined that way. I met opposition from staff members who did not understand the African American culture. Some approached me for help, they would end up sending their problems to my classroom; they were trying to understand the different cultures. Student teachers learned more about culture from me than the schools they attended... (Lenora, p.17)

Grace detailed how the district efforts to create solutions to deal with the effects of demographic change caused more interruptions in the teaching, which seriously affected teaching preparation.

*Using Hands-on Approaches*

No differences existed in the two groups' responses about using hands-on teaching approaches. Course-takers rarely mentioned hands-on approach as the focus of their teaching preparation, though all of them frequently used hands-on strategies in their lessons. Three non-takers (Katie, Joy and Jazzy) stood out from other participants, because of teaching preparation in hands-on approaches. Jazzy taught through a hands-on approach in Special Education aimed to prepare many students, who could not read, for the world of work (Jazzy, p. 6). Two additional non-takers, Grace and Eleanor, talked about the value of hands-on activities, but did not mention being prepared for using this approach when they began teaching. This circumstance contrasted sharply with Joy and Katie, though neither mentioned how hands-on approaches helped culturally and linguistically diverse students. Katie proved the only non-course-taker who mentioned how well English-language learners (ELLs) performed when she used hands-on activities in her classroom.

*Useful Aspects of Teacher-Education Preparation*

Difference existed between what course-takers and non-course-takers found useful in their teacher education preparation. All course-takers mentioned a multicultural class proved useful to help them become better prepared to teach multicultural settings, and even recalled which parts they found the most useful. (I will return to their reflections on teaching with a cultural vantage point in a subsequent section.)

Three out of six non-course-takers (Katie, Luke, and Jazzy) expressed a desire for more preparation to teach diverse settings in innovative ways, and thought a course in preparation for diverse settings would have been useful. Eleanor inferred that effective professional development that taught her how to teach a history course that better included ethnic groups would have been

useful. But, two other non-course-takers, Joy and Grace, did not talk about the topic. Joy, for example, mentioned learning about cultural issues from classes and observing other teachers over the years, but made no mention of how and if these ideas might be applied. Grace did say that, in her career-days, culture or ethnicity was not the focus, because her job was to teach reading and writing.

Differences between course-takers and non-course-takers became evident in their responses about useful experiences from outside education. Alice, course taker, spoke about the privilege and opportunity to learn leadership skills by teaching Sunday school at a Baptist church, where she became accustomed to students responding to her teaching by speaking out of turn. Beverly talked about the way her family lived in different places, like Chicago and Canada, and being exposed to diverse neighborhoods and missionaries who also traveled abroad.

Four of six non-course-takers (Eleanor, Katie, Luke, Jazzy), on the other hand, seemed to rely on these out-of-education experiences to help them teach a diverse population. Eleanor, for example, talked about going to school in '69-'70 when schools were desegregated and how "uncomfortable" it was. She found this experience useful, because it formed the basis for a friendship with an African American roommate. During a trip to Guatemala, the chance to compare notes on desegregation events opened her eyes when she was able to see both sides of the picture and learn a "colorblindness" approach. These experiences, she said, "made me start appreciating and enjoying other cultures" (Eleanor, p. 9). Katie mentioned an incident she had with her colleagues while studying in England where she realized the way she identified herself ethnically changed depending on geography and politics. She realized, through an incident with her English colleagues, that while she was in the United States she identified herself as German-Irish, but in England they referred to her as American. And, Paul Revere, viewed in the U.S. as a

patriot, was viewed as a traitor in England, as they referred to him as “that bloody bloke.” For Luke and Jazzy, experiences outside education proved very significant, as both talked about having the need to rely on these resources to cope with and understand students who are hurting, as well as to survive teaching challenges. Luke referred to personal counseling sessions as the most useful in helping him understand students, while Jazzy referred to two sources of inspiration and guidance: one being her grandmother, a strong woman who had to keep her emotions in check in very difficult situations; and her opportunities to always talk to God about how to maintain her sanity in the midst of dysfunctional children and God’s response to her prayer to “hold them closer, and hold them tighter” (Jazzy, p. 2).

Based on these participants’ responses, it became evident that experiences outside the education field, though helpful, did not ways for non-course-takers to apply culturally responsive pedagogy. Katie, for example, pointed out a reading problem. But, in spite of her optimism, love for her students, and her suggestion on pre-teaching for context in reading problem, she mentioned no accommodations outside of using a hands-on approach. Eleanor showed interest in learning more, when she wished for guidance about teaching inclusive history, something more than a “stop over” approach for Black History month or Cinco de Mayo celebrations. She likewise mentioned no accommodations for ELLs. Luke, who took the initiative to pursue diversity training on his own, had an interest in solutions, but relied ultimately on his ability to develop relationships with students. He lacked tools for class management or could not recognize linguistically diverse students and, therefore, was unable to make accommodations to ELLs.

Joy did not mention additional experiences as useful or necessary in connection to addressing the needs of those students because her function was to teach them to function in an English-speaking, middle-class world, as they learned to “go along to get along.” Grace said her focus

was not the culture, nor did she think it should be. Her job was to develop ability, and to teach reading and writing. For immigrant children she created stability for them and taught the skills to fit into U.S. culture. She based her practices on the premise that all are human beings, emphasizing that we are all God's children with gifts. Jazzy said she was not given enough exposure or instruction about teaching inner city kids, similar to her roots. However, she reported a lack of understandings about Spanish-speaking kids. Those who reported no useful experiences from outside education to help them teach in diverse settings, also did not demonstrate abilities needed to teach multicultural classrooms.

A colorblind approach did not prove conducive to culturally responsive pedagogy because it does not recognize differences, while recognizing and honoring differences would underpin culturally responsive pedagogy. A teacher's tendency toward "colorblindness" seems to suggest inadequate efforts might result in dealing with the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. That is, seeing them as the same as everyone else eliminates the need for adaptations. Thus, seeing "kids as kids" and acting as if everyone were the same provided for no way to meet the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

#### GAPS IN PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

Most participants took a broad, general teacher education program focused on traditional reading and reading methods based on brain research. Except for taking multicultural teaching ED-754, participants' teacher preparation indicated few significant differences. However, noteworthy gaps existed in participants' teaching preparation (Table 3). Here, teacher participants reported preparation gaps related to: hands-on approaches, what teachers found useful, ways to address diverse classrooms, discipline – especially for diverse students, professional development, concerns about the curriculum, and standards.

Teachers wished for more preparation for teaching of reading and for teaching diverse classrooms. Also, some things got in the way of teaching diverse learners, such as the strong emphasis on curriculum standards and constant changes derived from efforts aimed at dealing

Table 4. Gaps in Teaching Preparation

PARTICIPANTS	Course-Takers					Non-Course-Takers					
	Bev	Jul	Len	Ali	Den	Kat	Ele	Luk	Joy	Gra	Jaz
Teachers are not prepared to teach CLDS		YES	YES			YES	YES	YES			YES
Teachers wished they had more preparation to teach reading	YES		YES		YES	YES		YES			
Teachers are not prepared to deal with discipline issues								YES		YES	YES
Teachers who thought PD was ineffective		YES	YES								YES
Teachers who thought the curriculum was written from Eurocentric point of view			YES	YES		YES					
Curriculum does not reflect contributions of ethnic groups in US		YES		YES		YES	YES				
Curriculum is not relevant to students			YES	YES		YES	YES				
Teachers who say PD for diversity only addresses Black and White issues		YES	YES								YES
Professional development is superficial and fragmented		YES	YES				YES				YES
Teachers who complained about no follow up or lesson plans following PD							YES				YES
Teachers who missed having a mentor					YES				YES		
Teachers impacted by Standards	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

with demographic changes. Not unexpectedly, six non-course-takers lacked a particular class in their teacher education preparation intended to prepare teachers for multicultural teaching. With their teaching preparation based on brain research and reading methods, teachers like Katie and Joy found it ordinary to report not being exposed or prepared for teaching a diverse population, because their preparation “had very little to do with students” (Katie, p. 1-2), and “there was no study of the cultural aspect of the child” (Joy, p. 1). Eleanor added that, in her teaching



preparation, there was “nothing to prepare you for the students you were gonna’ have” (Eleanor, p. 3). Jazzy found there was a lot to be desired in her teaching preparation. As she put it:

I think the teaching preparation was not as good as I’d like it to be. There was not enough... explained to us how to teach inner city. The reason I could [teach inner city kids] is because that’s where I am from. They did not give you enough background, in that order, or experience, or enough exposure.” (Jazzy, p. 1)

Two non-course-takers found that not only “diversity was kind of overlooked” (Eleanor, p. 3), “it was not even part of the conversation” (Joy, 5). Others did not recall having a specific, class, like Grace, who said she did not believe that there were “multicultural, diversity training, or a class that she took singularly, but maybe I was a part of something else I might have had” (Grace, p. 9). Additionally, Grace said, “I do not think I had as much background as the teachers do today in how to uplift, perhaps, a student in the culture that they came from” (Grace, p. 19).

Four course-takers – Beverly, Grace, Luke, Julie – wished they had more training to teach reading. Julie called not teaching reading after the end of third grade “the great shame of the American education system” (Julie, p.11). Additionally, Julie mentioned a study done by Michigan Reading Association (MRA) that asked students when they last loved reading. They found that teaching practices impacted students’ reading habits:

They did not enjoy it, and they stopped loving reading at the end of third grade when teachers were doing all of those really great exciting, engaging, interesting, fun reading projects and assignments. And as soon as that ended, their love for reading disappeared. (Julie, p. 11)

Denise admitted that not having a degree in English or Language Arts proved a deficit in her preparation (Denise, p. 6) and she wished she had mentoring from her literacy coach (Denise, p

5). Katie also recognized that current reading methods were ineffective (Katie, p. 13). Luke added that students' issues "may be coming from the student just does not know how to read, or may be struggling with reading, or struggling with skills and that's where they're acting out" (Luke, p. 17). (I will return to issues about teaching reading in a subsequent section, but now discuss how teacher participants talked about discipline.) In addition, teacher participants reported gaps in the preparation for teaching diverse classrooms

### *Addressing Diverse Classrooms*

Again, because of the study's design, course-takers seemed more likely to have resources for addressing perceived deficits in their teacher preparation. This proved to be the case. For instance, course-takers did not include needing teaching preparation for diverse classrooms as a deficit. Three non-course-takers (Katie, Joy, and Eleanor) claimed that their teacher education preparation did not address diversity, or provided no exposure to diverse students. Jazzy had exposure to African American inner city students, but not to Latinos. Grace and Luke did not remember having a diversity class, unless it were embedded in another course, but mentioned that he would have done better with such a course. Luke said, "There's nothing that I remember specifically from or not much I remember specifically from that about how to help multicultural classrooms" (Luke, p. 9). Three non-course-takers (Joy, Grace, and Eleanor) did not have diversity class diversity, but did not mention this as a gap in her preparation. Eleanor inferred the need for professional development that addressed teaching history, suggesting that she thought a course would have helped here. Joy found diversity not part of the conversation in her preparation, and she did not talk mention that as a deficit. Grace thought she did not have as much background as the teachers do today, on how to uplift student in the culture that they come from (p. 19). But, she too did not consider this a gap in her preparation. Instead, she boasted of

having the ability to make students aware of being God's children with tremendous ability.

Thus, some teacher participants found the lack of a course addressing diverse classrooms left a gap in their teacher preparation. In addition, they wished for tools to deal with student discipline issues.

### *Tools to Deal with Student Discipline*

Differences existed in the way course-takers and non-course-takers talked about issues of discipline. Course-takers Alice, Julie, Denise, Beverly, Lenora mentioned few discipline issues, though two course-takers (Alice and Julie) mention isolated incidents. For example, Alice recalled having difficulties with strong African American girls in her class. This experience reminded her of being beaten; she was a blond girl in a predominantly African American high school. She had to reflect on her class and work through issues, which she resolved. Julie mentioned having a problem until she took a diversity class.

Three non-course-takers (Luke, Grace and Jazzy), on the other hand, talked about the lack of tools for dealing with discipline issues a deficit. Luke recognized he had "more sense of where their issues may come from, while a student just does not know how to read, or maybe struggling with reading, or struggling with skills, and that's where they're acting out" (Luke, p. 17). Jazzy thought students (who were supposed to "pull themselves up") acted out as a result of not having their emotional needs met. Other possible causes, such as a teacher's mishandling of classroom management, were never discussed, which shifted the blame on the kids.

Thus, differences existed in the way participants dealt with discipline issues. Four out of six non-takers reported having discipline issues and two course-takers reported isolated incidents. Lenora, a course-taker, recalled playing the role of mediator by helping colleague teachers while they were having discipline issues. Therefore, it became evident that course-

takers had fewer discipline issues. It seems reasonable to conclude that their ability to understand students' culture, their methods in making connections through multicultural teaching, as well as their use of students as resources contributed to less acting out on the part of their students.

### *Ethnicity and Discipline Methods*

Differences existed in the way that participants talked about discipline, and it ran with teacher's race/ethnicity. Two African Americans – Lenora, course-taker, and Jazzy, a non-course-taker – and Luke, a biracial non-course-taker, all received criticism for the way they dealt with discipline issues. Lenora did not mention having discipline problems herself, but reported meeting with criticism from staff members who did not understand the African American culture. She watched Caucasian teachers struggle. Those who wanted help would turn to her for help. Luke confessed he lacked tools for class management, which he referred as “accountability tools” (p. 6), and administrators expected him to figure out a solution. Jazzy, for example reported the same criticism from others. She also reported being criticized for being able to work with “these kids.” Grace described the school as “chaotic” and noted that administration tried to cope with demographic change, reporting that one school ended up closing because they could not control the kids (Grace, p. 7). Even Eleanor whose tendency was to overlook differences expressed frustration with “today's kids.”

### *Professional Development for Diversity*

Both course-takers and non-course-takers believed that professional development would help fill gaps in teacher preparation. Only two course-takers commented on professional development for diversity. Julie (a course-taker) found multicultural education essential. She discussed inequities that arose from ethnocentric views of “cultural competency,” which tended to mean “you better know who your African American students are” (Julie, p. 16). She pointed

out that teachers and administrators needed to consider multicultural education that addressed all points of view, including socioeconomic issues that impact teachers' views on homework.

Three non-course-takers (Jazzy, Eleanor, Luke) commented on the ineffectiveness of professional development. All three supported professional development, say they need it and want it, as well as suggested what is needed. For instance, Jazzy and Eleanor wished for more follow up after professional development workshops. However, Grace noted first that teachers balk if they have professional development before or after school, and second that teachers' absences from classrooms when they attend professional development produces instability for the students.

#### SUMMARY

Thus, teachers' preparation followed common models that had proven effective in the past, but these left many teachers without adequate strategies for teaching an increasingly diverse student body. Teacher participants found many aspects of their teacher-education coursework and on-the-job training useful, as well as used understandings garnered in out-of-school settings. But several gaps in their preparation left them less prepared to teach reading, handle discipline issues, and many wished for professional development that addressed teaching diverse students.

## CHAPTER 5:

### SCHOOLING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Teacher participants provided detailed information about the myriad ways their schools approached the increasingly diverse student body. As will become clearer in what follows, shifts in school strategies on the one hand provided needed professional development, but also contributed to a growing sense that culturally and linguistically diverse students somehow did not belong, but instead were viewed as immigrants, aliens, and outsiders. Also, dramatic differences between course-takers and non-course-takers existed in how teacher participants talked about schooling diverse students, and how they described teaching a lesson they selected because “is proved successful with all students. Teacher talk also demonstrated that some participants aligned with full inclusion using pluralist ideals, and others spoke in assimilationist terms. When teacher participants turned to concerns for schooling diverse students, teaching reading and equity became the focus. Overall, an unsettling tension about the standing of diverse students in these teachers’ schools emerged from the findings.

#### SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

To deal with curriculum demands and demographic changes, these teacher participants’ school districts used several strategies to deal with changing demographics: changing the teaching focus, curriculum, professional development, and the standards. When the composition changed from 85% White and 15% minority, to 50% White and 50% minority, a meshing of cultures and income level resulted (Grace, p. 5) and addressing changes proved difficult.

#### *Changing the Teaching Focus*

Some thought the teaching focus needed to change. For instance, Grace (a non-course-

taker) reported that when these diverse students came to school: “They did not know how to sit in desks” (Grace, p. 5), and the main concern was “getting them up to grade-level, and helping them feel more comfortable in an education setting” (Grace, p. 5). Grace described the school climate at the time as chaotic, which resulted in having “one school closed because they [teachers in that building] could not control the children” (Grace, p. 6). Grace explained: “You need to have some kinds of things go on, so that in your class you create stability for them” (Grace, p. 7). Though it is difficult to ascertain to what extent her comments might represent views of others, Grace nonetheless characterizes diverse students as unruly, as youth who needed to be schooled in how to be like students she had taught in the past, suggesting the need to control students and their behaviors, as opposed to opening a conversation about established educational practices and changing them in ways to make schooling relevant to diverse students. Changing demographics brought a need for professional development, so teachers could teach in different ways (Grace, p. 8).

### *Professional Development for Teaching Diverse Learners*

Professional development aimed to prepare teachers to provide academic tools for academic success of all students, but this did not produced desired outcomes. Teachers recognized their need to be better prepared to teach today’s students, especially a need to educate teachers who lacked diversity classes. And, professional development became the venue designed to fill those gaps. Luke and Jazzy both believed they could have done better with this kind of knowledge (Luke, p. 16; Jazzy, p. 23). Jazzy felt there was not enough training about the students and families. “Not enough. Nowhere near enough. That would make it so much better if you could really understand” (Jazzy, p.23). Luke went further in recommendations for professional development goals, saying teachers need to:

...develop language, common protocols, common ideas about quality, work in collaboration, doing the rounds, having conversations, learn from doctors who make rounds, and change to sit down and talk to colleagues about initiatives. (Luke, p. 23)

Some teachers recognized that training was needed. Julie, for example ended her interview saying, “What I would like to add, sincerely, is that Multicultural Education is essential” (Julie, p. 16).

Jazzy and Julie spoke about the limitation of professional development. Jazzy recalled that seminars mostly dealt with Black and White issues, and then only at the level of awareness (Jazzy, p. 16).

All it was awareness. That’s it. There’s no follow-up and there’s no teaching you how to do it. There’s no lesson plans. There’s no, there’s none of that. Not in a seminar. If you wanted to know more, you’d have to, you might want to read the material that they give you, which you probably would not do, and figure out something on your own. But there was nothing big to do about it. Nope. So if a person wanted it, they would have to do all of the legwork. And they would have to do all of the meetings and they would have to do see the follow-up they had to do it. (Jazzy, p. 14)

Julie, who worked in the same district, noted:

And it’s not as I’ve heard from the from city superintendents, that is about cultural competency, because that seems to me that is code word for: “You better know who your African American students are.” I believe that we need cultural competency from many points of view, from the socioeconomics standpoint, from point of view of age standpoint, from generation standpoint, from culture from every point of view, how students live, who their families are, old families are, what happens to students when they



go home, what they eat, what music they see, what radio station they listen to, and this has, is...this has to do with every cultural group that is in your classroom, whether they are Bosnian, or Hmong, or...or... African American, which could be in this country for a long time, but has a culture that might be unique. I think you have to know, and if you do not know, then you cannot plan a lesson. There are things that we know about the brain, and how humans react, but unless you work with the cultures that exist, it's hard to be successful. (Julie, p. 16)

Lack of follow up was also an issue for Great Plains district. Eleanor mentioned, for instance, that professional development presenters brought a notebook full of lesson plans for teachers to use and it was up to the teacher to decide whether to use it or not (Eleanor, p. 19). Thus, these professional development efforts seemed not to have the intended effect.

#### *One-Time Professional Development Produced Little Change*

One-time models of professional development produced little change. Eleanor, who participated in a diversity workshop ten years earlier, recalled the ineffectiveness and negative feedback from the participants:

It was the most worthless thing I ever went through. It was not...and the staff felt the same way too. She was like an adjunct that went around doing these presentations. We could not relate to it at all. (Eleanor, p. 18)

Eleanor talked about the methods used in the workshop. "We got books. I...I do not think you can teach diversity with books and words. You know..." (Eleanor, p. 18). She added:

It's gotta' be experiences with different ethnic groups rather than your own. It's gotta' be people working together for understanding, I guess. Teach me how to teach history bringing in different ethnic groups, so I do not have to stop in February and May to teach

about African Americans and Cinco de Mayo. U.S. History has to be more current and inclusive of different ethnic groups, not a “stop over,” because kids feel like aliens or the immigrants, instead of the Americans. (Eleanor, p. 18)

Grace also raised concerns regarding professional development aimed to prepare teachers for diversity. She pointed out that some teachers balk at professional development after school or before school (Grace, p. 5). Jazzy noted that those who attended did not care, and only attended because it was required. “They did not care. They were not trying to reach people, [in order to do] the right things for them” (Jazzy, p. 12).

Jazzy had similar concerns about the worth of these training sessions, because they were ineffective, as far as changing teaching practices aimed to change:

Nothing changed. Everybody’s still the same. It did not change anything. Because you’re in a society of free will. What, what? So the kids [are] supposed [to use their free will and] pull themselves up. If he [the kid] does not do what the kids [are] taught. And that’s what they [the teachers] believe that with all their hearts. So they let it go and they do not even try. That’s [low students’ success] the kids fault. (Jazzy, p.12)

Thus, Jazzy saw professional development as part of the process that made teaching diverse students not a conversation about changing teaching, but about changing students who did not match accepted (mainstream) models of U.S. students.

Another problem resulted when change efforts occurred simultaneously, thus bringing too many changes. Each new administration (a new superintendent every five years) brought a new teaching approach, a new curriculum, new teaching philosophy, new textbooks, new academic programs, new expectations for teachers, which included new skills and testing. District changes caused a domino effect with subsequent changes in teaching assignments. The

problem was, as Jazzy put it:

They gave a curriculum to work with and you've never seen it before, and they changed it all the time, so you never got a chance to get your feet in, wet and stay in there and develop it. So there were a lot of things that were neglected when I came through...

(Jazzy, p.1)

Thus, teachers complained persistently about moving among schools one year here, one year there; movements which many found not helpful (Beverly, p. 7; Denise, p. 4; Grace, p. 7; Lenora, p. 5).

Julie expressed concerns that changes ignored the needs of students to learn in an environment where students have a relationship with their teacher. Changing the traditional curriculum to a computer-based curriculum, for example, became a concern for Julie, since it limited the interaction between teachers and students. Overall, such practices proved upsetting to her:

My great sadness, looking at urban districts like West Plains, where I am looking at changes in the district... in separating cultural lifestyles instead of melding cultural lifestyles and moving ahead. When a district moves itself over to a way of participating in a world that would not move people beyond their own cultural background into higher education, into jobs, into work, into real state, into a greater acceptance for a universal culture, I have great sadness there... (Julie, p. 5)

She thought that teachers and students need time to build relationships.

Eleanor valued change and recognized that some changes were needed in teaching, though not all needed changes have occurred. She noted that the educational system had not changed to meet the needs of the students:

The standards are so book oriented instead of experience oriented. I think these kids have got to have experiences. I know the way we've got our curriculum it has continuity but no purpose. The kids just want to finish, and a lot of them don't even want to do that because they get so frustrated. It's not relevant to what the world is today. Eleanor, p. 16)

In the midst of many changes it came as no surprise that teachers felt unprepared to teach in today's classrooms. In fact, changes resulted in teacher's frustration:

A teacher has to be has to be prepared for that new approach, but that what's happening is there was...at least for [name] High School...(Sighs) There was...a lot of unclearness about how do we teach these children. (Grace, p. 6)

Teachers felt overwhelmed, disappointed, and concerned about students' lack of results.

Also, teachers talked about the pressure to comply with state mandates and district standards. While they followed the standards as their guide, teachers also expressed concerns about how curriculum and standards affected their teaching preparation for their students. Denise and Katie spoke about the way that standards influenced their teaching. Denise defined her preparation in terms of compliance to the standards and found it "overwhelming," since she spent up to 10 hours to prepare for her week, on top of other demands of teaching. Most of her time was spent "teaching, assessing, teaching, assessing, interrupted by the effort do remediate students" (Denise, p. 3). Katie added, "I had a very diverse classroom which I absolutely loved...but that's when whole style of teaching had to change to an assess-standard, teach and assess" (Katie, p. 3).

Ultimately, some teachers declared their commitment to standards, or the district's curriculum, as a guide, (Grace, p. 13; Eleanor, p. 3; Lenora, p. 6), as well as depending on local

board of education at the time (Denise, p.2). For instance, Grace said, “My preparation is based on the curriculum the school had invested in” (Grace, p. 5). Eleanor expressed pride in the curriculum standards she and her colleagues developed and referred to it as “a very organized curriculum, with tremendous resources” (Eleanor, p. 6).

*Diverse Students as Immigrants, Aliens, and Outsiders*

Participants reported that curricula adopted in their districts derived from European American viewpoints, resulting in negative impacts on culturally and linguistically diverse students. As Alice noted, “Ah...I remember “at that time, realizing, even more deeply, that most of the literature that we as English teachers taught was written by white people, mostly men” (Alice, p. 4). Eleanor confirmed the exclusion factors in the curriculum, as she talked about her experience teaching 8<sup>th</sup>-grade history:

When we got to the part in eighth grade, when it was the Spanish-American War ...then we could bring in the Spanish part of it. But I think the textbooks that we have today as far as history is concerned is so focused on the White European or, oh, what I want to say. We went back to the first cultures like the Mayan, and the Aztecs and how they added to our history here. You need to bring in more resources...sources as far as the ethnic groups that had participated and make [these] as big as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln to set the hook for kids. To have them be able to relate to what is going on in our country. A lot of times they saw themselves as immigrants, or aliens, the outsiders. And I had to convince them that they were more important than George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, or equally as important, because they were the ones who brought the ideas...the diversity of our country. We would not be what we are today if these people would not have immigrated here. But that needs to be brought into the

curriculum, into the books. The books that we have now, they are pretty straightforward, U.S. history from a White American viewpoint. (Eleanor, p. 5)

But, Joy defended the curriculum efforts by saying that due to the pressure for all kids to perform, curriculum was improving in the literature (Joy, p. 12). She cited the example of inclusion of stories about many families and cultures, such as the one about a Chinese family that moved to the U.S., opened a restaurant, and their custom of slurping soup and ice cream. She thought teachers could choose what works with students from many ideas and a variety of resources, such as the internet, “there is whole world, it’s overwhelming” (Joy, p.12). Lenora disagreed with Joy, because of limited effort by schools to include diversity in the curriculum:

...you know then, like I said, they started putting in a story or two in their reading textbooks on a different culture. But it was just kind of just basic, just basic things that did not really teach about the culture, just the story about another culture. (Lenora, p. 24)

Her sense suggested that their curriculum’s approach to differences was superficial, that is lacked depth, and was fragmented. Often, teachers did not know how to teach it:

It would be a story there about Germans or whatever. That was it. They learned from it, but it was not very much. Did not give it enough depth, did not put enough time into it, and teachers that do not know those cultures would go through it and keep going because they did not know what else to do. So it was not addressed. (Lenora, p. 21)

Evidently, from of viewing participants who addressed the standards issue, a decline in the quality of teaching seemed necessary to comply with standards. Alice, for example, noted that:

I would say my teaching took a nose dive when they started having common assessments, because then I had to read the texts that were chosen by the teachers at Great Plains and Rangers and that did not connect nearly as well with my students, not nearly as powerful,

and then they had to do multiple-choice tests and assessments, so...taking away their freedom and reducing their learning to multiple[-choice] tests as assessments, which I did not do, I did that in addition to other assessments that I would use. But that was one of the reasons that I left Great Plains Schools. (Alice, p. 11)

Other teachers mentioned similar concerns. Eleanor felt limited by pressure and time constraints of implementing standards, but had no time to make changes (Eleanor, p. 6). Lenora added that having to stick to schedule, standards, and benchmarks limited her time on the part of the lesson she considered effective and meaningful, because “we had a certain amount of time to do certain things and had to meet all the benchmarks that they assign” (Lenora, p. 14). Grace added that in the last eight years there was not time to do the International Day lesson, because “It was all these requirements” (Grace, p. 5).

Two teachers were specifically concerned about the minimization of creativity that followed emphasis on testing. Julie said that one negative effect of teaching to the test was teachers’ losing sight of creativity:

I believe that after the third grade, the teachers do not do that as much. That when you’re trying to teach content, when you’re teaching for a test, teachers sometimes lose sight of the fact that creative thinking or training creative thinking to come to a particular end point gives good test results as well as rote memorization and just working with multiple-choice vehicles. That there’s a lot of ways to get to those multiple-choice results that are lost, that are more interesting than just ‘Let us do this multiple-choice test.’ (Julie, II, p 5)

Lenora also cited these changes as one of the reasons she retired. There was no longer room for creativity, because, as she put it:

And we were teaching from a syllabus. And it was very tight. It really did not leave a lot

of room for creativity on the teacher's part. And they almost told you what to say too. I did not like that. (Lenora, p. 6)

Jazzy also retired out of frustration from the inconsistency derived from standard practices:

You know the test scores for the inner city is ridiculous. Ridiculous! Because how can you teach a person who is 16 to pass a test who cannot read. And you're forever changing the curriculum for what? This kid cannot read! (Jazzy, p.13)

Jazzy further suggested a central concern related to teaching preparation designed to reach culturally and linguistically diverse students:

You could learn from the kids, they'll tell you. You talk to the kids. It's so much fun talking to the kids. And they'll let you know where they are and how they want to do, who, what they love to do. They'll tell you all of that. And so they build a relationship with you and then you can influence them, but as far as the school sitting down and saying, "Well this is what Latinos do, this is how they think, this what, you know. If they do it, I have not seen it. And there is no follow up. It is superficial just bits and pieces.... (Jazzy, p. 23)

Jazzy hints at one way for teachers to learn about culturally and linguistically diverse students, one way to gain insights into students' lives and educational needs. But such comments were far from the norm among study participants, as the next section on participants' thoughts on schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

#### TEACHER TALK ABOUT SCHOOLING DIVERSE STUDENTS

Themes encompassing how teachers talked about education for culturally and linguistically diverse students, themes include: definitions, ideologies, goals, teaching strategies, as well as they role they play in achieving their objectives. Ultimately, these teachers' practices



made evident their affiliations with assimilationist or pluralist ideologies.

### *Goals for Students*

Table 5 illustrates how course-takers and non-courses varied in the goals for their students and how they led into teaching strategies. Course-takers Alice, Julie, and Lenora have

Table 5. Goals for Students

PARTICIPANTS	Course-Takers					Non-Course-Takers					
	Bev	Jul	Len	Ali	Den	Kat	Ele	Luk	Joy	Gra	Jaz
GOALS FOR STUDENTS											
Learn Empathy		YES	YES	YES	N/A						
Become Empowered			YES	YES	N/A						
Feel Cultural pride		YES		YES	N/A	YES	YES				
Develop appreciation for each other		YES		YES	N/A	YES	YES	N/A			
Keep their home language	YES	YES	N/A	N/A	YES & NO	X	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	
Learn through scaffolding	YES			YES		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Help them get into the gifted program										YES	
Learn through English Only approach					YES & NO	YES	N/A	N/A	YES	YES	N/A
Teach students to be bilingual	YES					N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

similar goals to empower students through reading, study skills, and writing. They all find it important for students to empathize with others. Alice teaches student how to write a poem in two voices, because she is “Trying to develop some empathy with these challenging teenagers” (Alice, p. 4):

I have them write poem in two voices from their own experience. I would have them write a narrative and then pull two characters out of there so [it] might be between a boy and his mother, so the boy comes home late, the mother is worried about him, so he [is] talking about “do not worry about me, I am grown” and through the mother’s point of view how she feels and kind of helping them to be more observant of other people’s point

of view. (Alice, p. 4)

Julie held similar goals in her workshop, through a carefully chosen story that worked for many groups, though which she also tried to get students to understand someone else's point of view:

It's a very good story and the turtle is alive and the people who by the end of the story, by the end of the predicting, those that believe that the turtle was going to be alive tend to be in the majority because as the story changes, the values change. (Julie, p. 4)

Julie explains that the story gets the students in an interactively involved with the human dilemma:

The son starts to hear what the father says when the father says...the father says to the son..."I could understand the turtle's position." The son says, "He does not have a chance." The father says, "That's right. And that bothers you?" Tony the father looked into Jimmy's face. "That's right," Bobby said, "That bothers me." "Well of all the dumb stupid things," Jimmy said. "What do you want me to do? Get down on all fours and fight with him?" "No," Tony said. "Not on all fours. Not on all fours. In the water. Fight the turtle in the water." "That would be a brave thing, my son." (Julie, p. 4)

Julie explains that the story is also about leveling the playing field and about human issues, that makes it work for anyone. She said, "There's a whole lot happening in the story. It's a good one for all kinds of groups" (Julie, p. 4). Empathy was also one of Lenora's goals. She wanted her students to "have the experience of speaking to someone that did not speak their language so they could feel how the person felt when they come to this country, and only speak the language that they come with" (Lenora, p. 3).

Two course-takers (Alice and Julie) also stood out in their efforts to empower students through helping them overcome language difficulties. Alice expressed her objective to empower

students. She started by describing her students' attitude toward reading. She said, "I found that many of my students felt...well, first they thought they could not write, and they thought that reading was useless" (Alice, II, p. 2). Alice expressed her beliefs in students' ability to overcome reading obstacles, saying, "they thought" they could not write. (Later her students published writings derived from her lesson.)

Alice had students of all academic levels, but was determined to explain in detail what she meant by being empowered through language skills:

I found that many of my students felt...well, first they thought they could not write, and they thought that reading was useless. So by showing them models from history and people who were oppressed by not being able to read and write, or not being able to read and write well, how different people in society use that to [hold] people down, to push them down, and I wanted them to realize that being empowered through being able to use language well, mature vocabulary, to be able to tell their story clearly and articulately with strength, and vivid words, how that would empower them, how it would help them to gain confidence, to learn that they have the right to speak their mind, and to say what is important to them, to tell their story. (Alice, II, p. 2)

Julie, who struggled herself with reading, understood how difficult it was to do well in school while dealing with reading deficiencies. Similarly, she also sought to empower students by helping them reflect on the way they study and helped them set goals to improve after teaching them study skills (Julie, p. 1). Julie's desire to solve the reading problem derived from early in her own experiences learning to read. She recalled, "I did not really own my brain. And, I could not really write well" (Julie, p. 1). Julie said because assumptions were made based on her speaking ability, though her testing and elementary school performance was good, she was

pushed to a place she was not ready to go, and here needed skipping lessons contributed to her frustration. As a result of these experiences she also aimed to give students confidence through learning skills they lack to resolve reading problems. She explained:

So a lesson plan that would be bridging middle-school skills and high-school skills to give them confidence and some real concrete ability to do some note taking and to predict and read, and to be better readers, so academic reading skills [like] note taking and some study skills. (Julie, p. 1)

Reaching goals that teachers set for their students requires that they define the role they play in the process of helping students reach those goals. Sometimes such roles are explicit and sometimes implicit. Let us look at some examples.

#### *Roles Teachers Play in Schooling*

Teachers' opinions on education for culturally and linguistically diverse students can also be seen in how teachers understand their roles in diverse students' educations. Earlier, we learned that Julie thought teaching-to-the-test pressured teachers to lose sight of creative thinking needed for teaching good reading strategies. However, Julie saw herself as an academic coach. She said that knowing how to read, as part of taking tests, is a required skill; therefore, "they really need to practice in order to get very good at the test" (Julie, II, p.16). She focused on making students aware of their own ability to learn, by "taking the anxiety" away. She used the phrase "owning their brain" to express the way that student need to be aware of their own ability and she provided successful experiences. As she said, her goal was: "To empower the students to know how to do what they can do, and how successful they can be and how easy it is they can get there" (Julie, II, p.16). Similarly, Beverly also saw herself as a key player in helping kids gain the confidence to read out loud during the story reading in her grammar lesson. As she put

it, “So I feel like the more that I can help to give skills and to pass things on and to give opportunities for practice, the better off (the kids are)” (Beverly, p. 6).

In contrast, Grace, a non-course-taker, had the implicit goal of protecting students from a chaotic school environment, as she tried to create stability for them. Joy’s implicit goal seemed to be to save children from an exclusionary situation, because “their ideas are not going to help them be successful in a middle class job, you know, or school situations (Joy, p.16). Luke saw his role as a teacher as one who would find the thing to help them find relevance (p. 18). Teachers, for the most part, tried to do what they believed to be in their students’ best interest, that is roles teachers played had an impact on their students’ learning, a point I return to in a subsequent section. But first, consider the ways teachers make connections with their students.

Table 6. Ways to Make Connections

Participants connect with students through:	Course-Takers					Non-Course-Takers					
	Bev	Jul	Len	Ali	Den	Kat	Ele	Luk	Joy	Gra	Jaz
Vocabulary w/ prior knowledge	YES										
Building language skills	YES	YES	YES	YES							YES
Empowerment through reading and study skills	YES	YES									
Building relationship		YES						YES		YES	YES
Meaningful texts		YES		YES							
Multicultural literature			YES	YES							
Honoring all cultures in the classroom			YES	YES							
Text		YES							YES		
Text to self and text to self				YES							
Text to text comparison of African American dialect with standard English				YES							
Emotional connection, praise and hugs									YES		
Relationship first, then educational objectives								YES			
Modeling teamwork			YES								YES
Psychology											YES
Similarities of background											YES
Concern about human condition											YES
Drawing on cultural attributes		YES	YES	YES				YES			YES

### *Ways to Make Connections*

Making connections to students emerged as a frequent theme in the interviews (Table 6). The way participants discussed the topic said a lot about their cultural attributes, and this impacted their view of connecting with students as a priority or not. Some teachers found connections important, but others did not mention them. Teachers' practices were revealed through their priorities, their preferences, and their teaching style. Table 6 highlights the different ways that course-takers and non-course-takers expressed making connections with their students. Here, consider a comparison between Alice and Joy focused on how they make connections which illustrates how different levels of cultural understanding impacted learning.

Alice, a course-taker, and Joy, a non-course-taker, both mentioned the importance of making connections and both mentioned the importance of making personal connections with students. Joy said she did not learn in a formal way, but she became more aware through experience over the years "that in education there has to be a personal connection," and therefore teachers need to consider: "What does that mean to you?" (Joy, p. 15). Additionally, she claimed that:

sometimes, [for] kids with limited experiences, it's harder for them to make connections with the character, unless that character is exactly like them or likes exactly what they do. Sometimes it's hard to kind of expand that and make some personal connections.... [Some students might say,] "I am not anything like this character." (Joy, II, p 3).

Alice's goal, on the other hand, was to help students make text-to-text and text-to-self-connections:

My goal is to help my students make text-to-text, text-to-self connections. As they are reading somebody else's story, it starts to open up first of all, their own right to be heard,

but also for them to see how other people communicated their feelings, their thoughts, and writing in a way that is powerful and it impacts them. (Alice, II, p. 5)

Here, Joy's Language Arts lesson focused on standards with the key objective involving kids performing a character analysis and making a personal connection to the character as they interact with the text (Joy, II, p. 1). However, what seems to go unspoken here is that even if Joy's choice of a story comes from "the reading anthology [and is] nicely laid-out and illustrated" (Joy, II, p. 8), a connection may prove difficult if students do not relate to the text. By comparison, Alice's Language Arts lesson taught the standard through various multicultural texts, where students can make meaningful connections. She selected authors well-matched to her students, and believed they would likely relate to issues of oppression in the texts (Alice, II, p. 5; Alice, p. 5). In Alice's case the teacher used her understandings of students to make decisions about curriculum that focused on the human experience, and anticipated variations in experiences due to race, gender, disability, abuse, poverty, oppression and culture (Alice, p. 8).

One example proved particularly illustrative, when Alice spoke of an experience that became a turning point for her using multicultural literature. She recalled a student's reactions to an autobiography by an African American author. Raised in foster care, his foster mother emotionally and physically abused him. In spite of this, "[he] writes movies and produces movies, and it's his story, his biography" (Alice, p. 4). An African American student found this story compelling, something worth paying attention to, something she read.

In dramatic contrast, Joy's students found it difficult to connect with her text because "[s]tudents struggle with language and writing" (Joy, II, p. 3), and visualization. "Taking words off a page and creating a picture in their mind...those kids really struggle more than others that can kind of picture in their mind" (Joy, II, p. 3). While Joy recognized students struggle with

these skills, she seemed to miscast her students from diverse circumstance as people who lacked the *capacity* to imagine events, people, or places described in text. She seemed to downplay the extent to which the stories used in her classroom related to some ways of life and not others, stories that made it easier for those matched to, or familiar with, story circumstances to imagine or “picture in their mind” story details. Furthermore, she acknowledged no need for her to facilitate the learning of students from diverse circumstances.

Other contrasts between course-takers and non-course-takers deserve mention. While Eleanor, a non-course-taker who saw few differences, said her students made no connections with 8<sup>th</sup>-grade history that covered what happened two hundred years ago (Eleanor, p. 8), course-takers Beverly and Julie connected with students by giving students the tools to overcome language barriers (Beverly, p. 9; Julie, p. 1). While Beverly taught language skills to mostly English-language-learning students, Julie taught middle and high school students reading and study skills they need to survive and overcome difficulties, and to empower them to become successful in a testing-focused education system.

Building relationships was mentioned by participants, though the reason for the relationships varied. Three participants, Julie, a course-taker, and non-course-takers Jazzy and Luke referred to building relationship as an important part of their teaching. Julie, emphasized the topic by making statements about teaching and relationships. Julie thought teaching was all about relationships:

I have been thinking about this and what this means, so everything I can learn about who students are and how to get connected makes a difference. I believe that relationships, it's all about relationships, and when you can get, build relationships by listening to who others are, you are a better teacher. (Julie, p. 11)



Jazzy, understood and advocated for her students, who benefited from a hands-on program that prepared for the workforce her non-reader students.

Luke, a non-course-taker, emphasized again the importance of relationships. He looked for ways to bridge the teaching gap by building relationship as a way to make material more relevant to students (Luke p, 18). Therefore, he saw his role as a teacher involved finding the thing help students find relevance, find a way to build a relationship, encourage them through higher levels of rigor than they are studying. He added that relationship building was his strength and he utilized it as much as possible. He also was the only participant who specifically stated the need to work on the relationship first, “then build on other pieces that I need” (Luke, p. 18). Luke, like Katie, worked to make teaching relevant to students, but recognized that he did not yet have all the tools to achieve this goal (Luke, p. 4).

Two participants, Lenora a course-taker and Jazzy a non-course-taker, had backgrounds similar to many of their students, and they sometimes drew on what they knew about cultures to establish trust and cooperation. For instance, Lenora and Jazzy drew on their understanding of high context and low socio-economic students to teach them through cooperative learning, thus building on their common cultural understandings for teaching. Lenora also built on students’ cultural understandings about cooperation by giving them specific roles in the process of helping an ELL newcomer who needed to practice her English speaking skills. She had the students call this student at home to speak English to her, thus breaking barriers between students and building a sense of community (Lenora, II, p.17). While preparing special education students for the work force, Jazzy taught through student collaboration and teamwork in a program for students who could not read.

Thus, as illustrated in Table 6, by comparing Alice and Joy, and others mentioned above,

course-takers created more opportunities to connect with students through curricular materials they select, such as multicultural texts that honor cultural differences and attributes; the way they recognize and are willing to help students overcome language and cultural difficulties, such as connecting vocabulary with prior knowledge, exercises on casual and standard discourse; helping them make a transition to a new culture by empowering them with the confidence in reading and study skills, as opposed to non-course-takers who connected with students through an emotional relationships, connecting through similarity of background, hugs, or verbal praise.

Next, let us examine lessons that nine out of the eleven participant teachers shared, by describing details about their goals and teaching strategies. (Two course-takers Eleanor and Luke were not available for a second interview to discuss a lesson.)

#### TEACHING STRATEGIES FOUND SUCCESSFUL FOR ALL STUDENTS

To better understand differences across teachers, I compared course-takers and non-course-takers lessons, topics, approaches, what teachers do, what students do, to determine the differences among their practices. Teachers shared a lesson “they should choose one that they felt would provide success for all students.” Thus, I compare strategies qualitatively, and based on teachers’ ability to articulate their strategies for the lesson during these discussions.

I selected two subjects to compare: Language Arts and Social Studies. First, for the Language Arts Group (Figure 1), I compare non-course-taker Joy with course-takers Beverly, Julie and Alice. (See also Appendix C for detailed analysis worksheets comparing Joy in turn to Beverly, Julie, and Alice.) Second, for the Social Studies Group (Figure 2), I compare course-taker Lenora with non-course-takers Katie and Grace. All three presented lessons about Multicultural Teaching, which they used in their classrooms as part of Social Studies units.

Figure 1. The Language Arts Group

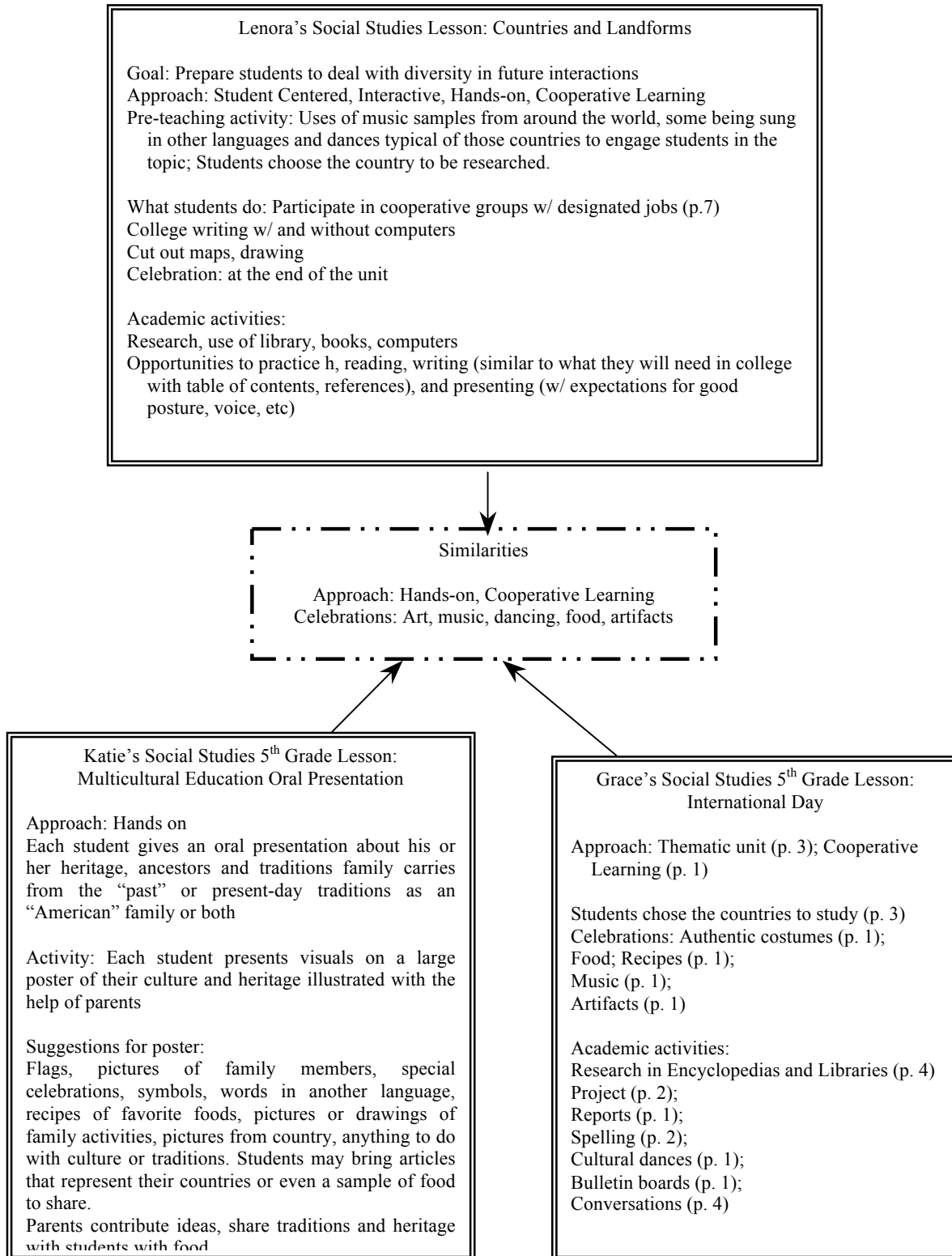
Joy – NC Lesson: Character Analysis Approach: Teacher Directed		
<p><u>What teacher does:</u> Starts with a story selected by the district committee Gives examples on board (p. 2) Goes through lesson step by step (p. 2) Uses Graphics organizers (p. 2) Mapping Poetry (p. 2) Visualization (p. 3) Writing rough draft Computer lab for writing final ELLs can at least work on vocabulary because it fits all different levels</p>	<p><u>What students do:</u> Sit at table for two Work individually Make character map of themselves Ask questions repeatedly Ask for correct word spelling Volunteers read out loud</p>	<p><u>Teacher goals with activity</u> “Gives me info about how they view themselves, what they focus on.”  To see their independent working level</p>
Beverly - Course-taker	Julie – Course-taker	Alice – Course-taker
<p>Lesson: English Adjective Placement Method: Teachers Directed</p>	<p>Lesson: Building Bridges for Reading and Study Skills Method: Student Centered Method</p>	<p>Lesson: Language and Power Approach: Student centered (p.6) Curriculum: Multicultural authors who used language to tell their story</p>
<p><u>What teacher does:</u> Start w/ a story chosen by the teacher (appropriate for children and families) Focuses on narrative Asks questions to stimulate background knowledge (p. 2) Models good reading Provides opportunities for practice Uses personal story (p. 2) Uses gestures and mimic (p. 2) Teaches how to use voice as a tool through practicing voice variations Encourages practice to build confidence Encourages them to read to their little siblings</p>	<p><u>What teacher does:</u> Reading selection selected by teacher: Guides student through a problem posing activity (p.1) Start w/ story that works for everyone Demonstration (p. 16) Game analogy (p. 2) Gives Reading Inventory (p. 3) Picture test (p. 9) One section at a time (p. 5) Establish reading purpose (p.5) One sentence summary(p. 5) Teach note taking system (p. 14) Predicting (p. 14) One sentence summary (p. 5) Note taking system (p. 14) Draws on high context cultural attributes of the need to social interaction</p>	<p><u>What teacher does:</u> Reading resources selected by the teacher - multicultural texts Problem posing (p.12) Prepares students for Literature Circle Groups students according to interest and reading level Students choose books from teachers’ selection by reading level Multicultural Literature Circles (p.6) Texts carefully selected by teacher with a theme of language used to empower Models by sharing her reflecting writing Character growth chart (p.4)</p>
<p><u>What students do:</u> work with partners write down some things from story write sentences to practice adj. placement ask questions spelling not important (p.8) reading out loud (p. 2) assessment</p>	<p><u>What students do:</u> Reflect on their current study skills or note-taking method Interact with the group (Get up, take sides on the human dilemma Predict what will happen to the turtle</p>	<p><u>What students do:</u> Read alone Read in groups Write personal narratives (p. 10, 11) Write poetry (p. 10, 11) Letter to the editor Create blogs (p. 10, 11) Practice writing in casual discourse and then hanging it into standard English (p. 17) Write vignettes (p. 16) Present reading in various forms Reader’s theater Poetry</p>

*Differences in Teaching Strategies*

This section highlights differences in teaching strategies used in the lessons teachers shared in the second interview. Course-takers tended to spend more time on language skills and their students engaged in activities. Julie and Alice use a student-centered approach, which gave them an opportunity to use a skill (learned in a diversity class) called problem posing, a Freirian practice aimed to guide students through a reflective examination of their situation in their lives. Reflective practice and hands-on activity did not arise when teaching reading or study habits in Joy's lesson that used a teacher-directed method. Though Joy demonstrated good teaching practices, such as mappings and step-by-step demonstration, opportunities existed (in Julie's and Alice's course-taker lessons) for students to learn through varied activities, such as the use of voice, mimicry, analogies to help connect with prior knowledge, and most importantly teachers built on cultural affiliations of students, their need for social interaction. Students seemed more engaged in course-takers' lessons because of the curricular materials selected, which were conducive to making connections.

Similarly, differences were found in the comparison of the Social Studies group (Lenora, course-taker, and Katie and Grace, non-course-takers) on Social Studies lessons, which I will address as efforts in Multicultural Teaching.

Figure 2. The Social Studies Group



Four participants (Lenora, Grace, Katie, and Eleanor) described a multicultural lesson. Figure 2 highlights the differences between Lenora, a course-taker, and Katie and Grace, non-course-takers. Eleanor's time to present her lesson diminished the quality of her explanations, but she used similar strategies for a unit on Mexico when covering Latin America. Her lesson provided an opportunity for her class to organize a celebration where parents contributed food, music, and language (Eleanor, p. 15).

As seen in Figure 2, course-taker Lenora and non-course-takers Katie and Grace included aspects of cultural celebrations in their lesson. One central difference concerned Lenora's curriculum being based on the cultures of the class, which provided the students an opportunity to bring their culture into the curriculum. Lenora's lesson, though taught in Social Studies, covered other areas, such as art, literature and writing (Lenora, p. 9). Drawing on her own love for music, she used her own music library as a resource to provide appropriate music. Lenora modeled attitudes and strategies derived from her own research, as well as demonstrated dances so students could guess the music or dance country of origin. Though similar to many Social Studies reports, Lenora designed an interdisciplinary unit that used the celebration aspects of the culture, such as music and dance, as way to spark students' interests, get them involved in research, and engage higher-order thinking skills.

Lenora reported many benefits of the lesson. It prepared students for higher-level thinking by giving them the opportunities to practice academic skills, such as the type of writing they would do in college, with reports that included table of contents, references, and oral presentations. The project culminated with a celebration of music, drums, and costumes, an event enjoyed by the school and the parents. As she described the grading, "And then I had a rubric that outlined what the grading would be on: participation, the research report, the resources that

they used, they had to have a table of contents. And I think it prepared them for higher, higher, higher level thinking” (Lenora, p. 8). “It went over excellent, because the kids at that age love dancing” (Lenora, p. 2).

Non-course-takers Katie and Grace, on the other hand, included similar celebration components in multicultural lessons designed to teach a Social Studies unit. Katie had students make a poster with their families in which they illustrated their heritage and traditions through many pictures, artifacts and cultural symbols, which students loved. Grace prepared, with colleagues, an International Day, in which students selected a country to research and share through bulletin board displays, music, dance, food, as well as research and reports, as seen in Figure 2 (Grace, p. 13). Grace discussed other activities she conducted in the middle of the year:

We would not have had, like I might have had a writing project of a topic, close to the very first one of the year, would be to write about yourself. You know, where were you from, how many sisters and brothers do you have, what kind of cultural things do you do in your house, I mean what is it like at like say at Christmas. Do you celebrate Christmas? (Grace, p. 21)

Grace thought the International Day activity was very “thought provoking” and useful in having students learn to respect cultures, and it held other benefits, but higher thinking-level activities, or preparation for college writing were not among these. For instance, according to Grace, “Learning was in the hands-on development of costume and food and dance and...now the school, that still does that, is truly one of the most multicultural schools in the city. And those young people get along very well. But each culture is respected” (Grace, p. 13). Thus, unlike non-course-takers Katie and Grace, course-taker Lenora used the project’s cultural activities to engage students in an advanced academic level, and provided opportunities to practice academic

skills. Therefore, these course-taker lessons seemed a productive way to engage culturally and linguistically diverse students who may struggle with reading and writing.

Two participants, Denise, a course-taker, and Jazzy, a non-course-taker, did not fit the pattern set by other participants. Denise reported that her class has a 95% rate on homework completion. Jazzy, a non-course-taker demonstrated insight in her effort to change students' academic achievement by teaching them how to understand their report card. She taught them the meaning of teacher comments and how comments correlated to letter grades. She taught her students how to understand the cultural expectations behind report cards. This suggests a lesson based on Freire's idea of praxis, though she had not studied his work. Alone among the non-course-takers, she acted to resolve an issue important for future school success (Jazzy, p. 1). Other teaching practices contributed to engaging diverse students, such as using hands-on approaches.

#### *Active Learning through Hands-on Approach*

Many participants reported using hands-on approach to teaching. Four course-takers, (Denise, Alice, Julie and Lenora) noted the importance of active learning through social interaction. For instance, Denise thought it was important to give students opportunities for "working with partners, games, some hands-on activity to increase motivation, talking to each other, having fun" (p.10). Lenora, Alice and Julie (course-takers) thought that kids need to have social interaction, opportunities to help each other and to problem solve in a cooperative leaning way (Lenora, p. 7). When Julie listed concerns about the computer-based curriculum, she included the lack of social interaction as something students lacked. She thought that "the new curriculum will not [allow] students to review, use talking points, comprehension, remembering what you read, etc., [because] many of these come from social interaction" (Julie, p. 14).



Beverly, a course-taker used a hands-on approach, which she considered good teaching, especially to provide successful opportunities for their English-language learners (ELLs). Beverly used many different activities in her class, including voice variations, mimicry, and role playing, and her students engaged in their learning. She reported 100% homework returned from her ELLs.

Three of six non-course-takers mentioned hands-on teaching approaches, Katie, Jazzy and Joy. As Jazzy put it, “This was the Special Education school [and students] would spend part of their day working at a work site which would prepare them for the world of work. It’d be a hands-on situation” (Jazzy, p. 7), but here her comments did not include using any specific strategies grounded in professional development for *cultural* diversity. In fact, as she put it, “I never really remember having anything that dealt with Spanish-speaking children. M-m. It was Black or White” (Jazzy, p. 10). Joy, whose teaching preparation included “hands-on from the beginning” (Joy, p. 1), also did not mention using awareness of cultural diversity in her teaching. Katie, however, recognized that “with ELL students anything I can do hands-on they just flourished, they understood it much more” (Katie, p. 9). Grace, a non-course-taker, believed that International Day should be brought back, because “students need to learn how to work in small groups” (Grace, p. 8).

Not everyone who believes in a child-focused teaching approach used it, however. For example, Joy and Julie both thought teaching needed to be student-centered or child-focused. In Julie’s lesson plan, she emphasized this point:

I always feel in my teaching, and the work that I do currently, that everything I do is about the students and it’s not about me. So the more the students are engaged and the more they have to take home, and to work with [because they are] without their own

experiences, the more quickly that happens; the better [it is], because then I can keep them engaged for longer period of time. (Julie, p. 1)

Beverly seemed to use culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally and linguistically diverse students more than other teacher participants, and she clearly articulated details about education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. She focused on language through teaching strategies aimed to help students make connections to other learning techniques, such as finding ways to connect puzzle pieces by using different explanations, role playing, scaffolding, building a bridge, through hands-on activities, considering children's language background (how close or removed it was from English), similarities and differences to U.S. culture, and otherwise working harder to bridge the gaps (Bev, p. 9). Thus, for course-takers students' active involvement while learning was a central feature of their classroom teaching strategies.

Here, participants showed considerable interest in students' success. They also showed concern over issues impacting the education of culturally diverse student and their ability to achieve in schools. But, their teaching practices also provided evidence about their ideological leanings.

#### *Ideologies Made Evident in Teacher Talk*

Teachers talk suggested affiliations with either assimilationist or pluralist ideologies. For instance, Lenora thought that the predominant ideology of the district has been assimilation:

It's been basically a assimilation where the Caucasian culture vocabulary and so on was taught to everybody, and the students were expected to change their way of thinking, and to the actually Caucasian American cultures, and... the Caucasian teachers which we have a lot of in this district...did not know anything about the other cultures.. (Lenora, p. 16)

She expands by sharing what she learned from a Native American teacher in Michigan:

I think he was Chippewa and that the Chippewa, he said that when they started school they had to stop, they were told to stop speaking their language. This was years ago when that happened, and they said they had to learn English and their teachers were mostly Catholic nuns. And then, so he says, that they do not speak their language anymore. They lost it. And he kind of sounded like he resented that too. (Lenora, p. 15)

Thus, when discussed schools came to be thought of as assimilationist.

But, study participants differed in their ideological affiliations. Most non-course-takers held an assimilation ideology, while course-takers followed pluralism. Consistent with an assimilation ideology, non-course-taker Grace found that education for culturally and linguistically diverse students was “American.” With the change in demographics and becoming more diverse), Grace recalled the school’s attempt to make changes in the curriculum toward inclusion, though she was clear about her strong convictions about what education for immigrant children should include:

The education for culturally and linguistically diverse students is American. That the way, because I know, I do not know what the things are being presented, but when I was teaching, I wanted these young people to learn diversity. Well, what I was supposed to be teaching, but that they are now part of a new culture. And I wanted to help them to feel included. And to feel help them to feel part of this country that they were now a part of. And I thought that was my job. (Grace, p. 16)

Joy, who showed awareness of cultural issues, also was very clear that her role in teaching entailed teaching students how to function in an English-speaking society:

I think now that I’ve become more aware, in the last few years, my focus is to find that balance between respecting where they come from and what they bring to the classroom,

every single day, what their experiences are, what their family is, and functioning basically still in a middle-class English-speaking world because some of them...you know, their ideas are not going to help them be successful in a middle-class job, you know, or school situations. (Joy, p.16)

Grace focused on the curriculum, not students' culture. "I think the focus is not in [the] cultural or the linguistic [aspect]; instead they now are being taught English" (Grace, p. 12). She clarified, saying:

I'm not sure that it should be made, ever, the major important... It's important that we become a melting pot. Ok? I'm not for groups staying in their own culture personally. It's ok, it's you know, but I think it happens in this country more because people feel segregated from other people then, because they want to stay there. You know, if people did not feel segregated they would multi-mix. I think the beauty of coming here is being able to connect. You do that through common languages and experiences. (Grace, p. 21-22)

In these three teacher participants' talk, clearly teachers saw their responsibilities in terms of teaching students how to adopt perspectives consistent with a U. S. version of life, one that conveys selected facets of European roots – what tends to be thought of as mainstream. What seems to be overlooked in their thoughts is that diverse students do not have a common or similar experience to that represented in mainstream, nor does being assimilated into such a circumstance seem to provide diverse students with opportunities to belong, to be the kinds of persons who have their own roots, which differ in substantive ways.

Course-takers took a pluralist view of schooling, as discussed in the themes of this section. Though most teachers committed to complying with district standards adopted according

to state mandates, course-taker participants' goals highlighted here, however, differed from district goals. Instead, these teacher participants' goals represented their ideologies, which were bound up with their hopes for their students and made evident in the roles these teachers play and the strategies they design, and they also connected to concerns about schooling diverse students.

### CONCERNS ABOUT SCHOOLING DIVERSE STUDENTS

As reported earlier, teachers lacked preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, which proved particularly true for reading. This significant issue impacted all students, particularly ELLs, and proved an important finding for the study (Table 7). In addition, teacher participants spoke of concerns with equity; both concerns discussed here.

#### *Concerns with Teaching Reading*

Seven participants talked about culturally and linguistically diverse students' struggles with reading. Julie and Alice (course-takers), and Katie, Luke, Joy, Grace and Jazzy (non-course-takers) reported that students struggled with reading and writing. Course-takers and non-course-takers wished they had more training in reading. Examining Table 7 illustrates the significant differences. Including insights from Julie (course-taker) and Katie (non-course-taker), who had similar views on reading issues, illustrates these differences.

Julie and Katie both found that current reading methods ineffective for culturally and linguistically diverse students. One reason that current reading methods proved ineffective concerned assumptions made about students' reading capabilities. Katie said, "We assume they know the context, and they do not" (Katie, p. 10). Julie had struggled with reading, as a student, because of the way that reading was taught and assumptions made about her reading ability. She felt she missed too many things, because it was assumed she knew how to do things that she could not do. She skipped grammar lessons and other work, but pushed ahead because she spoke

Table 7. Concerns about Reading

Problems Teaching CLDS	Course-Takers					Non-Course-Takers					
	Bev	Jul	Len	Ali	Den	Kat	Ele	Luk	Joy	Gra	Jaz
Students struggled with reading and writing		YES	YES	YES		YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
Teachers were not prepared to teach CLDS		YES	YES			YES	YES	YES			YES
Teachers did not recognize education for CLDS									YES		YES
Teachers reported the need for more teaching of reading	YES	YES				YES				YES	
Teachers claimed reading methods are ineffective		YES				YES				YES	
Reading methods are not appropriate for CLDS		YES				YES					
Teachers believed assumptions are made about students' reading ability		YES				YES					
Teacher said ELLs read without understanding the context		YES				YES					
Workshops for ELL encouraged vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary						YES					
Teachers mention teaching vocabulary to E LLs	YES		YES		YES	YES			YES		
Teachers make accommodations beyond vocabulary	YES	YES	YES	YES		YES					
Teachers mentioned making accommodations for ELLs	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES					

well. Later, she could not read or write as well as necessary, because she was never trained properly and consequently struggled in college. She thought poor reading instruction held deeper ramifications for English Language Learners:

My belief is that in the United States, we're very good at teaching reading. My belief is that just about everybody learns to read.... What happens when students get in fourth grade and we're reading to learn instead of learning to read. We've stopped teaching reading when not everybody is reading fast enough or fluently, or not enough to be considered a reader. (Julie, II, p. 10)

When speaking of academics, Katie was surprised when she noticed that “many times in reading I have students that can read every word beautifully, even with expression, and many of my ELL

students do not have a clue what they are reading” (Katie, p. 10). She clarifies, “They might be able to get the basic theme, but [not] the depth of certain characters. They did not know what they were doing, because there were many, many words” (Katie, p. 10). She claims that the workshops aimed at addressing the needs of English Language Learners need to emphasize more than vocabulary:

I found that we have had some workshops on that at school and again vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary is what we’re told over and over and over again but...as you’re teaching a classroom, because I’m not in their situation sometimes I do not even think to ask - stop and ask them about a vocabulary word because I know it, half the kids know it, and I guess you assume, so that’s very... I found it is difficult because truly, if they understood exactly what I was saying, they would be able to learn more math, more concrete [ideas]. I can show example and examples and examples. I feel like they can understand that. (Katie, p. 10)

Katie is also concerned about students’ ability to do well on tests:

The hardest part for them is in reading these everyday stories, and that’s what they do on the test, you have to read the story, you have to answer the question as well...you cannot, you do not understand the question if you do not understand the vocabulary, that I think is their downfall. (Katie, p. 10)

As Julie articulated earlier, teaching to the test has impacted teachers’ ability to use their creative thinking, by imposing methods that prepared students for multiple-choice tests, when teachers could have used other ways to teach.

Also, both Julie and Kathy both thought that strategies teachers used in the past are not being used currently, but they do use them. Katie, for example, said:

I must say that as a reading teacher I have been told hundreds of times that by the time they are in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they do not need to read together, they need to read on their own, they need to read in small groups, yada yada yada...(Katie, p. 13)

Katie countered reading-instruction advice she believed was erroneous:

If I said, "Let us do popcorn reading," they absolutely loved it. We read as a group, as soon as you finished, you said popcorn, you called on, if you're a girl you called on a boy, they read. They loved it and then I could, each time I could explain as we're reading: What happened? Why did they do this? What do you think is going to happen next? Good old fashioned [reading instruction] which many, many teachers, professors tell you do not do. I did it. (Katie, p. 13)

Julie draws on diverse students' cultural affiliations and advocates the use of stories.

A reader who can read a textbook or a test or, or another...whatever they're, they're given in school. And so by starting with the story, I'm doing a reading activity that again is not threatening, gets people engaged. It tells the non-reader, "Oh I can read." I read that story. "Oh I can do that thinking." "I figured that out." "I answered that question." "I remembered who said what in that story." It gives everybody some success in a classroom. (Julie, p. 10)

Julie's attitude and dispositions toward students' reading was one of problem solving. She dedicated her career to helping struggling readers with reading and study skills, and teachers with the teaching of reading. As a reaction to what she sees as an ineffective approach to reading, she developed after-school programs and workshops where she could work with struggling students and teachers:

We do not do a very good job of secondary reading, which is why I stayed in secondary



reading my whole career. I could see what was happening; it was not being taught. And I know that there was a better way to teach reading than that, what being given to secondary reading teachers. And so I developed my own materials. (Julie, II, p. 11)

Kathy would very much like to help ELLs do better in school, and she always encouraged them to get an education. On the other hand, she did not have the answers and sometimes felt helpless (Kathy, p. 17). Thus, Katie and Julie are both concerned about their students' lack of reading skills. Julie benefitted from more training and empowerment to change the way she taught reading, by creating reading and study skills materials through which to empower students to own their brain and realize "how easy it is" to read, study, and take tests.

Given these challenges for teachers and students, how are students supposed to achieve success in the classroom? According to culturally responsive pedagogy practices, it is recommended that teachers learn how to help students by make accommodations to bridge the gap for understanding.

Comparing course-takers to non-course-takers, three course-takers expressed concern about student's struggles with reading and writing, compared to five non-course-takers. In fact, two course-takers thought teachers ill-prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students needed skills, compared to four non-course-takers. One course-taker and one non-course-taker articulated concerns about teaching reading, using specific examples to illustrate where they think that problem lies. However, the non-course-taker developed a solution, whereas the non-course-taker did not. Katie was the only non-course-taker who mentioned ELLs success with hands-on activities, even though she did not recommend this strategy, saying she often follows her instinct and her experiences to implement what she feels works.

The evidence also shows that course-takers make more accommodations for students as

opposed to non-course-takers who either do not mention them, or when they do, may only be at the vocabulary level. In addition, concerns about equity emerged.

### *Concerns about Equity*

Concerns emerged throughout the research study from participants who thought equity issues impeded teachers' ability to teach, as well as students' opportunities to learn. Here, then, participants' report concerns about issues that culturally and linguistically diverse students face while trying to make it our schools.

Teachers, course-takers and non-course-takers alike, expressed concerns about equity in educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. As Beverly noted, students do not have a choice as far as the learning quality or reading skills. Beverly believed that all kids should have the skills, saying "that is a life skill, now days we expect that and it's not an option," adding "the more I can help give opportunities to practice, the better off they are" (Beverly, II, p. 6). Luke, for instance, could not apply effective teaching strategies to overcome students' reading deficiencies. He used diversity training from corporate employment to guide his reading instruction, which seemed not to work (Luke, p. 10). Though he may have studied teaching diverse students, "I did not absorb it. I just did not absorb it, because I did not have an application right in front of me. I do not remember that at all about language..." (Luke, p. 13).

Jazzy and Luke had concern about their district's lack of expectations for diverse students' learning, because these teachers lacked preparation to meet students' needs (Luke, p. 12 ; Jazzy, p.15). Similarly, Jazzy felt the district did not address Latinos/as' issues. She found the expectations for Latinos low, saying it seemed the kids do whatever they want and "there is no involvement from the parents, because they have no money and no position" (Jazzy, p. 15). Therefore, parents do speak out, and she wondered if anyone would listen to them. Teachers

lacked skills necessary for teacher-parent communication, and also were not competent in reaching out to parents to work together resolving issues. Lack of skill communicating with parents worked against resolving behavior issues, for instance:

They were very upset of course, because that's being disruptive in the classroom. So how does the principal handle that? Well...they call the parents. And here we go again with the two different cultures. They'll call the parents and their parents stop [by the school], only to have teachers or administrators hollering at the parent. They're not going to get any support [this way], because they do not know how to talk to the parent. They have this thing that they think they're better. So they're talking to the parent in a tone that is up here, where they're saying your kid is doing this and this, and he's disrupting my class; they're angry. Well the parent's going to just react. (Jazzy, p. 18)

The lack or resolution of the problem seemed expected from such a combative social exchange, as well as revealed that school personnel had little or no knowledge about how to communicate with parents, relationships necessarily steeped in cultural differences, and over-shadowed by the teacher's and administrator's attitude of superiority.

In fact, ethnocentrism in administration concerned both Jazzy and Julie. Two participants from the same school district, Jazzy, a non-course-taker, and Julie, a course-taker, noted that professional development only focused on Black and White issues, which left a large array of cultural differences unexamined. Similarly, Jazzy also addressed this challenge in her teaching, saying, "I never really remember having anything that has dealt with Spanish-speaking children. Uhm-uhm [no, no]. It was Black or White." (Jazzy, p. 10). Additional ethnocentric attitudes emerged when the district became diverse and changed its focus to "grade level expectations" (Grace, p.14). The focus of education became what they called "developmental mode" aimed at

making students comfortable in an educational setting, instead of being grounded in academic success and high expectations. In this asked period, a respected teacher, one the administration thought could make a difference, became principal. Though she accepted the challenge to reform a school, the first thing she did was send non-English-speakers to another school, instead of addressing the needs of all students. Thus, her solution eliminated non-English-speakers and focus on educating youth who could already speak English. “Her idea was to focus on school environment, intervention, through consistency, respect, security, acceptance, culture, but not language, that is, foreign language” (Grace, p. 13; 15). For students who came from Africa, “she would not take them; she would send them to a bilingual school” (Grace, p. 13). In an ironic moment in the process to deal with the demographic changes, students lost International Day, the cultural celebration that the kids enjoyed before the school became diverse. “Not only did it get discontinued, the school closed down. It closed the school down. That, group of young people that had come from the inner city...if, if it be known, it shut the school down. Because they could not..., they could not control the children” (Grace, p. 7).

Ultimately, school districts criticized teachers who set high expectations for diverse students. For instance, Jazzy held high expectations for her students, but instead of praise or respect, she found it difficult to dealing with administration. On one occasion, one of Jazzy’s girls wore shorts and Jazzy told her “You cannot wear shorts in here, you are not going to do that,” and they [staff] looked at her and asked her “How are you going to tell her no?” She answered, “I can tell her not! I’m preparing her for her future!” (Jazzy, p. 13). Her administrators told her she could not tell her kids how to do their hygiene. She adds:

They said that it was illegal. I said, “I do not care.” This is how crazy it gets. You cannot tell them that they have to be clean? How [are] you gonna’ get them to work? Are we

preparing our kids for the future? So, anyway, I deal with that kind of foolishness. So I did what I was going to do. And they had to deal with me. So...they left me alone.

(Jazzy, p.13)

Well-prepared teachers understood that high expectations for all students are a priority. They understood how to use good teaching strategies, even when bound by standards, which they report limit their creativity. They are clear about the role they play in student learning and, if they have concerns about equity issues, they did not feel hopeless, but tried to resolve them.

#### SUMMARY

Thus, in small seemingly inconsequential ways and larger more overt moves, schools, and some teachers, sent mixed messages to diverse students about their fit with schooling. The predominant approach proved to be assimilationist, with diverse students expected to adapt to prevailing ways of life that seemed to provide little respect for diverse students' roots. In troubling findings, lack of district and teacher understandings about diverse students led to social interactions with parents filled with conflict and disrespect, diminished the quality of educational opportunities provided to diverse students, and led to considering diverse students a threat to order. Yet, course-takers and an occasional non-course-taker (who depended on deep lived experiences related to oppression) seemed to have somewhat better skills for responding to the needs of diverse students, a topic that will be further developed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6:

### TEACHERS' DISPOSITIONS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

In addition to their academic and other preparation for teaching and issues related to schooling for diverse students, findings encompassed teachers' dispositions toward, and cultural awareness about, culturally and linguistically diverse students. As has been the case in Chapter 5, teachers demonstrated varying attitudes toward parents and language maintenance. Differences existed between course-takers and non-course-takers with respect to teacher talk about diverse students, attitudes about students, views on schooling, approaches to teaching reading, and teachers' sense of deficits that diverse students held. While some teacher participants were aware of their own privilege relative to that of their diverse students and of differences in socioeconomic circumstances, only some teacher participants used these understandings in their teaching. Overall, teacher participants' cultural awareness varied dramatically, and this reduced the use of culturally relevant pedagogies by these teachers.

#### TEACHERS' DISPOSITIONS TOWARD SCHOOLING DIVERSE STUDENTS

Teachers' dispositions toward schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse student came in the way they talked about changing demographics, approaches to differences, students and their parents, and language maintenance. Understanding teachers' dispositions begins with the way teachers described students and families in the context of changing demographics. Participants' profiles for diverse students' and families' in changing demographics provided a context for teaching and learning.

#### *The Context of Changing Demographics*

Teachers' dispositions toward schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse student emerged in the way they talked about students, parents, language maintenance, schooling, goals

for education, and strategies.

When speaking of demographics, course-takers and non-course-takers talked about having predominantly African American, Latino, and Caucasian students, with an increase of Hispanic student in recent years (Luke, p. 6). Katie worked welcoming a community of Vietnamese and Hispanic students, in a class she considered a little United Nations (Katie, p. 1). Here, students know two languages and are proud of their heritage (Katie, 4-5). Grace had children from other countries (Grace, p. 2). Course-taker Alice said she had a pretty good blend of African American, Hispanic and Caucasian, Vietnamese students, and also included gay and lesbian as well as various academic abilities a mixture of students who were not at grade level as well as students who exceeded grade level. Being at the alternative school, her school catered to a lot of students with behavior problems (Alice, p. 3). In order to understand culturally diverse students it is important to become aware of struggles they face while in school. Participants spoke of challenges in reading and of socioeconomics, which may affect students' emotional state.

Course-takers and non-course-takers mentioned struggles with reading. Julie and Alice thought there were issues with reading and writing (Alice, p. 2; Julie, II, p. 2). Alice said students had a negative attitude toward reading and writing, and thought reading was useless (Alice, p. 2). They thought they could not write (Alice, p. 2). Julie said students do not know how to engaged in it or get themselves interested, and they read, but they do not read well enough (Julie, II, p. 2).

Non-course-takers, (Grace, Luke, Joy, Jazzy and Katie) said reading was a problem for students at different levels. Grace most 5<sup>th</sup> graders could not read, (Grace, p.2). Luke also said students struggled with skill, and did not know how to read (Luke, p.19). Katie said when students read, they do not have a clue about the context of what they read (Katie, p.). Joy said

they struggle with language and writing (Joy, 1-3).

Non-course-takers Joy and Katie attributed the reading problem to the fact they are limited in their experiences. Non-course-takers, Joy and Katie said some students have limited experiences. She said sometime is it hard for them to make personal connections with the character (Joy, 1-3). Katie said students need prior experience, and activities, such as going to the lake to understand the words “sand dune” (Katie, p. 9). Joy reported that they have little frame of reference about the context of the story (depression, pre-World War II), and sometimes would say, “I am not anything like this character.” She also students have difficulty with visualization, “taking word off page and creating a picture in their mind – those kids really struggle more than others that can kind of picture it in their mind” (Joy II, p1-3). Luke said that kids act out as a result of not knowing skills (Luke, p. 19). Besides reading, course-taker Alice said students who are “diverse in every way,” (p. 3), open and needy, .dealt not only with academic issues, but emotional issues as well. She added that many had experienced a lot of pain or loss (Alice, p. 3).

Non-course-takers Joy and Eleanor described students in both positive and negative terms. Joy said they are visual, creative, athletic and active with their language. They love to listen to music through videos, the library and they like stories. However, they are insecure and reluctant, and therefore, they repeatedly ask for directions, probably because they do not want to make mistakes. Some of them need reassurance, or a little bit of encouragement. Sometimes they do not listen (Joy, II, p. 3). Grace said there were children who had no stimuli in the home (Grace, p. 2). Jazzy said that kids experienced “all kinds of abuse, and some traditional discipline methods such as like time out would not work for them because they already had experience the worst that anybody could possible imagine (Jazzy p. 1, 2). Eleanor seemed disappointed when



she said that kids today have really changed. “They want it on a silver platter. Just give me the ‘A’. They do not want to learn anything” (Eleanor, p. 16).

Socioeconomics was a concern for parents who often could not provide students with the support they needed in school. Non-course-taker Katie thought parents were dealing with survival. Often parents would take the position: “Teaching is your job; I am trying to put food on the table” and also, “I am doing the best I can, I do not know how to help my child do this” (Katie p. 14). In spite of challenges, teachers demonstrated a positive attitude toward students.

#### *Ways Teachers Approach Differences*

Asking teachers to talk about their dispositions toward culturally and linguistically diverse students elicited interesting responses. I found attitudes that teachers from both groups demonstrated toward students to be mostly positive. For example, Katie and Lenora made a point of saying that they really enjoyed the diversity in their classes. Katie enjoyed teaching in a community who welcomes Vietnamese, Hispanic, and others. She says “I loved my classrooms because it was like a little United Nations classroom and I always treasured that” (Katie, p. 4). Lenora said the best year she had was the one where she had students that represented so many different cultures, and it was the most enjoyable year. She said, “That was the most fun I had” (Lenora, p. 15).

Because of their caring, acceptance, desire to impact children course-takers and non-takers alike entered teaching. Alice talks about her students with a positive attitude, even though she acknowledged the challenges. “I like teenagers, I like adolescence; they invigorate me, they are funny; they are challenging and moldable; they can be influenced and impacted; I can have an impact on them” (Alice, p. 2). She benefited from exposure to diversity she experienced where she grew up. Having grown up in [a working-class highly diverse, medium sized

community], she was surrounded by all races, while attending a racially balanced school. She expressed no discomfort in a diverse setting (Alice, p.3), though sometimes specific students with emotional problems, who may have violent behaviors, gave her pause, but not a specific [racial or ethnic group (Alice, p. 3).

Making a difference was one of reasons Eleanor pursued teaching, and these drew on experiences while student teaching in Guatemala:

In the morning, they would have a...big Hispanic influence down there are the fountains from Spain, and the kids at seven o'clock in the morning, they would be splashing and playing, we thought in these fountains...no, that's how they cleaned up for the day. So... it opened my eyes...to the depravations we have in the world...it opened my eyes to how fortunate I was, and I wanted to do something... (Eleanor, p. 14)

Eleanor felt that giving money would not have as much impact on the kids as teaching:

Well, these kids would walk around too and asked for money. On top of "por favor"...What is a penny going to do to for them? You know, no matter how many pennies you gave those kids, it was not going to impact whatsoever. And that is another reason I stayed in education for as long as I did, I wanted to make a difference somehow to as many kids as I possibly could. (Eleanor, p. 14)

Luke also expressed the desire to impact students when he decided to become a teacher:

I think it was something I was interested in earlier on working with kids as a coach, as a referee. It was something I enjoyed so I thought to teach would give me more of that type of interaction with kids; a chance to impact them and influence them.. (Luke, p. 2)

Nonetheless some teachers took a colorblind approach in their teaching and ultimately as if there were no diversity. For instance, spoke about students as "just people," signaling a

pressure sameness, saying “I just learned after a while, they are just people, they are all kids” (Eleanor, p.13). Consistent with the effort to overlook differences, two other teachers, (Katie and Joy) claimed that students from current generation are, in fact colorblind, and therefore love and respect each other:

I think that part of what is going on is that the kids are learning to see, they do not see the barriers of skin color, of cultures. In the classroom that I have had in the past six years, they are children who love and respect each other; they do not see that barrier... (Katie, II, p.12)

Eleanor echoed this sentiment, saying, “kids see each other as people, they do not have to go through the learning process that she did” (p. 13), about planning for orientation at the beginning of the school year:

And it was not that we forced them together. Kids love to play. You make settings like that, and it does not matter what group they were in. And I think more and more kids today are colorblind. You know, they see each other as people, they do not have to go through the learning process that I did... (Eleanor, p. 13)

Joy inferred a similar view, saying that it took her a lot of years to learn that the important thing was not what I get done on her list, or the learning process, but rather that kids need to like and have success with learning, and that teaching needs to be more child focused. She added: “I do not know if it is particular to any particular way of life – everyone needs to feel valued. Everyone is good at something – we can help each other” (Joy, p. 9).

Eleanor, who emphasized the sameness of students, and their care for one another expressed frustrations with today’s kids, not knowing “A lot of these kids not knowing these interactional skills, you have to teach them kindness, elsewhere: school has become more and

more...manners” (Eleanor, p.13), adding”:

In the last year I would say discipline...support...attitudes. And as far as wanting to learn wanting to be there and having to be there. Kids today, they’ve really changed. And they are missing so much. They want it on a silver platter. Give me the “A,” I do not want to learn anything, just give me the “A,” That’s too bad, they do not know what they are missing out on... (Eleanor, p.16)

Beverly and Lenora expressed their appreciation of students, by using their racial and ethnic affiliations as resources in the classroom (Beverly, p.1; Lenora, p. 2). Lenora went beyond most participants by not only using them as resources, but also planning the curriculum based on cultures of students in the classroom. As she put it: “I would base my lesson plans on the background of the kids so they could relate in their own culture to what we were studying” (Lenora, p. 2). Julie said her appreciation of cultures was something that developed:

In diversity education, I learned to appreciate different cultures, and there were presentations in the class where people took a particular cultural group and presented information about that culture, did deep research and presentation. (Julie, p. 5)

But not all teacher participants used these strategies or understood diverse students’ as capable learners. Denise, a course-taker, seemed sympathetic to the hard work of ELLs. However, when she spoke about putting herself in students’ shoes as a way to understand what it might be like learning English, she characterized learning English as “uncomfortable and confusing,” which seemed to underestimate students’ capabilities, a deficit view. Also, she seemed unable to deploy research demonstrating the brain’s capacity to learn several languages simultaneously, she commented about how difficult it must be to go home to a Bosnian speaking household, and do that for 12-14 hours, then go to school and deal with levels 1, 2, 3, 4, saying “I

can only imagine...I think it's got to be exhausting" (Denise, p. 10). Thus, her sense of students' hard work did not seem to be related to a sense of them as capable learners, but as people "confused" and "exhausted," conclusions based on preconceived notions about language learners, not research.

In a similar fashion, research participants held divergent attitudes toward families of English-language learners (ELLs). Some participants thought of parents as resources (such as incorporating ethnic foods and music into special events), while others considered parents part of the problem (such as in interactions with parents about student behaviors). In the main, participants' responses about schooling diverse students intertwined learning English with maintenance of a home language.

#### *Attitude toward Language Maintenance*

Differing views on maintenance of a home language emerged from teacher participants' talk about diverse students. First, many of the participants supported maintenance of students' home language (Katie, p. 5; Joy, p.11). Katie thought ELLs should not only learn English, but also keep their home language because it places them at an advantage in the job market (Katie, p. 5). Katie taught a multicultural unit, because "that's how I tried to encourage that diversity and to keep them so proud of who they are and keep that as part of their, you know, do not give it up – do not give it up, kids, no matter what" (Katie, p. 5). Actively helping students maintain their language was a different issue.

#### *Teachers Accommodations for English Language Learners*

Accommodations for ELL is a common term in culturally responsive pedagogy, which aims to help students by bridging the gap between their first and second language and culture, as expressed by Beverly: "It's finding ways to create that bridge so that there is understanding".

Four course-takers made accommodations to help linguistically diverse students at various levels, as seen in Chapter 5. One course taker, Denise, and one non-course taker, Joy, talked about accommodations at the vocabulary level. Joy said in order to help English Language Learners in her lesson she could “write those words down there for them and then once they have it written down, you know then they can make those into sentences and things like that” (Joy, p. 11). Other non-course takers didn’t talk about accommodations, except for Katie, who said her students did very well with the hands-on approach in projects as well as the cooperative reading activities, and Katie certainly seemed open to learning more about these strategies, and most likely would have done more if she had gained more knowledge, especially in helping students maintain their native language, which she felt strongly about.

Language maintenance proved a complex issue. One would hope that course-takers demonstrated attitudes and dispositions about language maintenance supported by research and reflections about culturally diverse students and families, something that received attention in ED-754. But, as the following comparison of Beverly and Denise illustrates, deeply held implicit knowledge about language maintenance underpinned teacher practices.

Consider commonalities between Beverly and Denise, course-takers with additional multicultural education, who both taught Language Arts and have ELL learners in their classes. But, Denise spoke against language maintenance, when she discussed what she learned in a multicultural education course. [Part of what I learned in the course was] “adapting assessments for your ELL learner, and then within there was a part or a piece of, the parent the parent component, getting them to buy into the importance of trying to use the English at home” (Denise, p. 7). Beverly, however, thought that to help kids learn teachers need to consider that students have potential, and that teachers should respect their language and language

maintenance (Beverly, p. 7). Though Denise recognized the lack of diversity in teaching staff and would “like to see a more diverse staff” (Denise, p.10), she differed from Beverly’s view on language maintenance: ‘I think it should be complete English immersion. I do not care if you are eleven or seven, you’re all together and you are just focused on reading and writing. Just focused. English” (Denise, p. 10).

But, Beverly not only believed having two languages would prove better than one, she saw her goal for students, as well as her role as a teacher, encompassing helping them accomplish these goals:

What I want in the long run is that the children in my classroom are fluent in English, but also fluent in their native language. I do not think it should be a trade off. I feel that ah...having two languages is better than one, and I’ve often, you now, I’ve often said that to my own children. You can do many more things if you have two languages. You also have two cultures and two histories. Hum...I think it helps you understand yourself better. (Beverly, p. 14)

Denise, however, limited what she incorporated, which diminished what ELLs bring to the table:

I find that my parents of ELLs are very respectful – want what is best for their children. But, at the same time if they are ELLs, I can only do so much; especially if they are going home and only being allowed to speak that native language. You know, and then that learning stops in my opinion. (Denise, p. 11)

Thus, two course-takers assumed different positions home-language maintenance for English-language learners. And, taking different views on language maintenance impacted the services schools provided to ELLs. Not surprisingly, Denise favored reduced services and moving quickly into mainstream classrooms:

I really like, the Woodcock, and I also like the ELPA [ways to assess progress learning English]. I think those are two great testing measures to look at how a child is progressing; especially on the ELPA. But I mean using that as a tool, and then I think once you do hit a level three or a four, then, try to put them into a classroom. (Denise, p. 11)

Beverly, on the other hand, believed that in order to be effective, teachers need to recognize possible negative results of throwing them into a classroom with the English-only, sink-or-swim approach (Beverly, p. 7):

Really those little kids, they are going to grow up, and they're going to have jobs, so they need to become what they want to be, instead of having limits ah...that they cannot overcome because ah... they got discouraged or they decided that it's too much trouble. I think of all the potential that we have in our country and I do not know, I'll be the old generation pretty soon, and I want the next generation to do be able to do ah, whatever they want do and be whatever they want to be, and I want to be part of helping, instead of part of the difficulty. (Beverly, p. 7)

Despite these comments, Denise eventually admitted not being clear about language maintenance, saying: "I am so mixed up about that" (Denise, p. 12). This remains a complex issue worthy of further study to understand why course-takers have opposing views on culturally and linguistically diverse students.

#### DIFFERENCES IN TEACHERS' DISPOSITIONS TOWARD DIVERSE STUDENTS

In this section I highlight noteworthy differences between course-takers and non-takers' dispositions toward schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse students. I begin with what they said about students, parents of EEL, goals, ways to make connections, and strategies.



Additionally, I report various problems and concerns participants shared about education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. (See the end of this section for discussion on this topic). Let us begin with the way participants talk about students and differences.

### *Differences in Teacher Talk about Students*

Participants talked about students in terms of reading, emotional issues, and behavior problems. Three participants talked about reading. Here, it is noteworthy that two non-course-takers (Katie and Joy) found culturally and linguistically diverse students “limited in their experiences,” while course-taker Julie believed students’ experiences should not impact their ability to learn to read. Instead, according to Julie, the discussion should be about whether students’ *can* read the text and what reading methods are appropriate to engage students to learn to read, while they are reading to learn.

Teachers have different approaches when talking about diversity. Course-takers and non-course-takers talked about students’ diversity in varying ways. When speaking of diversity, it became clear that some teachers were reluctant to recognize diversity, and took a colorblind approach. Some teachers talked about students in general, while others spoke about culturally and linguistically diverse students. One of five course-takers (Denise) attempted to teach students not to see race. Four others (Beverly, Julie, Lenora, and Alice) did not mention race, but suggested taking a pluralist approach by recognizing and honoring cultural differences. As for non-course-takers, three out of six non-course-takers (Eleanor, Katie, and Joy) thought they differences, and either mentioned or inferred using a colorblind approach. Luke, a non-course-taker who pursued diversity training on his own, recognized that teachers need to appreciate differences among students. According to Luke, teachers need to understand differences. In fact, Luke demonstrated insights similar to a course-taker, especially his sense that teachers need to

recognize diversity and build relationships with students before pursuing educational objectives.

Luke, a non-course-taker, articulated the belief that teachers need to recognize diversity before establishing educational objectives:

To me all of that hopefully would be at some point coming in whether it's that class or a different class. But something that introduced you to all those different types of things. And then trying to get those specifics, for example, some cultures do not like to make eye contact, or some cultures do not like to speak out in front of the whole class and it's important for a teacher to know that wow, okay, not every students is going to want to give me that kind of feedback that I might expect based on my culture or my background.

(Luke, p.10)

One course-taker viewed students with a deficit view toward prior experience, seeing this as something that prevented them from connecting to curriculum material. Another course-taker found that when students are taught to read the materials, all their experiences are valuable. Additionally, two course-takers valued students' prior experience as they used curriculum materials from their ethnic group, or experiences. Therefore, for the most part, course-takers recognized and valued diversity to a greater extent than non-course-takers.

#### *Differences in Attitude toward Students*

No differences existed between course-takers and non-takers in their attitudes toward students. All of the participants showed interest in helping students learn and making an impact in students' lives, with all trying to do what they thought would be in each students' best interest. Three out of five course-takers (Beverly, Lenora, and Julie) and Katie, a non-course-taker, mentioned enjoying and appreciating diverse students. Katie especially enjoyed her class that looked like the United Nations. Alice, a course-taker, and non-course-takers Luke and Eleanor

wanted to make an impact on their students. Luke invested in learning about diversity, and he relied on what he learned to help him in the classroom. Based on the overall attitudes demonstrated in various forms, leads to the conclusion that all participants cared about the well-being and learning of students, and did their best to ensure their academic success. However, teachers' dispositions about schooling varied for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

#### *Differences in Teachers' Views on Schooling for Diverse Students*

Significant differences existed in the way participants defined schooling for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Differences existed between course-takers and non-course-takers in the way they defined goals and deployed ideologies, ideologies which impacted teaching practices. Additional differences existed between course-takers and non-course-takers in their level of awareness, knowledge, and application of practices consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy.

Four out of five course-takers (Beverly, Julie, Lenora, and Alice) either explicitly opposed assimilation or used teaching practices consistent with opposing assimilation. Their responses and lessons demonstrated awareness, knowledge, and application of teaching practices consistent with culturally responsive pedagogy. All four of these participants reported successful outcomes in reaching their objectives in their lessons.

Non-course-takers Grace and Joy, on the other hand, reflected an assimilation ideology about education for culturally and linguistically diverse students, while Katie and Eleanor made an effort toward multicultural teaching in Social Studies units, intending to make their students proud of their culture. Luke and Jazzy felt they lacked tools needed to teach diverse students, though Jazzy also reported success in her lessons.

Though all participants had honorable goals and creative strategies in their lessons, Katie

and Eleanor seemed to have more success making their students proud. However, they reported insufficient connections to academic skills needed to make a long-term impact. One might argue that making students proud of their culture proves inadequate to ensuring academic success.

Course-takers demonstrated awareness of issues impacting culturally and linguistically diverse students, such as struggles with reading and writing, curriculum exclusion, ethnocentrism in professional development, low expectations, and socioeconomic impact on learning. Their understandings of students proved a significant part of the scaffolding process needed to move toward achieving academic success. This was true for course-takers, such as Beverly who helped students overcome language difficulties, Julie who wanted to overcome reading and study skills difficulties, and Alice who taught students empathy and empowered them to use language as power and Lenora who built the curriculum based on students' backgrounds, and using their cultural attributes to teach writing. Denise sent mixed messages in her attitudes toward practices for ELLS, but managed to show 95% success rate with homework for her class daily (Denise, II, p. 4).

#### *Differences in the Teaching of Reading*

Difference existed in reading teaching practices between course-takers and non-course-takers. Two participants illustrated a significance difference teaching practice between course-takers and non-course-takers. For example, though Julie, a course-taker and Katie, a non-course-taker identified similar issues with the teaching of reading strategies that impact English-language learners, Katie believed EELs read without knowing context. According to Katie, devoting time vocabulary led students to become good decoders, without knowing the context of a text. Julie, however, recalled her own experiences when an overly positive understanding of her reading ability meant being pushed ahead before she was ready, and ultimately missing

details needed for reading and writing. The two participants differed in feeling empowered to resolve difficult issues related to the impact on reading for diverse students. Katie reported feeling helpless when she did not have the answers, while Julie not only identified problems, but tried to solve them by developing her own materials to overcome reading difficulties.

As for non-course-takers, two (Grace and Joy) expressed assimilation ideology, which did not recognize, honor, or celebrate differences. Other non-course-takers (Katie and Eleanor) demonstrated awareness of some problems for schooling of diverse students, such as reading comprehension from a lack of prior experience and ineffective reading methods (Katie) and exclusion of ethnic groups in the curriculum (Eleanor). However, neither mentioned their own solutions to resolve such problems. Katie felt hopeless and had no answer. Eleanor had ideas of how to make the curriculum more inclusive, but she lacked the time or energy to do it. Both taught a lesson that focused on celebration level of culture, but neither demonstrated knowledge of how to take this project to the next level. Two other course-takers (Luke and Jazzy) were unable to articulate this knowledge. Differing in substantive understanding about multicultural education, and guided by different ideological understandings, teacher participants differed in their understandings of diverse students' needs.

#### *Differences in Needs in Diverse Students*

Throughout the interviews participants expressed concerns about deficits or challenges in teaching diverse students. Table 8 compares course-takers' and non-course-takers' responses about their concerns and their desires, and when available actions addressing or solving problems. Differences exist when examining participants' concerns compared to their ability or initiative to take action to address perceived concerns. First, consider their efforts to overcome curriculum limitations. Two course-takers (Alice and Lenora) used multicultural resources in

their classroom. Non-course-takers Eleanor and Luke did little to overcome such limitations.

Eleanor, a non-course-taker had ideas about ways to make the curriculum more inclusive – by

Table 8. Actions Taken to Address Concerns about Diverse Students

CT	Concern	Reaction	NCT	Concern	Reaction
Beverly *	Concerns about effects of <i>English Only</i> approach on ELLs	Wants to be part of the solution. Helps students overcome language barriers so they can go to college.	Joy	Students struggle with language and writing.	Uses good teaching strategies, but no mention of accommodations. Helps students with vocabulary
Lenora *	Her culture was ignored under assimilation ideology.	Planned curriculum based on background of the students.	Grace	Students moved around and were subject to many changes.	Built on her strengths and provided activities to maintain stability for them.
Julie *	Assumptions about students reading ability and ineffective reading methods	Creates her own reading and study skills methods Designs a more fair reading inventory for visual learners	Katie	Students' basic needs need to be met before they learn (p. 14). Flaws in reading methods and students' lack of reading comprehension	Brings food for families in need. Feels hopeless, does not have the answer to the reading problem.
Alice *	Curriculum written from White males perspective	Developed lessons using Multicultural Literature as a way to teach students how to overcome become empowered to speak out and use language to tell their story. Human experience becomes the curriculum	Eleanor	Curriculum written from White males perspective and not relevant to students today	Worked countless hours on curriculum standards. She is proud of the results. She had many ideas on how to make the curriculum inclusive but did not have the energy or time to make changes
Denise	Resents services to ELLs; Assumes parents of ELLs do not want to learn English; Blames parents of ELL for not helping school make AYP	Prepares vocabulary cards for ELLs; Let us parents of ELLs borrow the Spanish version of the math book so they can help the kids with homework	Luke	Students have nothing that students want	Pursued personal counseling and diversity training; Develops relationship w/ students as a way to create relevance for them
			Jazzy *	Test scores are ridiculous. Students cannot read. Many students did not see the connection between teachers expectations for students behavior comments and grades	Starts to work with students on reflection and action to understand the correlation between the two and many changes their grades

bringing in more information about the contributions of different ethnic groups, for instance – to overcome these deficits, but reported lacking the energy to change (Eleanor, p. 14). Katie recognized that “[students’] needs need to be fulfilled before they can learn,” but she took this to mean such things as providing food from time to time, not recognizing learning needs.

As shown in Table 8, course takers and non-course-takers had different abilities to take action on problems they perceived impeded the education of diverse students. Participants marked with an asterisk not only mentioned a concern (four course-takers out of the five), but also acted upon those concerns to improve the education of diverse students.

Table 9. Teacher’s Level of Awareness Knowledge and Application

PARTICIPANTS	Course-Takers					Non-Course-Takers					
	Bev	Jul	Len	Ali	Den	Kat	Ele	Luk	Joy	Gra	Jaz
Levels of preparation in Education for CLDS											
Awareness of privilege through cultural affiliations			YES	YES							YES
Awareness of privilege due to socio-economic differences					YES	YES	YES	YES			
Awareness of social class differences		YES		YES			YES	YES	YES	YES	
Shows compassion toward poor students						YES	YES	YES			
Awareness of ethnic differences	YES					YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Awareness of students cultural differences	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Awareness of familial differences	YES	YES	YES	YES					YES	YES	YES
Awareness of language difference	YES	YES	YES	YES					YES		
Application of language learning at vocabulary level	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Application of language learning beyond vocabulary	YES	YES	YES	YES							
Knowledge of cultural differences	YES	YES	YES	YES					YES		
Knowledge of ELL research about language learning	YES		YES	YES							
Application of research about cultural and language teaching	YES		YES	YES							

Thus, differences existed in the way course-takers and non-course-takers expressed concerns about the education of diverse students and about their ability or willingness to overcome them (Table 9). In fact, differences existed across participants in the lessons and strategies used to ensure success for all students.

Also, difference existed between course-takers and non-course-takers in their use of active learning. Course-takers (Beverly, Lenora, Julie, Alice and Denise) designed lessons through teaching practices ensuring that students actively engaged in learning. Many also provided students social interaction to promote discussion and problem solving. Lenora thought her lesson succeeded, because students at that age love to dance. Lenora thought students needed interaction, opportunities to help each other, and problem solve in a cooperative-learning environment. Julie found important skills derived from social interaction and Alice's literature circles offer many opportunities for students to be engaged in active learning.

Thus, important differences existed between the ways teachers talked about students, teachers' attitudes toward students and their parents', teachers' views on schooling diverse students, the ways teachers taught reading, and teachers' understandings about students' needs. Not surprisingly, these issues relate to teachers' thoughts and reflections about cultural affiliations and diverse students.

#### TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS AND DIVERSE STUDENTS

Teachers' responses about cultural affiliations related to teachers' awareness of their own privilege, as well as encompassed teachers' talk about students' socioeconomic circumstances. Let us begin with teacher awareness of privilege.



*Awareness of Privilege*

Teachers' comments about cultural affiliations reflected different levels of understanding about their students and themselves. For example, some demonstrated awareness of the way they have been privileged, such as via opportunities that included access to education, while others did not. Let us begin with course-takers Alice, Beverly and Julie who had a similar perspective on the concept of privilege. Alice demonstrated awareness of privilege through her cultural affiliations. She reported that her father's position in the church provided access to leadership roles where she practiced teaching, something she always wanted to do. Though she attended a diverse high school, she also attended a Baptist church where she saw many people "like her." Here, in a working-class, highly diverse, medium sized community, most did not have a college background, and seemed disinterested in, or not motivated by, education. Many went to high school knowing they would work in a factory and earn a good wage. She, however, "always really wanted to be a teacher or something and go into college, so I did not feel like I fit in with them very well" (Alice, p. 8). Thus, her church reinforced the pursuit of a college education by providing an opportunity to practice leadership and affirming her goals:

I started teaching pre-school Sunday school, and every time I went into the classroom I came in with boxes of stuff 'cause I, my nature is to be very a very active, to encourage active learning, so props and things for the children, hands on... So it was pretty early that I realized that, that I loved it, that I am a teacher in my heart. (Alice, p. 9)

She reflected on her parents as role models, like her mother, who dropped out in eighth grade due to a serious illness, and her father who went to college, the pastor of her church:

He influenced me too; my father was a writer. He was always writing. He loved big words. He made us read after supper every day. He taught us big words, vocabulary. So

he influenced our family a great deal. (Alice, p. 9)

But, Alice also spoke about being different because an “intact family is one area that would make me different than most of my students, having a Mom and a Dad” (Alice, p. 10).

Beverly articulated her sense of privilege when talking about her mother being the librarian:

Well, and the other thing that helps a lot, I’m a pretty good reader, not to be a bragger or anything, but my Mom was the librarian at our school. And so....from the time I was about ...you know, four, I had really good modeling for reading. And I’ve read this and done this lesson with my sixth graders who were not ESL, and they loved hearing me also (laughs). [I am] a little luckier than probably others who did not have that. (Beverly, II, p. 5)

Julie recalled being influenced by a Peggy McIntosh’s activity (Unpacking the White Backpack) in ED-754. Here, she began to understand that many people left behind, those not exactly like the majority. She thought the class helped her recognize differences among students. She says that she was “exposed to reading materials she had never been exposed to before and that created the ‘sea-change’ in her personal and professional life” (Julie, p. 3).

Lenora’ mother played a role in her awareness of race and color, especially when she looked at herself as an equal to “those kids” that the neighborhood was being taught to fear:

Uh, we moved to an all-white neighborhood when I was about three or four....but there were not any children to play with in the neighborhood except Caucasian children. And we would play nicely but obviously their parents were talking uh...to them about black people or whatever and there would be stereotypes on that. But yet they would not see it when they were dealing with me; we were just kids, and I was playing out front of my

house with two white girls. I remember one's name was Sharon and the other one's name was Marcia. And at this time the neighborhood had begun to get a little diverse just a little bit and there were three black kids coming down the street. And then my two white friends saw them coming and they said, "Oh, we got to hurry up and go home; these blue kids are coming down the street." And they ran home frightened and nervous and I did the same thing because I thought the blue kids were going to get me too. (Laughs).

So I ran into the house and my mother said why did you come in here running like that and why did Marcia and Sharon run back across the street? And I told me mother, I said, "Because the blue kids were coming." She said, "blue kids?" And then she went to the door and she told me to show her, I pointed down the street where they were coming and they were African-American kids. And my mother said, "Well, I have a surprise for you; you're blue too" (Laughs) (Lenora, p. 22).

Jazzy, a non-course-taker, reflected similar cultural affiliations perspectives to course-takers. She talked about having a strong grandmother who ran a restaurant, against all odds, as an African American woman. Her grandmother encouraged education, in case marriage did not work, and expected Jazzy to have education to ensure she could take care of herself. Jazzy said her grandmother was doing her own thing and making her own money:

So I looked at my grandma at five or four or whatever, six or seven. And I go, if my grandma could do this, then I could do this. I do not have to worry because I can make it, because she made it. And she would always say this over and over, "Get an education. You do not wanna be like me." She had six husbands and none of them worked. But she could always take care of herself, and that was her message. You may not be able to have a husband. Or, if you do, what if he's not going to treat you right, because that was her

experience. (Jazzy, p. 22)

Recognizing that her students may not have the role models like her grandmother in their lives, Jazzy demonstrated a sense of privilege:

So she's always pressin' [for me to] get an education, so you can be an independent person. "If he beat you up, you can leave. If he does not treat you right, you can leave."

That was her message. Be able to take care of yourself. So that was one of the things we have that you... [I mean,] these kids and my kids did not have. (Jazzy, p. 22)

Thus, four of five course-takers (Alice, Beverly, Julie and Lenora), but only one non-course-taker (Jazzy) held awareness of privilege in their personal and professional lives. And, teacher participants thought of their students in term of the differential in socioeconomic circumstances.

#### *Lack of Awareness of Privilege*

While course-takers spoke about students' lack of opportunities, which these teachers found in their own lives flowed from their privilege, non-course-takers spoke about socioeconomic circumstances and did not recognize their own privilege. Consider Eleanor, Katie, Joy, and Luke, four non-course-takers, who understood their students as different from themselves based on differences in socioeconomics.

Eleanor's sense of these matters came from a trip to Guatemala:

They [the street urchins] had nowhere else to go, and at night they would pop these [refrigerator boxes] up, and they would...that is where they stayed, that was their safety.

In the morning, they would have a... big Hispanic influence down there are the fountains from Spain, and the kids at seven o'clock in the morning, they would be splashing and playing. (Eleanor, p. 14)

Then, she became aware that they were not just playing, but using fountains for bathing:

These fountains, that's how they cleaned up for the day. So... it opened my eyes to the depravations we have in the world...it opened my eyes to how fortunate I was, and I wanted to do something. (Eleanor, p. 14)

Eleanor's experience with students who were living in poverty continued to influence her while teaching:

We had kids in poverty in our building. We knew who they were. I used to take shoes into school. I had one girl, a sweetheart of a girl, she worked so hard, loved learning. She came to school with...and a bigger girl, she came to school with a sweater, blue sweater every day, that had huge holes on it, and you wondered how is that sweater ever keeping her warm. So I gathered up sweaters and took [them] into her. You know, I wanted to make a difference in kids' lives. Is that my original, where I came from? No, I mean my life and my experiences have changed my cultural point of view, I guess you can say. (Eleanor, p. 14)

Similarly, Katie said, "They do not have the same opportunities as I had growing up....They do not get enough food and they are very hungry by 10 o'clock (Katie, p. 14). And, Luke noted: "I had my food packed," while 90% of his students were on free and reduced lunch (Luke, p. 14). Also, Luke found many students differed "...linguistically, for sure. There was ethnically, like Latino students" (Luke, 16).

Joy also recognized issues of poverty with their students. Joy remembered specifically a lesson from Ruby Payne, whose views teachers as needing skills and intelligence to function in the levels of middle class, high class, and poverty:

What hit me the most [about Payne's message] was that poverty is about survival. The idea of planning for the future is not there – it's about investing in relationships, because

someday you may need those relationships to take care of you. (Joy, p. 13)

Based on these responses, it is evident that course-takers and non-course-takers look at their students in different ways. Four of five course-takers looked at ways that students lacked role models and access in terms of privilege, except for Denise, who said she worked for it. The four inferred they have benefitted from opportunities and cultural affiliations in their lives in ways that their students could not. Three non-course-takers, however, talked about being different from their students socioeconomically, without mentioning the concept of privilege, or if or how their current socioeconomic position might be different due to influences or impacts from role models or access to opportunities through cultural affiliations. Thus, course-takers demonstrated cultural awareness not seen in non-course-takers. Later we will discuss why this is a significant point in teachers awareness of differences and how this perspective impacts teaching practices.

Though teaching effectively is commonly understood as requiring time for reflection on teaching, having time to reflect on pedagogy proves rare in practice. Instead, teachers become immersed in compliance with other expectations: scheduling, standards, and assessments. Thus, I wondered, given the pressures of standards, how participants responded to the challenge of teaching with a cultural vantage point.

#### REFLECTIVE TEACHING: USING A CULTURAL VANTAGE POINT

This section focuses on the ways in which participants used a cultural vantage point, whether made explicit or held as implicit knowledge, as well as its influence on their attitudes, goals and teaching practice. As will become apparent in what follows, unexamined ideological affiliations flowed into the way teachers made sense of their students, enacted teaching, and related to the curriculum. For the most part, non-course-taker teacher participants use assimilationist ideologies to guide practice, while course-taker teacher participants took a more

pluralist view. Only rarely did teacher participants demonstrate praxis in the lessons they demonstrated. Ultimately, though course-takers seemed more aware of cultural affiliations and their impact on diverse students than did non-course-takers, teachers' reflections on teaching from a cultural vantage point

*Assimilation Ideology and Practice*

Reflection on teaching using a cultural vantage point revealed substantive differences between course-takers and non-course-takers. Reflection from a cultural vantage point implies seeing the world from the perspective of the students as well as the mainstream implications of their schooling for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of teaching practices for various communities. Most non-course-takers and one course-taker either did not spend time doing such reflection or held views based on assimilation ideology, while only non-course-taker and three course-takers' reflection with a cultural vantage point tended toward pluralism.

Three participants, (Denise, course-taker, Grace and Jazzy, non-course-takers) said they had few opportunities to reflect on teaching with a cultural vantage point. For Grace, who had many years of experience, it seemed a generational issue: "Ethnic background was, it's not about the ethnic background. It's about your ability. And, can you academically do that work? And that's my job. So, the cultural part is something that in the last few years, is more important, but it was not more important in my teaching career" (Grace, p. 20). Here, Grace explained that cultural issues became a school wide project geared toward recognizing differences in ethnicity, which needed to be learned about and considered, but not in the lesson plans in earlier times (p. 20):

Doing projects in which students had a chance to write about themselves, cultural things they did at their house, what is it like, say at Christmas time, celebrations, and foods...but

with the focus on being from a cultural standpoint, I cannot think of lessons per say versus enhancing it within the lesson. (Grace, p. 20)

She clarified the focus on ability:

The cultural part is something that, in the last few years, is more important, but it was not in my teaching career. And, I am not sure that it should be made ever the major important. It's important that we understand each other, but it's important that we become a melting pot. (Grace, p. 22)

She adds:

I would like to know that, one day if I could come back in three or four generations, I would want to know that your children were as multi-ethnic as I am. (Grace, p. 22)

Grace said her job was to teach how to read and write. In the process of teaching youth from troubled homes, her role as a teacher was to help kids find their strengths and build them up, help the class work as a team, and make sure put-downs were never tolerated. "My job was to teach you how to read, and write, and to get you on the same plane, so that when you're in high school, well I had the distinct honor at fifth grade of being able to submit names to the gifted school" (Grace, p. 22).

Though Joy demonstrated some awareness of struggles diverse students faced in mainstream classes, she nonetheless supported assimilation ideology in practice:

I think now that I've become more aware, in the last few years, my focus is to find that balance between respecting where they come from and what they bring to the classroom, every single day, what their experiences are, what their family is, and [focusing on] functioning basically still in a middle-class, English-speaking world because some of them...you know their ideas are not going to help them be successful in a middle-class



job, you know, or school situations.... (Joy, p. 16)

Thus even though Joy never mentioned “melting pot” or “assimilation” specifically, her overarching goal for diverse students aligned with assimilation.

Joy further explained how students demonstrated conformity to her expectations in her school:

The challenge for them is: Where is the line? Is it worth it? Some of them do not know how to play school. Some kids are good at playing school and being successful, they come to class, play the game, show up, and bring their materials. How much of myself do I give up? Is it worth it? Is it getting me where I need to be? She said some of the kids do not know how to play the game and some can pick on it and they do better. (Joy, p. 16)

The message seemed to be that regardless of their background, kids had to learn the game of school, and that “you gotta’ go along to get along” (Joy, p. 16). Jazzy shared similar perspectives on conforming, though her approach came from different lived experiences.

Conforming to the culture of the majority was something that Jazzy, an African American non-course-taker, understood from experience. She claimed having insufficient time to reflect on the implications of conforming, because of being too busy conforming to middle-class ways of life, saying: “I didn’t have much time to reflect” (Jazzy, p. 20). To her way of thinking, being a members of a minority community in the U.S. meant expecting to conform:

So I would probably say we [members of minority communities] look at their [mainstream] life more than they look at ours, because you have to. You have to survive, so you gotta’ know what they think, and how they do, and how they act. So I would say my life, being what is, I have to [conform], in order to survive. I had to know them, and what to do, and what not to do, and how to be in their system, and I still be myself, but

how to, how to work in their system and do what they want to be done, so I can succeed.

You know, I can be conformed, so, I think this is part of minorities' life in the United States of America. You must know. (Jazzy, p. 20)

Clearly, in her experience conforming proved central to surviving, and she taught her students to play the game of school in her class, to conform, while still holding on to cultural symbols. Ultimately, as had been the case for Joy, Jazzy accepted assimilation and spent little time reflecting on its implications. But, while Joy spent no teaching time helping her students understand these circumstances, Jazzy emphasized to her students the need to conform to society, as well as taught them they had the right to maintain their identity.

Consequently, in response to Joy's challenge by knowing where the line is, Jazzy could see the line clearly, and she made sure she taught her students:

So the kids need to learn how to conform to society. That's okay. They see you getting along with each other. They see you're okay. You're, you're safe and you feel fine and you [are] with all kinds of people. You [are] not mad. You [are] not upset with them. You [are] makin' it. (Jazzy, p. 8)

She demonstrated a willingness to adapt to the environment, but she held on to symbols that help her maintain her own identity, as she explained:

I had a white teacher, said to all of her students, she said, "You know what, I come from the country." She said, "But when I come to the city, I act like I'm in the city. But when I go back to the country I'm me." So that's right. I'll be here and do what you tell me, because for my job sake. But I will not become you, because I like being me. But when I go back home, I'm gonna' be me. (Jazzy, p. 24)

And, she did not cross her line, which she illustrated through a story about criticism she received

while wearing braids, like many of her African American students: “I had a principal tell me that up north, person worked in a library, he was the librarian, and he says, ‘You cannot keep coming here with your hair like that. It’s unnerving to me.’” [She responded:] “I do not care. I like them and I put them in my head. And that’s the way we going to be because, I did 30 years.” What they’re gonna’ say? I’m going to wear my braids” (Jazzy, p. 24). Ultimately, in the context of their teaching jobs, Joy and Jazzy both adopted assimilationist vantage points, but Jazzy also taught her students how to conform without losing themselves, a point I return to later.

### *Pluralist Ideology and Practices*

However, Luke, a non-course-taker, and three course-takers (Lenora, Alice and Julie) diverged from an assimilationist perspective and to varying degrees embraced pluralism. Luke, for example, sought ways to take diversity into account in his courses. He recalled taking the initiative to pursue diversity training outside of education:

Actually, this past year, I had a chance of taking a pretty expensive survey about how well I identify my own cultural background and how well I recognize other people’s cultural backgrounds and the difference between my perception [and what they say they are]. (Luke, p. 16)

This experience gave Luke a sense of himself as capable of dealing with diversity or not. In addition to this survey, Luke referred to personal counseling and being able to take a trip to Scotland for example, where he had the opportunity to “feel the dissonance in that situation and come back and process” (Luke, p.16). Luke said such reflection was ongoing, “to an extent that I am aware of those cultural differences” (Luke, p. 16). As for opportunities, he said:

I’ve had a lot of opportunities and it’s not built into the day, but my mind seems always to be thinking. So, if I’m not reaching a particular student or a particular lesson or class

group is not going well, I'm thinking about that. And as I get new information, whether it's counseling, or a book, or a class.... (Luke, p.16)

Also, Luke attended a workshop dealing with a Ruby Payne book, along with an institute dealing with racism. "Those are probably a couple of the biggest opportunities I've had to reflect on my own cultural affiliations" (Luke, p.16). Though Luke was genuinely interested in learning more about how to meet the needs of students, he continued looking for ways to bridge the gap, and "how to make things relevant" (Luke, p.18). He recalled being in some situations with students that he would have handled differently, had he had the knowledge. Rather than a head-to-head approach, in which he might have been confrontational, he said:

I would probably have a better conversation with a student. Hey, let me talk to you outside for a minute, you know. I do not know where things are happening for you, if you're able to share, if it's too, uh.... I would have it, we would have a much better conversation with student. (Luke, p. 17)

Course-takers (Lenora, Alice and Julie) reflected on teaching and also took a pluralist vantage point, and their responses differ dramatically from non-course-takers Joy and Jazzy. How did course-takers articulate their pedagogy?

Lenora recognized that traditional practices for education for culturally and linguistically diverse students in her school depended on assimilation ideology:

Students were expected to change [their] way of thinking and assimilate to actually Caucasian American cultures, and the Caucasian teacher which [we] have a lot of in this district...did not know anything about the other cultures. That means that students drop their native language, learn English, and lose their native language. (Lenora, p. 14-17)

Schooled where her culture was ignored, Lenora believed assimilation ideology had a negative

effect on students, which led to Lenora becoming “seriously interested” in students’ cultures. In responding to deficiencies in the curriculum, Lenora opposed assimilation, and instead tried to honor all the different cultures through a multicultural research project based on the cultures her students represented. After taking the ED-754 diversity class, she used curriculum materials (lesson plans and cultural analysis questionnaire) she collected from the professor’s and her classmates’ presentations to teach from a multicultural perspective (Lenora, p. 25). For Lenora to honor different cultures was not difficult, because “they’re all right here in the U.S. You do not have to go to that country to run into them” (Lorena II, p.15). Honoring the history of culturally diverse students was also important to Alice who said, “It is important that education honors the history of culturally diverse students, and multicultural literature,” and also to celebrate “their diversity, their uniqueness” and “what we have in common, as a community of learners” (Alice, p. 5).

Alice and Julie demonstrated knowledge and application of reflective teaching. Alice used Paulo Freire’s philosophy as a rationale, as well as a resource, for teaching low-income students:

Because my students are diverse and most come from low-income homes, I have been drawn to the writing of Paulo Freire and Ruby Payne. I want to nudge my students into discontent with their lot in life. I challenge their thinking about justice and inequality. I see teaching writing and reading as a form of empowerment, ideas gain strength and a really, form of power only to the extent that they take concrete shape in the actions of their daily lives. (Alice, p. 12)

Alice said Paulo Freire and Ruby Payne became sources of inspiration, who helped her clarify her ideology for teaching because she became aware that teaching had a much deeper purpose:

My teaching was a justice issue and providing a quality education for diverse students who did not come with all the extras like the suburban school. It started feeling more like a calling, rather than something that I was kind of stuck with. For me it really deepened my passion for working with those kids. (Alice, p. 3)

Alice recalled a turning point in her life and in her teaching when she started to use multicultural literature. “I think it’s important that education honors the history of culturally diverse student and multicultural literature” (Alice, p. 5). She said she become aware of predominance of white men in English course texts and decided to bring in the voices of people traditionally excluded from the curriculum:

I remember at that time, realizing, even more deeply, that most of the literature that we, as English teachers taught was written by white people, mostly men. And I realized why my students resisted that so much, and when I started implementing multicultural lit into the classroom, it opened up literature for my students. (Alice, p. 4)

Alice recalled the use of multicultural literature, as a turning point in her teaching:

More and more I am looking for and finding Hispanic, African American, and Native American leaders who can articulate the struggles of people like my students. I introduce my students to historically powerful communicators, people who were smart enough and brave enough to impact their world...Frederick Douglas with his passion for literacy...Martin Luther King with his passion for equality. In fact, we rarely read the work of White men. (Alice, p. 12)

Alice found using multicultural literature led a disruptive student to pay attention. The student’s academic work completely turned around when she realized the story was about “a brother,” and she suddenly connected with it. Alice started helping students learn about their roots. She

developed activities to do this, like poetry, and experiences they had with someone who had offended them or they thought was racist (Alice, p. 5).

Hum...however, I think every student in the classroom is culturally diverse. I am culturally diverse. And that's something I got out of the class too. Because living in Grand Rapids and coming from a Dutch background, I felt like I did not have culture, I felt that I was just Caucasian. And for me, understanding what a feast was, in my culture and realizing how different that was from my students, it's something that, ah...I became aware of, you know, celebrations, that sort of thing. The way my family celebrates are our culture. Before, I just thought I was American. (Alice, p. 6)

She worried sometimes they would not know Emily Dickinson's words, but hoped these understandings would come if they learned the power of poetry. Resulting from this ideology, Alice articulates a different perspective on the issues of generosity.

Alice did not feel sorry for her students. She did not mention their level of poverty or their material needs. Instead, her teaching practices were consistent with the ideas of Paulo Freire, who encouraged self-transformation:

I want my students to shake free the apathy they are enmeshed in. The generational pressure of looking good, the right tennis shoes, for example, feeling good, the perpetual buzz that keeps them asleep... They would rather pay \$150 for a pair of shoes, than buy books or paying for a college class. (Alice, p. 12)

And, striving for self-transformation for herself and her students had implications for Alice's relationships with her students:

Freire writes about *false generosity* that teaches the poor to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands, rather individuals or entire peoples

need to be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become humans hands which work and working transform the world. (Alice, p. 12)

Thus, Alice's approach contrasted sharply with that of non-course-takers Eleanor and Katie whose expression of a generous spirit toward low-income students meant handouts, helping them with food and clothes. In the main, Alice took a Freirean approach to her teaching, in particular disrupting assimilation and taking a pluralist view that honored all students' cultural affiliations.

Julie expressed a similar need to transform reading teaching and learning. For instance, she thought that the implementation of reading inventories proved unfair to non-readers, because one must know how to read to take them:

My concern was that all of them [reading inventories] ask the student to read questions and then answer them, with words like "sometimes," "never," "always," or "usually." And it's requiring those students to read those questions and read those words. And, someone who's challenged by reading is not going to do well with that assessment because they have to read the words. (Julie, p. 9)

Julie created a reading inventory that helped identify students as "word people" or "picture people," to help her as a teacher determine where best to begin her lesson:

So...by developing this, I said okay, everybody can, can look at a document that's pictures and words at the same time. So there are words for the "word people," and there are pictures for the "picture people." I can see how your brain functions given a very short time to do the work. Fifteen seconds to look is not much when you're not accustomed with fifteen seconds. And then about a minute or so to do the drawing is not enough to worry at it, think about it, think about what you're supposed to do. I'm giving the direction, now go do it. And so it's very direct brain and eye. (Julie, p. 9)



Leveling the playing field was a motivation for Julie, and she created reading and study skills to solve reading problem. She empowered students, by teaching them to own and use their brain to practice reading and study skills. Like Alice, she was careful to choose materials like the story about a turtle, which she chose because she felt it worked for everyone due to the nature of the story that deals with values common to all ages and cultures. Julie's ability to identify flaws in current reading strategies and her sense of overcoming injustice motivated her to dedicate her time designing strategies to overcome injustice in current reading inventories and empower students in reading and study skills. As such her approaches proved pluralist.

Thus, based on participants' responses, it seems reasonable to conclude that a non-course-taker (Luke) and three of five course-takers (Lenora, Julie, and Alice) practiced reflective teaching based on education that is multicultural, reconstructionist, and pluralist, while Beverly (a course-taker) practiced culturally responsive pedagogy (an issue discussed earlier). Only one course-taker was conflicted in her teaching messages about teaching with a cultural vantage point. Three non-course-takers (Grace, Joy and Eleanor) held assimilationist views, which flowed through their teaching. Also, based on teachers' responses, one non-course-taker and four course-takers who held education that is multicultural, reconstructionist, and pluralist views could articulate specific ways in which their teaching practice changed as a result of reflections. However, only two teacher participants demonstrated praxis in the lessons they demonstrated.

### *Demonstrating Praxis*

Participants, four course takers (Beverly, Julie, Lenora, and Alice) and a non-course-taker (Jazzy) demonstrated praxis. Beverly reflected on her preparation and decided to pursue an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) endorsement, because she wanted to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Her ESL endorsement combined her knowledge about culture with

specific research about teaching ELLs. Her practice exemplified culturally responsive pedagogy. Julie corrected a reading problem by designing a reading inventory she thought would be for “word people,” as well as for “picture people.” She also guided her students through a reflective process on their current study skills so they could react as they learned new skills. Lenora thought assimilation ideology had a negative impact on herself and therefore reacted by using materials from ED-754 to design a multicultural lesson. This lesson gave students a way to express their artistic and creative sides, and cultural characteristics, allowing them to learn about diversity and write in a way that would prepare them for college. Alice taught through multicultural literature youth who thought they could not write and that reading was useless, student products from these reading and writing activities were published in a project sponsored by a local university.

Jazzy clearly possessed considerable cultural awareness in two areas. First, her awareness of how to help students assimilate without giving up their identity, when she cited the example of keeping her braids, even though it bothered the principal. Second, her unsettling drive to help her students analyze why they were not getting good grades, and her guiding them through the reflective process of understanding teachers’ classroom expectations for their behavior. She had much in common with students from the inner city and understood their perspectives. As a teacher, she also understood middle-class cultural expectations. Her lesson of seeing the correlation between grades and teacher comments on students’ report card helped them see how their own actions had to change. Jazzy lacked knowledge of linguistically diverse students, but her lesson demonstrated praxis, because of the way she guided her students to analyze their position of receiving bad grades, to reflect on their behavior, and to make a plan of action to change their behavior in the classroom. These strategies turned about twenty students around and

improved their grades.

### SUMMARY

Thus, teachers' dispositions toward diverse students and their cultural awareness of themselves, and of their students, varied dramatically. All teacher participants came from similar teaching contexts and all saw a mismatch between diverse students and schooling practices. However, teacher participants tended to differ in their approaches to rectifying this mismatch. Overwhelmingly, non-course-takers understood the solution as encompassing what had to change about diverse students, to make them a better fit with schooling, while course-takers tended to approach solutions by considering changes to curricula and teaching practices. Clearly, having had multicultural education opportunities (such as ED-754) improved the likelihood that participants saw the world from the vantage point of their diverse students, as well as understood that mainstream cultural implications of their schools. While most course-takers demonstrated an awareness of their enculturated privilege relative to the circumstances of their students, many non-course-takers focused on students' socioeconomic circumstances. Finally, non-course-takers tended toward assimilation views in their teaching decision-making, while course-takers thought in terms of pluralist ideals, taking a multicultural and reconstructionist approaches.

In what follows in Chapter 7, I return to the scholarly framework and illuminate the myriad ways the findings reported in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 contribute to the scholarly literature. In particular addressing in what ways these findings corroborate, contradict, and add to earlier scholarship.

## **CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

As discussed earlier, teaching ED-754 from 2000 to 2004 provided a first attempt developing a course focused on teaching culturally responsive pedagogy at a west Michigan university. The course offered a model for teaching based on culturally responsive pedagogy, arguing for the importance of preparing teachers who are aware, knowledgeable, and competent to understand and teach children with diverse backgrounds. This research study investigated the effectiveness of such a teacher-education course, especially working to understand to what extent this multicultural course prepared teachers for multicultural classrooms and proved culturally responsive. As detailed in Chapters 4-6, 11 study participants provided rich data from which findings emerged that contribute to the knowledge base of multicultural education. In fact, these findings suggest ways to improve education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. In what follows, I return to the scholarship underpinning this study and make evident contributions of my study to the findings reported by earlier scholars, discussing in turn teacher preparation, teachers' dispositions about schooling diverse students, district- and school-wide impacts, and teaching from a cultural vantage point. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations to generalizability and opportunities for future research.

### **TEACHER PREPARATION**

Teacher preparation proved a persistent strand in both research findings and prior scholarship. As has been reported in earlier scholarship, not all teachers found their teacher-education preparation adequate. In fact, common teaching models that had seemed effective – prior to changing demographics – no longer served an increasingly diverse student body. While teacher participants found many aspects of teacher-preparation and on-the-job training useful for

their evolving circumstances, many felt ill prepared to teach reading and handle discipline issues. Such gaps led them to desire additional professional development addressing teaching diverse students. Ultimately, as has been reported elsewhere, multicultural education opportunities (such as ED-754) improved the likelihood that participants saw the world from the vantage point of their diverse students, as well as understood implications of cultural mismatches in their schools.

#### *Adequacy of Teacher Preparation*

Findings from this study confirm that not all teachers found their preparation adequate for changing times, with many noting gaps in their preparation proved. For example, scholars report that regardless of their education background, teacher candidates often enter teacher preparation programs with little exposure to diversity (Smith, 1998; Zimpher & Ashburn, 1989; Villegas, 1991). Prior research shows that in many instances even teachers diligently committed to children's success and who boasted of seemingly appropriate course work, student teaching, enrichment experiences, and several years of teaching experience lack adequate knowledge about teaching diverse students. Consequently, lack of preparation led to misconceptions that influenced teachers' ability to recognize their own understandings about the role of culture in their teaching (Sheets & Fong, 2003).

#### *Prior Teaching Models Ineffective*

Shifting demographics in their schools brought new teaching dilemmas for teachers. Traditional education practices encouraged teachers to be in charge through teacher-directed approaches focused on transferring knowledge to students, which then was assessed. While these practices seemed to work for students from seemingly similar (mainstream) backgrounds, as the population shifted in schools, teachers found "problems" emerged at a level they never before experienced. Some participants characterized the dilemmas as centered in students: "these kids

have changed;” “they don’t want to do the work;” they have no manners, have trouble sitting down at desks and overall, did not know how to behave in an education setting. A few participants saw dilemmas in terms of a mismatch in teaching models and students. But, this should not have been surprising. As research reports, most teacher-education students enter schools prepared to work effectively with the mainstream or dominant culture – those white-identified, and middle-class (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; VanHook, 2002). Thus, with a shift in the demographics, increasing numbers of African American, Native American, Latino, and English-language learners could have been expected to display difficulties learning through traditional models. And, associated declines in test scores and school climate belied teachers’ years of experience, degrees, and dedication, which no longer proved sufficient to teach a diverse population effectively.

Understanding cultural differences provides a foundation for conversations about the importance of the match between diverse students and classroom practices. For instance, many culturally and linguistically diverse students from Middle Eastern countries, Asia, Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America come from cultural roots considered *high context*, while teachers from North America come from *low-context* cultures. High-context groups favor being relational, collectivist, intuitive, and contemplative, and prefer group harmony and consensus to individual achievement. Many incorporate a large measure of intuition and feelings into decision-making, along with a wide range of tangible and intangible information necessary to act in context. As such, high context cultures emphasize interpersonal relationships, and developing trust becomes a crucial function. Lenora, Luke, and Jazzy seemed to understand this in their teaching approaches to diverse students. In contrast, *low-context cultures* value logical, individualistic, and action-oriented behaviors, and elevate facts, directedness, and problem

solving ahead of feelings and interpersonal connections. School cultures in the U.S. align more with low-context individualistic values of the dominant American culture, especially in classroom organization and management (Rothstein-Fish & Trumbull, 2008). In such settings, it comes to seem natural to define student success according to Eurocentric values, when filtered through low-context lenses. Here, research shows teachers' perceptions of students based on race, class, and gender – notions often born of teachers' cultural and ethnic backgrounds and knowledge – influence expectations for student behavior and academic performance (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sleeter, 2001). Teachers who fail to understand students' differences may view high context students in a negative light, what some researchers refer to as a *deficit* model. This sort of cultural awareness seemed not to have been a focus of teacher-preparation for non-course takers, and many exhibited attitudes about students' capabilities that implied teachers with deficit views of diverse students. Thus, though teacher participants genuinely desired what was best for students to the best of teachers' ability, many teachers remained unprepared to teach in settings with diverse students.

### *Gaps in Teacher Preparation*

Gaps in teachers' preparation experiences – such teaching reading, handling discipline and desiring effective professional development – all reinforced the literature. To teach reading to culturally and linguistically diverse students, research suggests teachers need to become aware of ways teaching strategies encourage or discourage learning by culturally and linguistically diverse students. For example, researchers report teachers need models for learning that view teaching and learning as interactive processes (Garcia & Guerra, 2004), processes that require acknowledging students' diversity. Lacking such ways for acknowledging students' diversity, teachers may misinterpret students and prohibit culture-defined behaviors that enhance students'

learning opportunities, such as those “who come from cultures where human interaction and cooperation are highly valued” (Oray, 1989). Julie and Katie mentioned this specific concern of students not connecting with text, when they spoke about flaws in teaching of reading. Teaching to the test, also, aligned with an assimilation ideology, and encouraged teacher-directed practices that ignored students’ needs for social interaction and creativity. As Julie noted, teachers stop teaching reading in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so students can learn to read *independently* to learn content, while Katie found group reading being discouraged by the time students reached 4<sup>th</sup> grade, a practice she countered by using group work in reading.

According to the literature, incorporating cultural differences becomes critical when culturally and ethnically diverse students come from collectivist cultures (Hall, 1976, 36). Students with collectivist ways of life desire interactions as part of their normative practice, such as in their learning. Though few argue students’ need to learn independently, at times, or to demonstrate their own understandings, teachers still need to incorporate models for viewing teaching and learning as interactive processes (Garcia & Guerra, 2004). Research suggests that teachers often remain unaware of the potential harm done to many students, and in some cases, well-intentioned educators’ culture clash contributes to classroom environments that systematically deny some students meaningful opportunities to learn (Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1995), and this proves to be the case for language-learners as well.

Research also confirms the need for professional development that would address reading instruction, by including research on second-language acquisition to help teachers learn ways to help students make connections between their home and school languages. Teachers lack understandings about current research on second-language acquisition that suggests that “students need to develop competency in the first language because it is the foundation for the



development of their second language” (Capella-Santana, 2003, p.1). Lacking these understandings, teachers become less likely to succeed teaching reading to culturally and linguistically diverse students. When research about language-minority students is absent or ignored, teachers tend to encourage students to give up their native language in order to learn to speak English by placing them in mainstream classes, without having the “grammatical foundation” (Collier, 2008, p. 11). This suggests the sorts of problems experienced by Katie’s students who read without knowing the context of their reading, as well as explains why Denise, who resented providing services, had students who continued to need English help in their middle school classes.

As for discipline issues, teachers experienced an inability to handle discipline issues, owing to several reported reasons. Students were often perceived in a deficit light and behaviors consonant with cultural affiliations seemed out of place or inappropriate in schools. Students lacked academic skills needed for success. Teachers lacked the ability to make connections with students through curriculum materials relevant to students. Teachers lacked understandings about funds of knowledge that students bring to school and use to build context for learning content (Moll, et al., 1992). Teachers lacked opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices, reflections that would enable them to adapt their lessons. Taken together, such classrooms offered diverse students few ways to participate in schools and led to acting out, making diverse students an easy excuse problem in schooling today. In contrast, multicultural initiatives have the potential to change school climate and impact social interactions in a school.

Efforts to deal with teachers’ gaps in professional development for diverse learners brought concerns similar to points made in the literature. Research indicates that hidden assimilation ideologies underpin practices and prevent teachers from receiving much needed

professional development about culturally responsive teaching. When deficit views of students and families prevail, educators are absolved from analyzing their assumptions and critically examining whether their teaching methods are equally effective for all student populations (Trueba & Bartolome, 1997). When teachers assume nothing wrong with the system or themselves, they conclude there is nothing more they can do to educate all students, which prevents teachers from looking beyond traditional solutions for real and meaningful change (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

According to the literature (and this study), teachers overwhelmed with teaching and assessing continually make instructional decisions based on their immediate needs to comply, survive, or meet time constraints (Finley, S., Marble, S., Copeland, G., Ferguson, C., Alderete, K., 2000). Additionally, teachers' makes decisions largely based on private and tacit knowledge, coming from personal, lived experiences underpinning teachers' practical knowledge (Cole & Knowles, 2000). Katie's decision to use group reading, in spite of her professor's advice not to do so provides an example. Thus, in order for teachers to benefit from professional development for diverse students they must experience strategies that work in their personal experience.

Conversations in the literature about professional development confirm the need for more efficient ways to conduct professional development to prepare teachers for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The suggested approach considered highly effective involves the *listening-dialogue* approach in pre- and in-service teachers' interaction, which can be academic, goal-directed, small-group conversations (known as instructional conversations), rather than lecture (Freire, 1970). One author recognized that dialogical methods prove troublesome for teachers whose paradigm comes from competition, individualism, and self-reliance, such as mainstream American culture (Osterwall, 1995). One specific gap proved to be multicultural

education.

*Importance of Multicultural Education*

This finding proved consistent with the literature showing that, when teachers seek to deepen their understanding of cultural differences and the role of culture in child-rearing and schooling (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000), they are in a better position to explore the effectiveness of their practices for various communities. According to Sleeter (2001), schools can play a significant role toward achieving equity. But all too often schools serve to reinforce and legitimate the status quo, instead of serving to enlighten and emancipate, working against rather than with indigenous efforts for liberation (Sleeter, 2001). Teachers have an important part in such processes. However, teachers must internalize a conviction that, through their beliefs and actions, they either maintain the status-quo and perpetuate inequities, or choose to engage in social change (Bartolomé, 1998; Major & Brock, 2003, Smith, 1998).

According to the literature, teachers need opportunities to reflect on and learn about students' cultural differences and vantage points, so that teachers can find ways to mediate across those differences for the benefit of each learner and the classroom community (Greenfield, et. al, 2000). Issues can then be addressed, such as self-esteem, power, privilege, empathy, family, and exclusion, but only if teachers take the time to know who the students are and what they bring to the schooling.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOLING FOR DIVERSE STUDENTS

It proves no surprise that assimilationist and pluralist teacher beliefs were found existing side by side among teachers who were teaching in the same teaching context. ED-754 taught culturally responsive pedagogy and two course-takers used this approach (Alice and Julie), most course-takers aligned with pluralist ideologies (Beverly, Lenora, Alice, Julie, and at time non-

course-taker Jazzy), most non-course-takers (Jazzy, Joy, Grace, Eleanor, and course-taker Denise) adopted assimilationist ideological stances, while other non-course-takers (Luke, Katie and at times Jazzy) expressed tendencies that leaned toward pluralist practices but lacked training to see these through in their classrooms.

*ED-754 and Teaching Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

Culturally responsive pedagogy emerges from practices involving reflection on assumptions, knowledge, and experiences with diverse learners, producing skills where teachers learn to interact effectively with members of different cultures and to teach in ways to bridge the gap between the learners' home cultures and school cultures. Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three propositions about what contributes to success for all students (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Culturally relevant teachers: (1) focus on each individual student's academic achievement (e.g., using clear goals, multiple forms of assessment), (2) have attained cultural competence and help develop students' cultural competence, and (3) have a developed sense of sociopolitical consciousness and foster students' sense of sociopolitical consciousness. Villegas and Lucas (2002) expanded on this framework of culturally relevant teaching by articulating six characteristics that define a culturally responsive teacher, including: (1) sociocultural consciousness (e.g., understanding that people's ways of thinking, behaving, and being are deeply influenced by such factors as race, ethnicity, social class and language); (2) an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds (e.g., students who differ from the dominant culture); (3) the commitment and skills to act as agents of change (e.g., recognition that schools have served to maintain social inequities and the willingness to take action to change this); (4) constructivist views of learning (e.g., use and build on learners' prior knowledge and beliefs); (5) learned knowledge about their students (e.g., students' backgrounds, experiences,

lives, communities); and, (6) culturally responsive teaching practices (e.g., involving all students in construction of knowledge, building on students' personal and cultural strengths, teaching students to examine the curriculum from multiple perspectives, making classroom cultures inclusive of all students). Beverly, Alice and Julie demonstrated evidence of culturally relevant pedagogy, thereby displaying the ability to teach all students.

Culturally responsive teaching grows from the premises that a multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply interconnected; that teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors; and that teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how and to whom (Gay, 2003). As the findings emerged, it appeared initially that as long as teachers had opportunities to reflect on schooling with a cultural vantage point, they would better understand and examine their teaching practice in light of their reflection. However, the reflection that made a difference was a type of awareness referred to as "critical pedagogy." Grant and Sleeter (2003) suggested that multicultural and reconstructionist approaches seemed the most promising because they guide teachers toward social consciousness, allowing teachers to address inequities in schooling through teacher education and provide language-minority students with empowerment and transformation. This study reinforced the literature's sense of the importance of teachers' developing deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is being taught, how it is taught, and to whom it is taught (Gay, 2003).

But, teachers committed to their profession become burdened with trying to fix "the problem" of failing language-minority students. Critical pedagogy argues that "these goals could only be achieved through emancipation, a process by which oppressed and exploited people became sufficiently empowered to transform their circumstances for themselves by themselves"

(Tripp, 1992). Conscientization – a process developing critical awareness – leads to a deep level of consciousness and critical thinking that enables learners to experience *praxis* or put thought into action (Freire, 1970). Such *reflection* and *action* provides a way for teacher education students to learn about, and become aware of, themselves and the world, and such awareness results in liberation from oppression and empowerment for themselves. Ultimately, learners do truly transform teacher-student interaction. Evidence of the impact of positive beliefs on teaching occurred in Alice’s attitude toward students and her expectations for their learning. Here, her lessons came not only from the research students brought into the classroom, but also in tests, speakers, and through her attitudes and expectations, because instead of coddling them, she expected them to work every day and work to their highest potential (Alice, p. 11).

Research suggests the importance of educating teachers to identify and consider cultural affiliations students bring into the schooling. Such affiliations include understanding the meaning and value students associate with school learning and achievement, since these play a significant role in determining students’ affiliation with learning and performance in schools (Hall, 1986; Ogbu, 1991; Oosterwall, 2003; 2008). Providing culturally responsive pedagogy emerges when practices are derived from reflection on assumptions, knowledge, and experiences with diverse learners. These practices not only produce skills and behaviors whereby teachers learn to interact appropriately and effectively with members of different cultures, but also provide the ability to teach in ways to bridge the gap between learners’ home cultures and school culture (Taylor & Sobel, 2002 ). Thus, culturally relevant pedagogy produces learning for all students (Gallavan & Putney, 2004). But, most non-course-takers held assimilationist views.

#### *Impact of Assimilationist Views*

Overwhelmingly, non-course-takers held to assimilationist views, a common finding in

the literature. Assimilation, defined as the “gradual process whereby cultural differences (and rivalries) tend to disappear” as a person joins a new community by giving up old affiliations (Gordon, 1964, p. 66). In this process, newcomers give up languages, customs, and methods of life, which they brought with them, and adopt instead the language, habits, and customs of a new country, and the general standards and ways of American living (Gordon, 1964, p. 100). Researchers report myriad ways immigrants were instructed in how to repulse themselves and that millions of people were taught to be ashamed of their own faces, their names, their parents and grandparents, and their class patterns, histories, and life outlooks. Some view this shame as providing the power to make immigrants learn, especially when coupled with hope, the other main energy source for the melting pot – hope about becoming modern, about being secure, about escaping the wars and depressions of the old country, and about being equal with the earlier arriving Americans (Cheng, Brizendine, & Oakes, 1979). Cultural pluralists, scholars and intellectuals, working in New York City going as far back as the 1910’s (Wacker, 1979), rejected the assimilationist premise with anti-“melting pot” arguments, such as those of Elwood Patterson Cubberly (Vaughn, 2001), and critics “frequently pointed out that assimilation could not be forced upon people without destroying their self-respect and identity” (Wacker, 1979, p. 4). Though efforts led to assimilation ideology being replaced, such as in the view of those who clearly linked it to cultural imperialism: “a form of oppression associated with the imposition of the cultural meaning of the dominant group on all groups” (Young, 1990, cited in Howe, 1997, p. 70). But, cultural pluralism did not eliminate assimilation.

The impact of beliefs on teaching practices remains undisputable; such beliefs influence how teacher teach, understand, and implement multicultural education (VanHook, 2002). In fact, “Bandura (1986) and Dewey (1933) inferred that beliefs were the most significant predictors of

the decisions that individuals make throughout their lives” (VanHook, 2002, p. 6). Overwhelmingly, research suggests teachers, regardless of their ethnic background, tend to uncritically and unconsciously hold beliefs and attitudes about the existing social order that reflect dominant ideologies that interfere with their abilities to effectively teach diverse learners and are harmful to many students (Bloom, 1991; Davis, 1994; Freire, 1997, 1998a; Gomez, 1994; Gonsalvez, 1996; Haberman, 1991; Macedo, 1994; Sleeter, 1992; Shutz et al., 1996; Bartolomé, 2004). And this was the case for participants. Consider Joy’s views:

I think now that I’ve become more aware, in the last few years, my focus is to find that balance between respecting where they come from and what they bring to the classroom, every single day, what their experiences are, what their family is, and [focusing on] functioning basically still in a middle-class, English-speaking world, because some of them...you know their ideas are not going to help them be successful in a middle-class job, you know, or school situations.... (Joy, p. 16)

She, in fact, expresses her alliance to an assimilationist ideology that does not recognize cultural affiliations of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Here, when teachers are not prepared to use multiple lenses to interpret multicultural behaviors, their monocultural lens will hinder their ability to understand different cultural attributes (Hall, 1976) or appreciate the resources or the funds of knowledge students hold (Moll, Amanti & Neff, 1992). It concerns me, as well, that non-course-takers (Eleanor) do not find the energy or the time to include multicultural teaching, even when they know what it would take to level the playing field. Research on assimilation ideology and teaching practices documents that this ideology supports common models considered ineffective by the researchers, because it encourages teaching-directed instruction, such as lecture, drill and practice, student seatwork, worksheets, and remediation (Herman, 1991;



Padrón & Waxman, 1993), and “teaching to the test” (Stephen, Varble, & Taitt, 1993, p. 9; Kozol, 2007). Others, however, used pluralist views.

### *Impact of Pluralist Views*

Freire (1970, p. 73) rejected such teaching practices (referred by some “banking,” or “depositing,” methods that produce students as the depositories and the teacher as the depositor), in favor of pluralist models. While assimilationist practices see knowledge as “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 1970, p.72) and equate students as being empty vessels to be filled by the teacher, pluralist models consider students possessors of knowledge in the classroom, people with unique understandings that should be included in the classroom.

Furthermore, when teachers rely on transferring information that students “receive, memorize, and repeat,” a practice termed “pedagogy of poverty” (Stephen, Varble, & Taitt, 1993, p. 9), students are in a passive state, which deprives them of developing critical inquiry skills needed to challenge false representations of life and deficit views of themselves propagated in society. Freire finds such approaches a form of domination, because they guide students to adopt the ways of the dominant culture, without valuing students’ cultural understandings,= (Freire, 1970).

Alice demonstrated the possibilities of pluralist practices for teaching diverse students, which grew out of her reaction to the effects of a traditional model’s uniform curriculum. She realized that most of the literature she taught as an English teacher came from white males, and realized why her students resisted it. A formerly disruptive student after realizing a story was about “a brother,” completely turned around academically and became connected to English-class readings, leading Alice to feel the importance and significance of pluralism (Alice, p. 4).

*Meeting the Needs of Diverse Students*

Studies in the effectiveness of multicultural programs recommend that all teachers should be prepared to address the social, cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds of the entire spectrum of American students by making multicultural and bilingual education an essential component of the teacher preparation program (Walton, Beca & Escamilla, 2001). Some evidence exists that college course work can be effective in changing teachers' attitudes about multicultural and inclusive issues (Taylor & Sobel, 2002). And, when teachers use culturally relevant pedagogy it produces learning for all students (Gallavan & Putney, 2004). College students being "more aware than empowered suggests that most are in the process of developing awareness of multiple levels and faces of diversity" (Wasson & Jackson, 2002, p. 11). Such findings indicate a need for teacher-education courses to provide adequate time in the curriculum for teacher-students to develop critical awareness.

Ultimately, diverse students cannot achieve if they do not develop the academic tools to become successful. When teachers take into consideration their students' cultural/ethnic backgrounds and are able to develop appropriate curricula, they foster the academic success of minority students (Capella-Santana, 2003). Therefore, pre-service and in-service teachers need to become knowledgeable about how to use active teaching methods (Schmidt, 2003). Just as teachers need to learn to bridge the gap between home and school paradigms, students need to learn to complete assignments individually, and collaboratively, such as in small groups, or pairs with time to share ideas and think critically about their schoolwork. Beverly thought that all students should have such skills, because they are a life skill, something expected and not optional. She also recognized her responsibility in making that possible:

Well, and to read out loud in another language. I mean, I try, I'm pretty outgoing but I

know that it wouldn't be quite right. (Laughs) So I feel like the more that I can help to five skills and to pass things on and to give opportunities to practice, the better off, plus ...I think some of it can be personality too. I know my outgoing children are a lot quicker to volunteer than my more shy children. But I want even those who feel like, I don't know I'd rather be last, to still have the skills and to still be able to do that. (Beverly, II, p. 6)

Here, Beverly advocates teaching five central practices: cooperative learning, critical thinking, peer mentoring, and review, and the recognition of multiple perspectives, all of which draw on this idea that students can learn through meaningful interactions with their peers, rather than solely with the teacher.

Research clearly shows that, when teachers seek to deepen their understanding of cultural differences and the role of culture in child-rearing and schooling (Greenfield, Quiroz, & Raeff, 2000), they are in a better position explore the effectiveness of their practices for various cultures. Overall, course-takers proved more capable responding to the demands of teaching diverse students. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude, since the central difference between course-takers and non-course-takers ED-754, that course-takers derived their ability to respond to students' needs from reflective exercises course-takers explored in ED-754. However, some district and school-wide practices had adverse impacts on diverse students' learning.

#### LACK OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT DIVERSITY

Overall, most teacher participants taught in districts and school buildings where assumptions about diverse learners undercut the learning of diverse students. And, in these schools, diverse students were expected to cause discipline problems, something that did not occur on course-takers' classrooms. Unfortunately, finding school districts and buildings

deficient in understandings about diverse students proves to be something of an understatement. Research shows that tendencies to over-generalize about family backgrounds leads to differentiated instruction aimed at retraining students viewed as deficient and in need of remediation (Sheets, 2003; Valencia, 1997). Here, Denise's generalization about parents not wanting to learn English provides one such example, as does her sense that if parents of English-language learners insist on not speaking their native language at home there is only so much she can do to teach their children. Denise overlooked the importance of students' native language as a scaffold to learning English, and lacked a defined position about the value of their first language in a globalizing world. Her giving up on students, in fact, provides an example that flies in the face of calls for differentiated instruction. Similar assumptions about parents, whose behaviors do not conform to the norms of the dominant culture of schools and the larger society, lead to solutions being erroneously located in better parenting training or parental education programs (García & Guerra, 2004), instead of in better teaching practices. Deploying such stereotypes placed blame for problems on parents and shifted responsibilities for change onto those left out of conversations about educational issues, largely leaving teachers off the hook.

Lack of reflection about these matters harmed students. When teachers assumed little was wrong with the system or with their own teaching practices, they demonstrated an unwillingness to change, a tendency toward complacency and/or resignation that they could do nothing more to educate all students. These beliefs kept teachers from looking beyond traditional excuses, and prevented their seeking real and meaningful change (Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

### *Issues of Discipline*

Overall, though discipline proved a common concern raised relative to diverse students, course-takers had fewer discipline problems than their non-course-taker colleagues. Though

discipline issues arise in many conversations about increasing diversity in middle-class schools, little of this strand emerges in the literature about potential improvements to discipline that might result from preparing teachers using multicultural education. When Jazzy complained about students being blamed for discipline problems, research connecting academic achievement with discipline issues came to mind. Here, scholars believe minority academic achievement and high drop-out, suspension, and expulsion rates cannot be addressed in primarily methodological and technical terms apart from the material, social, and ideological conditions that have shaped and sustained such failure rates (Bartolomé, 2004). Jazzy also brought other studies to mind concerning her students' emotional needs not being met, such as when one student complained a substitute teachers would not look at him. Igoa (1995) noted that "a thorough investigation of the child's environment, intellectual or emotional failures are often found to result from undercurrents between the child and adult and/or the institution wherein the child feels unloved (Wickes, 1988), unchallenged and disempowered." (p. 8). Others suggest the reason may be that schools reproduce the existing asymmetrical power relations among cultural groups (Trueba, & Bartolomé, 1997; Sleeter, 2003). Cummins (1986, 1989, 1996, and 2001) suggests that the reason schools fail to successfully educate many minority children, and that efforts aimed at school reform have stalled, comes from the relationship between school and minority communities, especially inadequately addressing the needs and backgrounds of diverse groups.

Scholarship suggests that when schools make a commitment to investing in a multicultural program to help change social interactions among students, especially during a change in demographics, results are overwhelmingly positive. Data covering four years of a multicultural intervention with youth document considerable improvement in reduction of fighting and threats by 50% in 1996 and 1997; reduction of 90% of reported incidents where

students used ethnic slurs; 51% of students in a control group originally identified as behavior-at-risk in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade were no longer identified as such after participating in specific interventions (Bastos, 1999, p. 474). And, in fact, most course-taker teachers, but not non-course-takers reported having few discipline problems. As such, it seems that when teachers educated in multicultural education practices deploy these in their classrooms, diverse students become better students and this includes their behaving appropriately.

### TEACHING FROM A CULTURAL VANTAGE POINT

Teaching from a cultural vantage point encompassed both teachers' awareness about their own privilege and teachers' use of praxis in their classrooms.

#### *Teachers' Awareness of Privilege (or Not)*

Research shows that discussion on privilege remains under-utilized in teacher education courses. Researchers report that fewer than fifty percent of students in one study felt that there were adequate discussions about white privilege. These data raise concerns about the need for more discussions on the topic of white privilege, especially in predominantly White academic communities (Bhargave, et. al, 2004). Clearly, course-takers had more skills changing teaching practices, something influenced their awareness of their own privilege in their schools. Many of these skills derived from classroom activities, such as one suggested by Peggy McIntosh, and mentioned by Julie as the most influential assignment, a point I return to in a subsequent section. And some teachers employed praxis in their teaching.

#### *Incorporating Praxis in Spite of District and School Practices*

Course-takers created more opportunities to connect with students through curricular materials, such as multicultural texts that honored cultural differences and affiliations; the way course-takers recognized and helped students overcome language and cultural difficulties, such

as connecting vocabulary with prior knowledge, exercises about African American Vernacular English and standard discourse; and made a transition to a new culture by empowering them with the confidence in reading and study skills. In contrast, non-course-takers connected with students through more superficial relationships, such as connecting through similarity of background, hugs, or verbal praise, which lacked links to educational success.

#### LIMITATIONS TO GENERALIZABILITY

There are few limitations to extending the results of this study to other sites study. In particular, the study encompassed sites typical of a medium-sized metropolitan area where schools typical of urban and suburban communities predominate. Thus, the results have limited transferability to rural school settings. Furthermore, there is some possibility that course-taker participants may have self-selected for the study, and thus represent a more rosy view of the course, than might course-takers who did not participate. Also, though the researcher strived throughout the research to engage course-taker participants in in-depth conversations about their teaching, providing opportunities to discuss ED-754 and ways to improve it, course-taker participants may have presented a less critical view of the course in these conversations, because the researcher taught the course. But, non-course-taker participants were selected because of their being from similar circumstances to course-taker participants, giving the study a matched sample across which to perform the comparative analysis. Transferability is further bolstered by findings being relevant to the scholarship about such schooling matters.

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Four areas for future research emerged: teacher's advice about revising teacher-education programs, ethnicity and discipline, the importance of reflection on teachers' own heritage as a way to develop cultural awareness, and a sense one got that teachers with ethnic and racial

minority affiliations hold deep-seated understandings about educating diverse students that is largely untapped by empirical research focused on better serving racial, ethnic, and language minority students. First, a substantial amount of information in the existing data set provides information relating to teacher participants' advice about revising teacher-education programs. Preliminary analysis suggests that findings from this area are deep enough to underpin a subsequent research presentation at either a conference for teacher-educators or in a suitable journal written for teacher educators.

Second, little in research reviewed for this study reported on teachers with racial and ethnic minority affiliations being cautioned about their classroom management/discipline practices. But because this turned out to be the case in the research reported here, a subsequent study that drew its participants from among this community of teachers might shed light on the extent to which teachers with enculturated understandings (that align with those of diverse students) may themselves be subject to district- and school-wide initiatives representing mainstream (white middle-class) perspectives that undermine diverse teachers' use of their own understandings in their classrooms.

Third, while different course activities made an impact on course-takers (Table 10), performing an analysis of their own cultural heritage seemed more powerful in terms of changing their teaching practice. Four course-takers talked about the impact of this cultural-heritage analysis. This project provided an opportunity to examine their own heritage, and identify people in their lives who influenced their education journey. Consider Alice's comments about this activity. Once she learned to appreciate her own culture, she then could take her students through the same process. Thus, when she designed activities and lessons with this objective, she became aware of how we (people of Dutch heritage) celebrate our feasts – and that these are unique to



Table 10. ED-754 Assignments Course-Takers Found the Most Useful

Assignments	Beverly	Julie	Lenora	Alice	Denise
Cultural Analysis	Helped me discover <i>English Only</i> [for] my father had to <i>sink or swim</i>		I did it with my students exactly the way you had us do it.	It helped me appreciate my Dutch culture. Then I could help my students appreciate their own culture.	I remember a lot of reflection about my family and the culture I was brought up in.
Videos: Shadow of Hate, History of Intolerance...			A movie I saw showed the different races, and the different abuse, and prejudices toward other cultures. Everybody interested in it. I still think about that movie. I wish so many times I had a copy of it		
Oral presentations on specific ethnic groups		Presentations in which people took a particular cultural group and did deep research and presentation. Presentations were priceless.	We did projects, did presentations where we shared lesson plans that I used as curriculum to teach my lessons		
Readings		I was exposed to reading I hadn't read before...it totally opened my mind as to different differences in society I hadn't thought about before  The story of Pritchey Smith: You are part of it, or you are not part of it at all		Ruby Payne and Paulo Freire changed my teaching. After learning about Ruby Payne I started to pay attention to hidden rules in the culture of my students; I used an exercise on casual discourse and standard English; I noticed how generous kids are toward each other, even when they don't have much to share.	
Peggy . McIntosh's Exercise on Privilege		The lesson that had the biggest impact on me. I used it in a career exploration activity.			
Cultural Experiences		Cultural experience was priceless	I went to a Hispanic church where no one spoke English. It was useful to hear the experiences of people in the class. It gave you an idea of how people who don't speak English feel...And I felt alone.		
General		I learned Multicultural Education is essential. I think you have to know about the culture. Things about the brain and how humans act are important, but unless you work with cultures that exist it's hard to be successful and can't plan a lesson.	That's the class that prepared me the most I think for multicultural classes.  I got a stack of lessons to use in the classroom.  I enjoyed teaching a little more after those classes. I thought student would feel funny learning about their culture, but they loved; parents loved it because [of not] being ignored.	I started to become aware of how we celebrate, what our feasts are, that's unique to our culture.  I cooked a Dutch meal for students and one girl turned her nose at everything I fixed. She wanted rice and beans....For me that was a real eye-opener. The next time, I let students plan the menu	I remember group-working and sharing and learning from each other. Building that respect and breaking down barriers. That class really just taught me a lot about other cultures that I probably would have never learned about had I had a student from that culture.

their culture. “As a Dutch woman I am crazy about flowers, and wrote my thesis about Dutch artists” (Alice, p. 7). Growing up in west Michigan she had a negative attitude toward the Dutch, because “people are so critical of Dutch people”:

I went from kind of not wanting people to know that [I was Dutch], to feeling like my culture is amazing. And not White Caucasian, my Dutch heritage is what I am really proud of. I think that’s important for teachers to go there, in order to take students there.

And that models to them respect for where they come from (Alice, p. 7)

Though some research exists about the value of such an activity, my dedicating more time in the future to further research about usefulness and application of such assignment would enhance understandings about why this is such a powerful experience for changing teacher practice.

Finally, this study reminded me that teachers who have lived experiences reminiscent of those their diverse students experience are themselves rich resources for learning more about teaching practice that meet the needs of their racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students. As I wrote earlier, my own experiences as a student learning English, and someone fluent in Portuguese, continue to provide me with insights about diverse students that help me continue to learn to understand and serve diverse students’ needs. Similarly, the teaching practices of Lenora, Luke, and Jazzy, all of whom are of African heritage, seemed routinely to draw on their cultural affiliations, even in the face of challenges to their ways of teaching from their school administrators. Thus, subsequent research with participants selected from among teachers with racial, ethnic, and language-minority affiliations would deepen understandings about these teachers’ deep understandings and enrich research in teacher education.

## SUMMARY

Ultimately, teacher participants welcomed me into in-depth conversations about their

teaching practices and helped me understand in what ways a course in multicultural education (ED-754) contributed to their becoming teachers aware of and responsive to the needs of diverse students. In expected and unexpected ways, ED-754 contributed to making course-takers better teachers of diverse students. But, as the cases of Luke, Katie, and Jazzy remind us, some teachers persistently strive to teach all students well, even when they lack specific courses focused on multicultural education. And, for some non-course-taker teachers, lack of preparation – from either teacher-preparation coursework, on-the-job training, or lived experiences as a member of a diverse community – could not be overcome even when teachers had the best interests of students at heart. Thus, we are reminded that good intentions must be combined with appropriate, and this research argues, *multicultural* teaching preparation to serve the needs of diverse students.

#### REFLECTION: PERSONAL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

##### AS A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENT

Teachers lounge conversations gave me a lot to reflect upon as an immigrant student, teacher and professional. The funny thing is that the more education I pursued to become a “success story” as a graduate student, the more curious I became about what it takes for a culturally and linguistically diverse student to succeed in the American mainstream education system.

Is it the education level of the parents? It wasn’t the case for me since my parents only had a fourth grade education. Is it parents’ commitment to read to children every night? It can’t be that either, since my parents never read to us and my sister Vitória taught me to read at the kitchen table in a “barracão” on 61<sup>st</sup> street, in Bairro Popular, Goiânia, Brazil without reading books. I am not even sure if my parents were even aware that our playing school would lead to

my learning to read. As it turned out, I was the first to finish high school, the only one to go to college, and here I am, against all odds, concluding my dissertation.

As I reflect on my schooling, I realize that my experience would probably not fit into any type of education research. One thing I did know is that in most situations I found myself in I was always part of the minority. When I started teaching in Brazil I was part of a minority group, since, studying abroad (in the U.S.) made me part on an “elite” group, (since so few Brazilians have such opportunity unless they come from an affluent family, which was not my situation), and also because living in the U.S. for two and half years had changed me into an American in many ways. When I started teaching in Michigan, I was in the minority teaching staff. Though these issues were implicitly part of my everyday teaching, I had not become an advocate for culturally and linguistically diverse students until I attended a NAME conference in Detroit (1994) where I met Dr. Ruben Martinez, and Dr. Feinstein in 1994, and heard many original founders of National Association for Multicultural Education speak at this conference. This encounter inspired me to explore Multicultural Education through folklore and multicultural dances displayed through a Multicultural Club, in annual celebrations called Cultural Showcase, which engaged as many as two hundred students for almost ten years. Understanding the limitations of the “heroes and holidays” approach I also developed a curriculum for a Multicultural Awareness Exploratory class for 7<sup>th</sup> grade which I taught for twelve years. Cultural Showcase celebrations and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Multicultural Class Diversity class became part of strategies for school improvement and NCA-OA Accreditation as well as other strategies mentioned in Chapter 7. As a result of my work in diversity I had the opportunity to teach ED754. This class gave me an opportunity to take the best of training and readings to share with graduate students. I discovered that though teachers seemed to appreciate the curriculum which I

had carefully prepared, they seemed to be the most interested in my personal stories because they knew those were real. I had the same experience teaching middle school when I realized that students who connected with me the most were those who knew that what I was talking about did not come from the books, often removed from their reality and often communicated to them in ways they don't understand, even when they speak English. The stories always seemed to break all kinds of barriers between students and me as well as among themselves. It makes me wonder why any educator would give up on storytelling...

Wayne State University provided me with the opportunity to explore Multicultural education, which became the avenue for me to learn more about my own cultural attributes which I had unintentionally buried in the process of assimilating into the American mainstream educational system. Wayne State University provided me with the preparation I needed to find meaningful purpose: the goal of improving teacher education for diverse learners in order to increase educational opportunities for all students, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students who are failing at alarming rates.

My academic story is proof that beliefs matter. My English teacher Harold Jack Yonkers, who used to beat his head against the wall to dramatize the lesson on verbs (beat, beat, beaten!) didn't know that my parents only had a fourth-grade education and probably could never afford to send me to a college in the U.S., like many foreign students from Brazil whose parents have the means to send their children to study abroad. Nevertheless, he prepared me in Senior English, with the same expectations for me to do my best, even though I had only been in the country for two and half years.

Ideology matters even more, such as the concept of lifting oneself up by one's own bootstrap. I feel blessed and privileged to have had opportunities in education, while surrounded

by people who supported me in the process. I certainly I did not pull myself up by my own bootstraps. (In fact, as a Brazilian, I never even owned any boots until I came to Grand Rapids, Michigan!). No... I had much help along the way. Besides Harold Jack Younkers who prepared me in the academic area, I also benefitted from affiliations like Antonio Herrera my advisor and colleague who told me I had potential when he saw the way the audience was immersed in my stories. Jan Maggini, who worked with me as a co-chair for Social Interaction Committee at Jackson Park Middle School to develop our Multicultural Program who presented with me at National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME). Jan remained a friend who encouraged my graduate work because she believed in the potential of the rippled effect of culturally responsive schooling though our belief that *We can make a difference one day at a time to one student at a time*. Chuck Sandro, the principal at the time who supported our initiatives while he predicted that our committee would have the most impact on our school culture. Gottfried Oosterwal whose friendship I treasure, as I do his contribution to my learning about the impact of culture on schooling. Many friends, particularly Linda Belknap and Marilyn Hoeks, who listened to me as I struggled to maintain my cultural identity in my profession.

I am thankful for the opportunity to teach at West College, which inspired me to work on this research study. I appreciate participants who shared their beliefs and practices to contribute to the knowledge base in teacher education aimed to improve education for diverse learners. I only hope that I have done justice to these teachers' stories, so that educators and policy makers can see the value of educating all our students, even those who come from culturally and linguistically diverse circumstances.

## APPENDIX A:

## WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

HUMAN INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE  
101 East Alexandrine Building  
Detroit, Michigan 48201  
Phone: (313) 577-1628  
FAX: (313) 993-7122  
<http://hlc.wayne.edu>



## NOTICE OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: Deulene Bastos  
College of Education

From: Ellen Barton, Ph.D. E. Barton /s  
Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: March 26, 2010

RE: HIC #: 028010B3E  
Protocol Title: Examination of Dispositions and Practices in Diversity: The Impact of a Teacher Education Course Promoting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Sponsor:  
Protocol #: 1002008075

Expiration Date: March 25, 2011

Risk Level / Category: Research not involving greater than minimal risk

The above-referenced protocol and items listed below (if applicable) were **APPROVED** following *Expedited Review* (Category 7\*) by the Chairperson/designee for the Wayne State University Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3) for the period of 03/26/2010 through 03/25/2011. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

- Participant Contact Information Form
- Consent Form (dated 3/20/10)

- \* Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. You may receive a "Continuation Renewal Reminder" approximately two months prior to the expiration date; however, it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval **before** the expiration date. Data collected during a period of lapsed approval is unapproved research and can **never** be reported or published as research data.
- \* All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the HIC **BEFORE** implementation.
- \* Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be submitted on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the HIC Policy (<http://www.hic.wayne.edu/hicpot.html>).

## NOTE:

1. Upon notification of an impending regulatory site visit, hold notification, and/or external audit the HIC office must be contacted immediately.
2. Forms should be downloaded from the HIC website at **each** use.

\*Based on the Expedited Review List, revised November 1998

**APPENDIX B:**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**

Both interview were audio-recorded and transcribed word for word.

First Interview:

The first interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. Participants conversed about issues related to their teaching students, using these guiding questions:

1. How do you think about your teaching preparation for your students?
2. Have you even had a class (a course) that was designed to prepare you for multicultural teaching? If so, tell me about that course (or those courses).
3. Explain, describe, or characterize education for culturally and linguistically diverse students.
4. What opportunities have you had to reflect on your own cultural affiliations and your cultural awareness about those students who are not like you?
5. Have you had opportunities to reflect on your teaching with a cultural vantage point?

Second Interview:

The second interview lasted approximately an hour and asked participants to share a lesson plan they felt has successfully reached all students. The ensuing conversation discussed how the teachers made decisions about the lesson, what made it successful, and other characteristics of the lesson and their use of it in their classrooms.



## APPENDIX C:

## ANALYSIS WORKSHEETS: JOY COMPARED TO ALICE, BEVERLY, AND JULIE

Table C-1. Alice's Lesson Compared to Joy's Lesson

Alice's Lesson – Course-taker	Similarities	Joy's Lesson - Non-course-taker
<p>Lesson: Language and Power</p> <p>Approach: Student centered (p.6) Curriculum: Multicultural authors who used language to tell their story</p> <p>What teacher does: Selects multicultural texts Problem posing (p.12) Prepares students for Literature Circle Groups students according to interest and reading level Students choose books from teachers' selection by reading level Multicultural Literature Circles (p.6) Texts carefully selected by teacher with a theme of language used to empower Models by sharing her reflecting writing Character growth chart (p.4)</p> <p>What students do: Read alone Read in groups Write personal narratives (p. 10, 11) Write poetry (p. 10, 11) Letter to the editor Create blogs (p. 10, 11) Practice writing in casual discourse and then hanging it into standard English (p. 17) Write vignettes (p. 16) Present reading in various forms Reader's theater Poetry Skits</p>	<p>Teach English</p> <p>Caucasian</p> <p>Caring teachers</p> <p>Both use poetry</p>	<p>Lesson: Character Analysis</p> <p>Approach: Teacher directed</p> <p>Curriculum: Start with a story selected by the district committee</p> <p>What teacher does: Gives examples on board (p. 2) Goes through lesson step by step (p. 2) Uses Graphics organizers (p. 2) Poetry (p. 2) Visualization (p. 3) Writing rough draft Computer lab for writing final ELLs can at least work on vocabulary in case because vocabulary fits all different levels</p> <p>What students do: Sit in desk at a table for two Listen to the story Volunteers read out loud Make maps Compare themselves to the character Some raise their hand to volunteer Ask teacher for correct spelling Use the computer</p> <p>Teacher goals with activity: Gives her info about how kids view themselves What they focus on To see their independent working level</p>

Table C-2. Beverly's Lesson Compared to Joy's Lesson

Beverly's Lesson - Course-taker	Similarities	Joy-Non-Course-Taker
<p>English Adjective Placement</p> <p><u>What teacher does:</u>            Start w/ a story chosen by the teacher (appropriate for children and families)            Focuses on narrative            Asks questions to stimulate background knowledge (p. 2)            Models good reading            Provides opportunities for practice            Uses personal story (p. 2)            Uses gestures and mimic (p. 2)            Teaches how to use voice as a tool through practicing voice variations            Encourages practice to build confidence            Encourages them to read to their little siblings</p> <p><u>What students do:</u>            Work with partners            Write down some things from story            Write sentences to practice the adjective placement            Ask questions            Spelling not important (p.8)            Reading out loud (p. 2)            Assessment</p>	<p>They both teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade            They are both Caucasian            They both teach Language Arts</p> <p><u>What is similar about their teaching practice?</u>            Both use teacher-directed approach            Start with a story            Reading            Comparisons            Use graphic organizers or thinking maps</p>	<p>Character Analysis</p> <p><u>What teacher does:</u>            Starts with a story selected by the district committee            Gives examples on board (p. 2)            Goes through lesson step by step (p. 2)</p> <p>Uses Graphics organizers (p. 2)            Poetry (p. 2)            Visualization (p. 3)            Writing rough draft            Computer lab for writing final            Volunteers read out loud            ELLs can at least work on vocabulary in case because vocabulary fits all different levels</p> <p><u>Teacher goals with activity:</u>            Gives me info about how they view themselves            What they focus on            To see their independent working level "I should do one about myself?"</p>

Table C-3. Julie's Lesson Compared to Joy's Lesson

Julie – Course-taker	Similarities	Joy – Non-course-taker
<p>Lesson: Building Bridges for Reading and Study Skills</p> <p>Method: Student Centered Method (p. 1)</p> <p><u>What teacher does:</u> Reading selection selected by teacher:</p> <p>What teacher does: Guides student through a problem posing activity (p.1) Start w/ story which works for everyone Demonstration (p. 16) Game analogy (p. 2) Gives Reading Inventory (p. 3) Picture test (p. 9) One section at a time (p. 5) Establish purpose for reading (p. 5) One sentence summary(p. 5) Teaches note taking system (p. 14) Predicting (p. 14) One sentence summary(p. 5) Note taking system (p. 14) Draws on high context cultural attributes of the need to social interaction</p> <p><u>What students do:</u> Reflect on their current study skills or note-taking method Interact with the group (Get up, take sides on the human dilemma Predict what will happen to the turtle</p> <p><u>Teachers' goals with activities:</u> Empowerment – owning their brain Concrete skills in reading and note-taking Opportunities to practice Student experience success</p>	<p>They teach English reading and writing skills</p> <p>Joy teaches 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Julie works with middle and high school on English;</p> <p>Caring, committed teachers;</p> <p>Start with a story;</p> <p>Use demonstration;</p> <p>Explain concepts one step at a time;</p>	<p>Lesson: Character Analysis</p> <p>Approach: Teacher Directed</p> <p><u>What teacher does:</u> Starts with a story selected by the district committee Gives examples on board (p. 2) Goes through lesson step by step (p. 2) Uses Graphics organizers (p. 2) Mapping Poetry (p. 2) Visualization (p. 3) Writing rough draft Computer lab for writing final ELLs can at least work on vocabulary in case because it fits all different levels</p> <p><u>What students do:</u> Sit at table for two Work individually Make character map of themselves Ask questions repeatedly Ask for correct word spelling Volunteers read out loud</p> <p><u>Teacher goals with activity</u> “Gives me info about how they view themselves, what they focus on. To see their independent working level “I should do one about myself?”</p>

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**ABSTRACT****EXAMINATION OF DISPOSITIONS AND PRACTICES IN DIVERSITY:  
THE IMPACT OF A TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE PROMOTING CULTURALLY  
RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY**

by

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Assimilation ideology guiding teachers and policy makers to mainstream immigrant children into the American schools has prevailed in spite of pluralists' efforts for reform schools to provide more opportunities for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Research shows a need to change assimilation driven policies and practices which are harmful to students into a reconstructivist ideology that has shown to be more conducive for the application of culturally responsive teaching. Teacher education courses aimed to prepare teacher candidates for diverse classrooms have shown limitations due to abundant focus on theory or lack of elements in course work that are known to produce change in teachers' beliefs and practices. Conducted by a former teacher education professor who was an immigrant student, this study examines the impact of a teacher education course promoting culturally responsive pedagogy by comparing five course takers with 6 non-course takers.

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT**

I grew up in a loving family in Brazil. My sister Vitória married Douglas, a gentleman who was serving in the Marines while stationed in Brasilia, Brazil. At the age of fifteen I came to Michigan to spend time with them, go to school and learn English. After graduating from high school I returned to Brazil where I pursued a Teaching Certificate to teach Physical Education while teaching English as a Foreign Language in private schools and homes. When I returned to Michigan I attended Calvin College where I obtained a minor in Art and a Michigan Teaching Certificate.

After teaching middle school for many years, I was asked to co-chair a committee for school improvement with twelve teachers who showed an interest in preparing our school for the future demographic changes. That was the beginning of my education journey through my contact with Dr. Feinstein, Dr. Martinez and eventually Dr. Rosa, Dr. Tonso and Dr. Cuello.

As a result of my work with Wayne State, I developed and taught a Multicultural Awareness Class for 7<sup>th</sup> grade for twelve years. An annual Cultural Showcase, a multicultural celebration that highlighted the diversity of the school community, and a Multicultural Awareness class became part of strategies for school improvement towards North Central Association for Outcomes Accreditation (NCA-OA) process.

As a result of my work in diversity I had the opportunity to teach ED754. Teaching this course helped me see the potential for improvement of education for all students, particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse students. My experiences as a culturally and linguistically diverse student, teacher, and professor, parent, grandparent, all gave the context for this research study and contributed to the sense of urgency and seriousness of these issues.