Preparing Multicultural Teacher Educators:
Toward a Pedagogy of Transformation

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Introduction

As the population of the United States becomes more diverse, (Banks, 2006; Irvine, 2003) both challenges and opportunities are created for the educational system. The gap that currently exists between a predominantly White, middle class, female teaching workforce and an increasingly heterogeneous population of students is one of the key factors that shapes these challenges. In an attempt to address this gap and better serve the needs of all children, Banks (2006) has advocated that every level of education should be "substantially reformed and educators must acquire new knowledge and skills" (p. xvii).

The efforts of teacher education programs in this endeavor are critical to any hope for successful change. It stands to reason, however, that if the majority of teacher educators come from positions within teaching, then they are likely to be more similar to those currently entering the teaching workforce than to the students occupying seats in classrooms (Melnick & Zeichner, 1998). With this in mind, it is imperative for doctoral programs in education to follow the lead of the multicultural teacher education literature and help future teacher educators cultivate the strategies and habits of mind necessary for preparing culturally responsive teachers.

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The research reported here examines the experiences of students in a doctoral seminar in critical pedagogy that attempts to foster multicultural knowledge and dispositions by providing future teacher educators with opportunities to examine their sociocultural identities while critically exploring the current system of education in the United States. Specifically, the focus is to understand the impact the course had on participants' personal and professional beliefs and practices. Additionally, the researchers were interested in features of the seminar that explained its impact on the participants. Insights from the study have implications for transforming teacher educators and are therefore relevant to successful multicultural teacher education.

Literature Review

For close to two decades educational scholars have called for changes in teacher education programs to prepare for the increasingly diverse student population in America's schools (Banks, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). As a result, a significant body of literature has accumulated to support the development of culturally relevant pedagogy for future and practicing teachers. As a backdrop for this paper, we provide a brief synthesis of the teacher education literature on strategies for developing sociocultural awareness. In addition, we review the limited literature that addresses the role of teacher educators in preparing preservice teachers to work with diverse students. We situate the literature and our research within the framework of Mezirow's (2000) theory of adult transformative learning.

Influenced by the concepts of paradigm (Kuhn, 1962), constructed conscious-ness, conscientization (Freire, 1970), hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), and Habermas's (1984) notions of the role of discourse and reflection in learning and examining assumptions, Mezirow (2000) has written extensively on the concept of transforma-tive learning which he defines as "the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference" (p. 6). He asserts that transformation takes place through a process of critical reflection that is facilitated by open dialogue in a safe setting. In conjunction with this reflection and dialogue, "Transformation Theory's focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feel-ings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). This addition of individual agency in transformative learning is critical as Paprock (1992) writes that, "a mindful transformative learning experi-ence requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight" (p. 24). That is, transformation represents a new way of thinking as well as a new way of acting.

In order to facilitate changes in one's frames of reference, Mezirow (1997) advocates that educators help adult learners to become aware of and critically reflect on their own and others' assumptions. He also asserts that "learners need to be as-sisted to participate effectively in discourse" (p. 10) because it is the foundation of the social process required for learning. To foster the type of discourse needed to set

the stage for transformation Mezirow suggests learning experiences intentionally designed to promote critical reflectivity as well as those that are learner-centered, participatory, interactive, and presented within the context of students' lives.

Transformation Theory has particular relevance for the kind of experiences necessary to reframe ways of thinking about teacher education that impede the creation of programs that are multicultural and focused on social justice. A second important source of direction for preparing multicultural teacher educators is the literature on multicultural teacher education. One major trend in this literature has been the discussion of strategies for crossing the cultural boundaries that exist between teachers and students in high minority, low socioeconomic status environments (Ladson-Billings, 2000; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). A key aspect to crossing this divide involves challenging teachers to understand the way that culture has shaped their own histories and informed their thinking about cultural diversity. Both Ladson-Billings (2000) and Gay and Kirkland (2003) underscore the significance of this when they write that culture both constructs and constricts the lens through which people look at the world and that it is important for teachers to know who they are, to question their own knowledge and assumptions, and to try to better understand the context within which they are teaching. Teachers who fail to acknowledge their constructed consciousness about race, class, and ethnicity will make the mistake of defining some students by their deficiencies rather than their strengths (Burnstein & Cabello, 1989; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). To challenge preexisting notions that shape teachers' thoughts and actions, much of the scholarly literature (Burnstein & Cabello, 1989; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) advocates reflection and critical self-analysis as ways to promote sociocultural consciousness.

In addition to providing teachers with the opportunity for self-reflection, the multicultural teacher education literature advocates that preservice teachers engage in a process that deconstructs the hidden structures of social reproduction that occur both inside and outside of the education system (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). More specifically, Villegas and Lucas (2002) write that preservice teachers, "need to understand that social inequalities are produced and perpetuated through systematic discrimination and justified through a societal ideology of merit, social mobility, and individual responsibility" (p. 22).

In the end, the literature on fostering culturally responsive teaching is theoretically aligned with Mezirow's transformative learning. Both clearly advocate opportunities for critical self-reflection and for deconstructing frames of reference with regard to schooling. If these activities are important for future teachers, might they also be significant for future teacher educators? Despite the wealth of literature that now exists on teacher education programs, relatively little work has been done with regard to the preparation of those who educate future teachers.

Melnick and Zeichner (1998) have pointed out that changes in teacher education programs have been difficult because teacher educators are very much like the

population of students with whom they work, that is, overwhelmingly Caucasian, middle-class, monolingual, and limited in cross-cultural experiences and understandings. They characterize the majority of teacher education programs as providing a monocultural approach that perpetuates the "kinds of teaching practices that have historically benefited middle class, White students but have largely failed to provide quality education for poor and ethnic and linguistic minority students" (p. 89). They go on to conclude that "the work of teacher educators and the institutional environment in which teacher education is embedded are critical in determining the success of efforts to prepare teachers to work with diverse students" (p.89).

With this in mind, Cochran-Smith (2004) has urged that teacher educators take a stance of critical self-reflection and ask themselves important questions such as, "How are we complicit—intentionally or otherwise—in maintaining the cycles of oppression that operate in our courses, our universities, our schools, and our society" (p. 83)? She goes on to ask, "Under what conditions is it possible to examine, expand, and alter long-standing (and often implicit) assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and practices" (p. 83)? In addition to this, Cranton (2000) has argued for "educator self-awareness" in order to "create learning experiences that better meet the needs of others" (p. 201). Just as teacher education programs have benefited enormously from the publication of multicultural education efforts, so too may the preparation of teacher educators be improved by studying efforts aimed at disrupting the constructed consciousness these educators bring to their work. Such is the goal of this article.

Context for the Study

The seminar under study—Critical Pedagogy, Curriculum, and Teacher Education—was taught for the sixth time in the fall of 2006 and over that time, although not required, graduate students have viewed it as an important part of their program. Enrollment is typically between 12 and 21 doctoral students, the majority of whom are preparing to be teacher educators. Although the majority of students are White, the seminar is more diverse than many classes, with the fall 2007 seminar, for example, including six White females, three African American females, one White male, one African Caribbean male, one Asian female, and one Middle Eastern male. A goal of the seminar is "to familiarize advanced graduate students with concepts and principles of critical theory and critical pedagogy as well as major writers…so that they may use this body of work to inform their own scholarship and teaching" (Syllabus, 2005). Students discuss written texts, including books by Adams, Blumenfeld, Castaneda, Hackman, Peters, and Zuniga (2000); Ayers (2004); Freire (1997); Hinchey (2001); hooks (1994/2003); Kincheloe (2004); McLaren (2006); and Shor and Pari (1999). In addition, a variety of videos are used to prompt reflection about society and schooling [e.g., Off Track: Classroom Privilege for All (1998); Race: The Power of an Illusion (2003); Unequal Education (1994)].

In line with the basic premise of critical theory, readings and discussions are framed in ways that question dominant meanings in educational thinking and discourse. Discussions and the writing of 6-8 page narrative essays are used to promote the type of critical self-reflection that can lead to transformation. One example of this is the Praxis Essay (Syllabus, 2005) where students identify a personal assumption and then take specific steps to examine it (e.g., readings, interviews, observations). At the end of this process students write about the relevance of their analysis for their beliefs and future actions.

Participants and Researchers

Seven doctoral students who had previously participated in the seminar were invited and agreed to be in a study of their perspectives about the seminar. In the qualitative tradition, the principle behind selecting participants was not based on sample size; it was rooted in purposely selecting individuals who would provide "information-rich cases" (Glesne, 1999, p. 29). To provide a rationale for selecting the participants, three criteria were used. The first criterion was to choose participants who intended to be teacher educators upon completion of their doctoral studies. Second, the researchers chose participants who were reflective of the current population of teacher educators in the U.S.—predominantly White and from middle to upper middle class backgrounds (Cochran-Smith, 2004). The final criterion was to select participants who entered the course with a range of perspectives and knowledge regarding critical pedagogy. This was deemed important to yield diverse stories that are typical of the doctoral students who take the course and to provide the researchers with a range of experiences (Glesne, 1999). In the end, five of the participants were female and two were male. All participants were White and middle or upper-middle class. The seven participants represented four of the five semesters the seminar had been offered before the fall of 2006.

Three researchers designed and implemented the study. Two of the researchers had been students in the doctoral seminar (2004 and 2005), and the third was the seminar facilitator. To avoid undue influence on participants, the seminar facilitator interviewed two former students with whom she had no further contact—she did not serve on their doctoral committees or teach in their areas of specialization. The intent of the research was to develop an understanding of the meanings participants constructed as a result of their experiences in the seminar, a focus that places the research squarely within a constructivist paradigm.

Data Collection

The data were drawn primarily from retrospective interviews with participants and essays written by the participants when they took the course. Participants were asked to reflect on features of the course, their experiences, and their perceptions of how the course affected them personally and professionally. Interview questions

were open-ended, allowing for the researchers to probe participants' experiences and perceptions (Berg, 2006). Examples of interview questions included:

> • Here is the syllabus for your seminar. What readings stand out for you? What assignments stand out? Please explain.

> • Has the seminar had an impact on your personal life or your way of thinking about your life? Please explain.

> • Has the seminar had an impact on your work? Please explain.

Interviews were completed in either one or two sessions and lasted between one and two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The second primary source of data was the essays written by each participant to fulfill course requirements. Although not the same each semester, the essays provided opportunities for self-reflection and analysis and synthesis of course concepts with personal experiences. For example, students wrote Theory to Practice essays in which they applied a self-selected concept (e.g., hegemony, conscientization, meritocracy) to a familiar educational experience, discussing such things as how the concept helped explain or critique the situation, or how, if applied, it might have altered the situation. All participants agreed to electronically send to the researchers the essays they wrote during the seminar.

Data Analysis

Three researchers collaboratively analyzed the data using an inductive approach (Hatch, 2002) with two guiding questions: What impact did the seminar have on participants' beliefs and practices, and what features of the seminar explain the impact? The process followed a cycle of analysis, discussion, and further analysis. To begin, the team coded five pages of the same interview and met to compare results. Even though the intent of qualitative inquiry is not to quantify the research process (Glesne, 1999), strong evidence of inter-coder reliability is reported because comparing the independent coding of the three researchers demonstrated a high frequency of similar coding of the interview data. As a result of this evidence of inter-coder reliability, the researchers completed analysis of the common interview and met again to compare results.

The premise of the coding process was to assign salient data codes according to overall domains that correlated with the original research questions (Hatch, 2002). Typical codes related to the second question, for example, included "feeling safe to speak," "connecting the familiar to the unfamiliar," and "freedom to choose writing topics." Because the essay data were very different from the interview data, the team also worked collaboratively to determine ways to code the essays. Essay analysis yielded codes such as "thinking about my work in new ways," "interacting with family members in new ways," and "making sense of new ideas."

In a second phase, the researchers divided up the remaining interviews and coded them using the same approach as in the first collaboratively analyzed interview. They wrote memos to each other to capture the impact of the seminar and the features that were influential for each participant. Next, the team met several times to discuss the analysis for each participant. Through an interactive process of presenting a case, providing evidence, questioning one another's interpretations, and justifying conclusions, the team began to reach consensus about patterns in the data. In a third phase, the team held a retreat to clarify findings for each participant and across participants. Following this session, team members returned to the data to seek confirming and disconfirming evidence of the salient themes.

The overall goal of using an inductive approach to data analysis was to search for patterns and meanings across the interviews and essays that would allow the researchers to make general statements about the impact the course had on participants as well as the salient aspects of the course that produced this impact (Hatch, 2002). The aim of making these general statements, however, was not to take the research results to a level of generalizability; it was to provide a framework for understanding the extent and context of transformation that occurred for the participants within the critical pedagogy seminar.

Although the reader ultimately judges the trustworthiness of a study, the team used two strategies to enhance credibility. These included peer debriefing and data source triangulation (Glesne, 1999). Peer debriefing was a strength of the study due to the collaborative data analysis process. We moved through a cycle of analysis, discussion, and further analysis until we reached agreement on the key research findings. Triangulation was accomplished by working back and forth between interview and essay data. In doing so we were able to identify the consistencies and occasional inconsistencies between what participants said and wrote. Their essays helped us to understand better what they learned in the seminar, how they viewed that knowledge, and what they might do with it.

Findings

Influence on Participants

Data analysis revealed that participants' reactions to the course varied, in part, due to individual histories which had been shaped by such things as gender, schooling, family background, religious background, previous experiences with difference, and socioeconomic status. In spite of this, all seven participants claimed the course had caused some type of shift in the way they thought about their lives and their work. As was previously mentioned, literature by Mezirow (2000) and others (e.g., Freire, 1970) supports the notion that transformation of frames of reference affects both thoughts and actions. Similarly, Saavedra (1995, as cited in Taylor, 2000) noted, "Acting upon redefinitions of our perspectives is the clearest indication of a transformation" (p. 373). As a result, we defined transformation as a change in

a participant's frame of reference and the actualization of that change in her/his behavior. With this rationale as a foundation, the seven participants clustered into three domains representing varying degrees of transformation.

Transformed Perspective

These participants (Jackie, Dianna, and Hilda) provided evidence of a change in perspective as well as action. In general, for these participants the seminar influenced many aspects of their lives including their identities, their personal and professional commitments, and their relationships with friends and family. Facilitated by their enrollment in the seminar, issues of social justice and equity became the lens through which each looked at her professional and personal life.

For example, the seminar helped Jackie to define the focus of her doctoral program. She spoke of entering the program with a vague focus that quickly changed after taking the critical pedagogy seminar. She explained, "Even though I might be taking general classes, I'm kind of trying to add a critical spin." Her commitment to acting on her shifted frame of reference was evident when she spoke of her dissertation:

> When I did a pilot study for my dissertation where I did coaching with one preservice teacher, we talked about issues that were typical,…we just used that lens of CP [critical pedagogy] to frame our discussions, and so the same types of things came out, but…we looked at them in different ways. Well, okay, so the kids are out of control and they're not engaged. What does that mean for those students? Why are these certain students the ones who are not engaged? Just adding an extra layer…I noticed that all the kids sitting in time out are Black boys…just trying to get them to think about that.

Throughout their interviews and essays Hilda and Dianna verbalized their commitment to critical pedagogy. Interestingly, however, the transformation was more dramatic for Jackie, who entered the seminar with less exposure to and experience with critical concepts than Dianna and Hilda. For Dianna and Hilda, the transformation took the form of crystallizing and giving voice to concepts they had essentially lived for years. Hilda demonstrated this when she talked about how taking the course gave her language to connect what she was thinking and feeling to how she wanted to live her life as a professional: "It was like I rediscovered something that was always there to begin with and now I had a name for it…I can actually take it and use it…to teach with." In a similar manner, Dianna spoke of critical pedagogy giving voice to what she had been feeling and how that impacted her work as a middle school teacher. She said, "To be able to articulate the voice of hegemony that's never articulated was so powerful and so liberating." In relationship to how this impacted her teaching she added, "I can articulate professionally unlike I could before, to really advocate for kids."

In addition, for these three participants in particular, the seminar influenced their personal identities as people of privilege and their relationships with friends

and family members. One example of this came from Jackie as she talked about how her conversations with her husband shifted as a result of the transformation in her frames of reference. She said, "Now he will bring up issues of color and when he hears things on the news, we can get into these conversations, about gender, things like that, and before we would never have conversations like that."

Additionally, Dianna spoke of how taking the critical pedagogy seminar helped her to come to terms with some particularly painful aspects of her family history. She said,

> It got me out of that bad family I was in. I mean I walked away from this family of mine, and….I don't want to say critical pedagogy did all that, it wasn't just this course but it was that ability, what this course did for me is helped me articulate it so that I could talk through with language, something that was so incredibly abstract.

Finally, in a statement that underscored how the critical pedagogy seminar helped to crystallize her identity, Hilda said, "This is part of my identity now,…it's a part I put on the outside now."

Transforming Perspective

These participants (David, Kara, and Elizabeth) provided evidence that their perspectives were in the process of changing, as if their frames of reference were beginning to transform. They talked about changes in their perspectives toward personal and professional aspects of their lives and how they had attempted to, or planned to, include some of these changing views in their work. However, each struggled with efforts to actualize changes and their transformation appeared to be more fragile than that of the first group. Hence, we refer to them as in the process of transforming rather than having transformed.

These participants provided numerous examples of how the course opened new avenues of thought for them. For instance, David articulated an example about his realization of institutional racism when he said, "I always thought of racism as an act of individual prejudice…but in this course you see racism as a much larger and more pernicious influence…I never would have thought that way if I hadn't taken this course." In a similar revelation about power and its insidious influence, Elizabeth said, "I look now at the power differentiation, not just race, culture, class, but also education level, and experience…and that never entered into my mind when I was doing research before, it does now and it makes a huge difference." Finally, Kara spoke about how surprised she was to come to the realization that not all people have the same opportunities in life when she said, "It blows my mind that…I had this opportunity and to think someone else wouldn't have this opportunity."

All three talked about how their insights could have a powerful impact on their work as educators. As an example, David talked about becoming an advisor for a lesbian, gay, and bisexual group at his new school. He said, "This is something I understand much better now… and it seems very important to me." In an interview

where Elizabeth was talking about an essay she had written for the course, she shared an experience that was very emotional for her:

> I never realized how lucky I was…I remember writing…how for granted I have taken the fact that I am where I am in my life and that I am able, I am able to enact change. I have the power to do that and that was a big thing for me and a very, very scary thing for me….Because I didn't know, and still don't know how to do it,…it seems like an extra responsibility.

Finally, Kara made a direct connection to her potential responsibility as a teacher educator and the significance of having taken the critical pedagogy course. She said, "I have the potential to teach future educators…If I kept my same narrow perspective, my narrow assumptions, then I would pass that on to them…and that would just keep getting passed down…recreating intolerance and ignorance."

These participants' transforming perspectives may have been fragile because they entered the seminar without any exposure to or experience with critical concepts. In addition, each of these participants had taken the course more recently than Jackie, Hilda, and Dianna, which may indicate they had not had sufficient time to process and internalize concepts that will lead to a transformed perspective. Whatever the reasons, it appeared as if they would require further opportunities to discuss and act on these new frames of reference in order to transform their perspectives.

Informative Learning

Robert, a serious and disciplined student, learned a lot in the seminar, but his learning was more informed than transformed. He expressed great interest in the course, speaking and writing intelligently and convincingly about the value of critical concepts. When he spoke of what he learned Robert said, "I gained scholarly insight to that kind of theoretical perspective…because I hadn't come to it from that angle before." He went on to say that the value of critical pedagogy was that it offered him additional tools for how he might approach his teaching. Still, he maintained an intellectual distance from the course concepts and when asked how critical pedagogy might impact his work as an educator he concluded, "I'd probably do some things differently, but I don't know how much I'd be willing to go outside my own comfort zone."

Conditions for Transformative Learning

In addition to indicating the extent to which participants experienced transformation, interview responses illuminated features of the course pedagogy that were essential to learning. Not surprisingly, many of the strategies overlap and build on one another. Nevertheless, distinctions between the conditions for learning are made here to facilitate the ability to discuss them as essential features of a transformative learning environment. Two main conditions surfaced from data analysis: (1) normalizing a sense of dissonance and conflict, and (2) providing multiple means

of making sense of new ideas. Strategies for accomplishing these conditions played out in a climate that the participants described as unusual, a climate in which the power differential between instructor and students was minimized.

Four respondents made reference to the equitable power dynamics in the class. Elizabeth described feeling a sense of agency, even in her role as a student, while simultaneously feeling the subtle guidance of the instructor:

> I felt like we as students had a lot of control over the class, over the discussion but [the instructor] was always there, scaffolding and getting us to the next level. But she did it very under the radar. I never felt like she was lecturing to us.

Dianna saw that the instructor's evenhanded approach to managing the class was built on trust. She said, "It was very courteous; she just had a courteous way of trusting us with the readings and trusting that our dialogue was going to go where it needed to go." David believed that more than trusting the students, the instructor was willing to admit the limits of her expertise and work alongside students to develop her knowledge of critical pedagogy. This practice stood in contrast to the approaches of many other instructors. He explained,

> I think that's what [the instructor] does so well…she doesn't pretend to know all the answers,…I truly think she makes herself into a student,… I never felt like there was a hierarchy in her class, but that is not true of all graduate classes.

By giving control to, trusting, and working alongside students to develop their understandings, the instructor was able to minimize the power differential in the classroom. This approach allowed for open communication that was fundamental to normalizing dissonance and conflict.

Normalizing Dissonance and Conflict

Participants described the normalization of a sense of dissonance and conflict as an essential feature of the course pedagogy. This meant that seminar members became accustomed to having their beliefs and ideas challenged by the content of course readings and discussions. Creating a sense of ease within this context involved a delicate process of pulling students out of their comfort zones to allow them to examine previously held assumptions.

Participants recognized the need for conflict and dissonance as part of a transformative learning environment. Elizabeth described how this feature was addressed on the first day of class when she said, "I remember [the instructor] busted out on that very first day, 'Ok guys we're going to be willing to be disturbed in this class,'…and boy did it happen from that first class all the way until the end." Another noted that internal conflict led group members to move beyond their preconceived notions to investigate established structures of society. Jackie explained that during class,

> It wasn't ever a time when you felt at peace with yourself…you know, things that you've kind of accepted this is the way they are, kind of get rumbled up…There's

an uneasiness about, well, maybe the things I knew before really aren't true or I need to question them.

Similarly, Robert talked about how feelings of uneasiness were a part of the design of the course pedagogy that featured prominently in motivating students to question their assumptions.

The fact that there is a certain amount of discontentment is a good thing because that's part of the design of the course. So if everybody was sort of happy and people weren't slightly disturbed by things then…that's not what this is really about. So I think it's a good thing that some people are kind of questioning and feeling disconcerted.

Although interview participants did experience some anxiety, they noticed that establishing that anxiety as an expectation of the course contributed to group members' abilities to examine their previously unchallenged beliefs. What else was done to facilitate a "willingness to be disturbed?" (Wheatley, 2002)

Give processing time and avoid overloading. When course participants were struggling with dissonance, the instructor allowed adequate time in class discussions to process new ideas. As Hilda told us, students needed time to formulate their contributions to class discussions:

[The instructor] gives you time to think and that's one thing I personally need, especially when I'm dealing with theory and things that are really complicated. I need time to process that so when she would ask a question she often left a lot of time before anyone answered.

Equally important was the need to avoid overloading students with assignments and readings in order to allow them time to reflect on their developing understandings of the course material. David explained that the manageable workload recognized the emotional energy involved in challenging long-held beliefs. He said,

It's important not to overload students with work in a course like this because that confusion and frustration, working through that, takes time and takes a lot of emotional energy and if you're having to do that plus do fifteen assignments . . . it's almost cruel.

Thus it was important for the instructor to give students time to work through the difficult task of reexamining their frames of reference. Interview participants highlighted that allowing time to process new ideas and providing a reasonable workload was recognition that the work of transformative learning was often unseen and unheard, but very demanding intellectually and emotionally.

Making connections between the familiar and the unfamiliar. Another strategy for facilitating dissonance and conflict as normal was to help students make connections between familiar and unfamiliar concepts. Providing these bridges created a path for students to move out of their comfort zones into transformative learning experiences. David described achieving a delicate balance between creating productive

dissonance that motivates reflection and a discomfort that leads to an unwillingness to examine beliefs. He said, "You want to unsettle people to the point where they think long and hard about changes in their behavior, but I don't think that you want to unsettle them so much that they just shut down and resist." Dianna also explained the importance of this strategy in terms of the zone of proximal development when she said, "You can't be so far out of your ZPD, that you are just sitting there and shutting down…it could be a mean situation for some people, a hostile or marginalizing experience, even an isolating experience." Thus, bridging the gap between the familiar and unfamiliar helped students handle the uncomfortable challenge of investigating their perspectives and assumptions. Interview participants identified strategies used by the instructor to maintain this balance.

First, the instructor began with a text that was accessible and familiar to students in the class. Three respondents recognized Hinchey's (2001) *Finding Freedom in the Classroom* to be a valuable introduction to the concepts and terminology of critical pedagogy. For example, Robert said the Hinchey text, "Provided the vocabulary to understand what CP [critical pedagogy] is…[and] gave me the tools that addressed moral issues in terms of social justice….[It was] a nice way to ease into the topic." Consequently, providing a primer text proved to be an important method to extend the consideration of course concepts as it provided the necessary foundation to acquaint students with the language and concepts of critical pedagogy.

The Theory to Practice Essay assignment was the second method identified by respondents as a way to connect the familiar to the unfamiliar. By asking students to analyze a past personal or professional experience in terms of critical pedagogy concepts, the assignment allowed students to reexamine their experiences from a new frame of reference. Four participants described how the assignment helped to deepen their understandings of the course material. For example, Jackie explained that when she wrote the essay,

> I was fresh out of teaching, and I could pick something that I had seen in my class…Something that…when I was teaching I would always say, "I think this is unfair, I don't really think this is right for kids," but I couldn't always name it…. I didn't know how to embed it within a larger sphere and so that helped me name it and explain it a little bit better.

In the end, providing students with accessible foundational knowledge of course concepts and allowing them the opportunity to reexamine their experiences served as a means to gently nudge them beyond their comfort zones, connect the familiar and unfamiliar, and normalize the dissonance and conflict that was essential to their transformative learning experiences.

Providing Multiple Means of Making Sense of New Ideas

Interview participants made numerous references to methods for processing new concepts. As a result, the following four categories emerged as key features

of the pedagogy: (1) opportunity for affective and rational modes of knowing; (2) dialogue; (3) choice; and (4) opportunities for application.

Affective and rational modes of knowing are honored. Four interviewees indicated that the critical pedagogy seminar differed from many of their other courses at the university in the sense that it validated personal and emotional experience as a way of making sense of course content. By licensing personal and emotional experience alongside more rational, intellectual knowledge, the instructor provided for a "relational way of knowing" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1996; Taylor, 2000). Course members came to know both the content and each other. For example, when asked what words best describe the class, Elizabeth responded,

> The word relationship is called to mind for that class because it's the one class that I've had in all the courses that I've taken here…that I actually felt like I made relationships with the other students in the class. And I think part of that is because we were talking about such…emotion evoking and thought provoking kinds of things.

Perhaps the clearest manifestation of the equal acceptance of affective and rational modes of knowing came in the nature of the written assignments. Both personal experience and scholarly research were considered valid contributions. David described how written assignments for the seminar allowed students to venture from traditional academic writing styles when he said, "In each of the essays I had a chance to merge…personal reflection and more sort of intellectual, analytical thinking, which is something I don't think you often get to do…in grad school level writing." Thus, respondents noted that affective ways of knowing were not only valid within class discussions and personal exchanges between course members, but they were also valid in class assignments as a way of making sense of new ideas.

Dialogue. Dialogue featured prominently in five interviewees' descriptions of the course pedagogy. Analysis revealed a distinction between interpersonal dialogue among class members and intrapersonal dialogue that resulted from completing the seminar's activities and assignments. The interpersonal dialogue described in the interviews was similar to what Belenky, et al. (1996) called "'really talking,' in which emphasis is placed on active listening, domination is absent, reciprocity and cooperation are prominent, and judgment is withheld until one empathically understands another's point of view" (p. 14). An example of how this was manifested in the course came when Elizabeth told us,

> [The instructor] gave us ample time to discuss the readings, which was so important to me because the readings were a little bit difficult for me and the… ideas were so new for me. Hearing what the rest of the group had to say and hearing their experiences was very crucial to me being able to understand the material.

Interview participants further explained how particular interpersonal dialogue-based activities benefited them. Two respondents referenced the advantages of small groups. In one example, Robert explained,

> I liked when we had an opportunity to work in small groups and…discuss our ideas in that kind of realm, whether we're sharing ideas from our papers or analyzing something and then bringing it to the class as a whole because that helped me to kind of focus on what I wanted to say and sort of get my thoughts together.

Intrapersonal dialogue also surfaced as an important part of the seminar for two of the interviewees. Both Kara and Elizabeth explained how the essays were essential to their understanding of the course materials since they provided them the opportunity to formulate their own perspectives on seminar topics. Kara stated, "I think that's what the essays were, was to explore your own ideas…rather than being dictated what to think." Elizabeth also commented on the essays when she said, "I'm a talker, and to put down on paper and have to clearly articulate what I was thinking and feeling was very important to me in understanding the class."

Choice. Participants emphasized the importance of choice in the seminar. This proved to be essential for several of the respondents in that it allowed them to engage the material on their own terms. In one example Kara explained:

> There was enough flexibility in what we did…in what we had to read sometimes, you know we could read selections or pick certain sections of the social justice book to read….You know there weren't as many people that might have chosen the same thing as others, like a lot of people…tended to stay around some of the similar topics like race…and that was one where I chose [social] class.

Providing choice allowed students to explore their own interests and learn the way that suited them best and ensured that the learning experience was not overly cumbersome with course demands. Furthermore, it provided students with a variety of ways in which they could make sense of new concepts.

Opportunities for application. The final strategy related to multiple means of making sense of new ideas was the opportunity to put concepts from the course into practice. Four of the respondents made statements that exemplified the importance of both planned and spontaneous opportunities for the application of course content.

Planned opportunities were those built into the structure of the course, usually in class activities or essay assignments. David described a particular activity that connected course concepts with content area standards for K-12 education:

> We looked at those from a critical perspective.…I found that valuable…because you were looking at an actual artifact around which people…organize their curriculum… So we were taking concepts that we had learned in the course and applying them to something real….that felt authentic to me.

Hence, the opportunity to examine curriculum and instruction from a critical perspective seemed to ground the course concepts in a way that made them tangible.

Specific essays, most notably the Theory to Practice Essay and the Praxis Essay, also provided seminar participants with planned opportunities to put critical concepts to work and gain new insight. Robert's Theory to Practice essay exemplified

the work of many of the participants in that he critically reflected on his practices as a classroom teacher. From this Robert gained the understanding that

> I didn't always offer students many choices, and I pretty much controlled the agenda of what was discussed. I had my ideas of what was worthwhile…sometimes as I look back I'm thinking well, was it more of a lecture? Was it more of a discussion? So that became kind of humbling to look back and find that I sometimes sent mixed messages.

Consequently, the course activities and assignments pushed participants to strive for the balance between theory and practice embodied in the notion of praxis. However, planned opportunities were not the only chances for students to put course concepts to use. Two respondents spoke of spontaneous application opportunities when engaging in household discussions with family members and friends that resulted from their consideration of course materials. In one example, Kara described a situation with her husband by saying,

> I wrote a paper about [how] the gap between the haves and have-nots gets bigger… talking about public education and private education and when I read the final conclusion paragraph to my husband, he said, "I could not believe that came out of the mouth of my wife.".…when he said that to me I was like, "And what exactly did you expect your wife to say?"….And so it kind of just starts conversation because…he has some very narrow ideas of what public education is…and so he had these ideas of how the University has changed my thinking on public education. I said it hasn't changed my thinking whatsoever… I'm just in a forum where I can talk about it.

This opportunity gave Kara the chance to further articulate her thinking on public and private education and "the haves and the have-nots." By confronting her husband she was able to articulate her position more clearly, and moreover, she attributed this to her participation in the seminar.

Discussion

Cochran-Smith (2004) writes, "To alter a dysfunctional system, we need teachers who regard teaching as a political activity and embrace social change as part of the job, teachers who enter the profession not expecting to carry on business as usual but prepared to join other educators and parents in major reforms"(p. 46). Preparing this kind of teacher requires a certain kind of teacher educator, one who has engaged in the process of conscientization (Freire, 1970) and considered the implications of that process for praxis. This study provides direction for how these objectives could be accomplished.

Not surprisingly, participants did not all experience a transformation of their frames of reference. These findings echo the literature on the preparation of pre-service teachers for multicultural education in that a single experience may not be sufficient to promote transformation of long-held perspectives (Sleeter, 2001). Nevertheless, even initially skeptical participants appeared to be influenced sub-

stantially by their participation in the seminar. Their actions and plans for action suggested a growing commitment to multicultural education and social justice as well as knowledge and skill related to praxis. Thus, for some participants, at least, the experience appeared to be "mindful" (Paprock, 1992, p. 24) in that they moved beyond reflective insight to action.

Is it the particulars of a syllabus that cause the disruption of constructed consciousness? We think not. Although participants did talk about particular readings, more often they talked about elements of a pedagogical framework that created the conditions for reflection. That is, while the course materials were important, the ways in which the group operated appeared to be more important. Without the attention to the climate for learning, the normalizing of dissonance and conflict, and the provision of multiple avenues for sense making, the seminar may have seemed like a traditional academic experience. Perhaps more of the participants would have been informed rather than transformed.

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning holds great promise for informing the preparation of multicultural and social justice oriented teacher educators and teachers. For example, Taylor (2000) reports that research on transformation reveals the process to be "recursive, evolving, and spiraling in nature" (p. 290), thereby reinforcing the insight from teacher education research that multiple experiences over time may be necessary to promote transformation. Further, Taylor's synthesis of research provides direction for a pedagogy of transformation including essential features of the learning environment (e.g., democratic, open, collaborative) and key instructional methods (e.g., group and internal dialogue, stimulation of conflict, application opportunities). The research also points to qualities of the facilitator that have a bearing on the likelihood of learner transformation. In addition to describing the conditions for learning that promote transformation of frames of reference, the theory reminds us of the demands transformation can place on a learner. Kegan (2000) writes of educators who seek transformation in their students:

> They are asking many of them to change the whole way they understand themselves, their world, and the relationship between the two. They are asking many of them to put at risk the loyalties and devotions that have made up the very foundation of their lives…This is a long, often painful voyage, and one that, much of the time, may feel more like mutiny than a mere exhilarating… expedition to discover new lands. (p. 67)

Although few studies in teacher education have used Mezirow's (2000) framework, the current study certainly suggests the theory's utility for the preparation of multicultural teacher educators.

Implications for the Transformation of Teacher Educators

There are limitations to a retrospective study of the experience of seven participants who were interviewed by peers and a former instructor. Although we are well aware of those limitations, we are encouraged by the insights we have gained into teaching

and learning in the critical pedagogy seminar. Several implications for practice in the preparation of multicultural teacher educators are tentatively offered.

Develop Conscientization as a Strand in Teacher Education Doctoral Programs

Although it is unclear in the current study and in transformative learning research what exactly triggers transformation in an individual, there is general agreement that transformation is "less a singular significant experience and more a long cumulative process" (Taylor, 2000, p. 300). Our participants responded differently to the same seminar, with some revealing evidence of transformed frames of reference, others revealing evidence that they were undergoing transformation, and one appearing to have learned a lot without necessarily altering his frame of reference. Multiple opportunities for critical reflection over time appear to be necessary for many learners.

Use the Pedagogical Framework with Inservice Teacher Educators

The seminar participants were all doctoral students preparing to be teacher educators. Nevertheless, the insights gained from the study may be helpful in designing and implementing ongoing reflection opportunities for teacher educators. Practicing teacher educators, who may have had little experience with conscientization prior to assuming faculty positions, could profit from the scaffolded reflection the study participants described. The conditions for learning are likely to be relevant due to the personal, challenging nature of conscientization, no matter the individual's age, background, or years on a teacher education faculty.

Be Explicit with Participants About the Conditions for Learning So That They Might Recreate Them with Their Teacher Education Students in the Future

Whether the conscientization experience is conducted with preservice or practicing teacher educators, the facilitator can use the experience to teach lessons about teacher education pedagogy. In order to respond to Banks's (2006) call to reform every level of education, teacher educators must be prepared to stimulate conscientization in their students. While fraught with challenges, the process may be facilitated by use of the conditions for learning revealed in this study and supported by transformative learning theory. When teacher educators experience those conditions, they may be better prepared to implement them with their students, the future teachers of our nation's children.

The call for teachers who are prepared to teach culturally diverse students demands teacher educators who are capable of preparing them. Despite their best intentions, teacher educators are likely to be restricted by a constructed consciousness based on limited cross-cultural experience and understanding and immersion in the dominant, white middle class American culture. As one participant noted,

You think of yourself as being enlightened, and you think of yourself as trying to

enlighten others, and yet you have to always go back and realize that you have a constructed consciousness, and that you need to examine [it] and be critical because if you don't, then it's awfully hard to model it and to be aware of it enough to offer students the tools to do it themselves.

The examination of one effort at disrupting the constructed consciousness of prospective teacher educators yields insights into how this work might be done with preservice and practicing teacher educators. It also points to the utility of transformative learning theory for accomplishing the objectives of multicultural teacher education. The pedagogical framework identified in the study may help teacher educators learn to teach for social justice.

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