Developing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: A Meaning Making Process

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Dedication

To my family

In every conceivable manner the family is the link to our past and the bridge to our future.

To Katie, Ryan, Kyle, Nathan, and Kirsten. Being your mother has been my greatest honor and joy.

To Laura and Brielle, my heart daughters.

To Adrian, child of my child. There is nothing like the sweet sound of your voice as you ask Nana to come and play.

And to Jim, from sunrise to sunset you are and always will be my best friend, my husband and my life.

Abstract

Guided by my own practice as an elementary teacher, literacy coach and teacher educator, I sought what Erickson (1986) describes as " divulging the journey of the participants from the actors point of view " (p.119) to understand the lived experience of nine preservice teachers who actively sought wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with what it means to practice culturally relevant pedagogy at the intersection of three distinctly unique and different locations: a Midwestern university setting, an urban elementary school setting and the community in which their field experience took place.

This qualitative study uses what Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) calls culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Participants Focused on the three criteria of CRP: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order, as well as, Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti's (2005) Funds of Knowledge as an anchor for seeking more equitable spaces within the elementary classroom. In an attempt to engage in ethnography that Fetterman (2010) calls telling a credible, rigorous, and authentic story I collected the following data: fieldnotes, students' writings (i.e., journal writings, lesson plans, essays), video and audio recordings of university course work, video recordings of participants teaching, and unstructured interviews.

My findings give us new stories to consider when thinking about what it means to become a teacher and the uneven workings of power between the preservice teachers, their cooperating teachers, and their university instructors. Furthermore, engagement in

had revealed to the preservice teachers the unequal power structures within a racialized society and how it is enacted in schooling. The findings suggested that the preservice teachers, within this study, were discovering their human selves at the intersection between what they brought to their social roles and the testimonies of their pupils, families, and the community. This study also explains how using story as metaphor brought the preservice teachers' racialization stories and the stories of their pupils, families, and the community within the urban school setting to the forefront.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

"Come on up!" This is always how my favorite time of the day started. I called

him grandpa because he was my heart grandpa. John Fritz was my step-grandpa, but he

could not have treated me with more kindness and love if we had been blood relatives. In

my eyes he was larger than life. His booming voice commanded the attention of

everyone around him. Pulsing with energy, vibrant and animated, my grandpa could

make people stop and smile with his cheerful disposition and the gift of the gab. He grew

up in southern Alabama, one of eight children. His life experiences provided a rich

bounty to draw upon during the ritual after-dinner story-telling hour. I say "hour", but

these story-telling episodes could go on well past my bedtime.

They always started in the same way. Grandpa would look around the table

asking if I or my brother or sister needed another cookie, piece of pie, or whatever

wonderful sweet my grandmother had prepared for us. My mother would give us "the

eye" indicating that we had had enough and were not to respond with any sort of

affirmation. She would then turn to my grandmother to compliment her on the delicious

dinner and to say that we all had had quite enough. My grandpa would immediately

respond in a booming voice, "Nonsense! These are growing children." In perfect timing

with his words, he would raise his arms in the air and bring them down onto the dining

room table with a force that would cause the perfectly balanced silverware to jump and

the coffee in his cup to spill into the saucer. He would do this in a manner that might cause a stranger to believe that he was extremely angry or upset, but just as the silverware and coffee started to settle into a new home he would give us a quick little wink. This was my cue. I would quickly jump from my chair and run to my grandpa as he pushed himself from the table to make room for me. He would slap his knee and up I would come.

This was the start of the story-telling time at my grandparents' house. My grandmother would take her cue (trying not to smile) and quickly serve each of us another dessert. My mother would protest, but then would quickly surrender – it really was useless to argue with my grandpa. As my grandfather started talking and we nibbled at our second dessert, my mother and grandmother would clear the table and start to wash dishes. This ritual was the source of many, many hours of entertainment. We would hang on every word as my grandpa would spin his tale. The stories he told varied in length and topic, but each brought to life a history of my grandpa's life and revealed the cultural nuances of growing up in the south. It wasn't until I was much older that I began to understand the magic and power of these stories and the impact of the rich tradition of storytelling. Those stories took us to another place and time while simultaneously being woven into our lives. As my grandpa wove a tapestry of characters, actions, and situations, our imaginations were awakened as we used our life experiences to actualize the story in our minds and to make meaning. Meaning here could have two denotations: what the story is actually about, and how the story affects the listener personally and resonates for them on a personal level. My grandpa's stories were more than the factual

details that spurred the plot along. His stories had the power to connect time, place, and humanity with the simple start of "Once upon a time. . ."

I believe my love of story and my deep connection to the use of story as a teaching tool were born in these moments. I draw upon many of the meanings that were constructed from the stories of my life as well as the stories that have been graciously shared with me. I am a self-proclaimed collector of stories. It is empowering for a listener to make the creative leap and connect the metaphor of a story to the realm of his or her own life. Recognizing and creatively processing an analogy is a way of personally embodying information as experience. Experiential learning or "active processing" of connections (Caine & Caine, 1991) contributes to the memorable nature of stories presented as metaphor to create a shared and collaborative meaning-making opportunity.

It is with this thinking that I approached my research. The aim of my research is to share the story of nine preservice teachers as they attempted to make meaning of culturally relevant pedagogy at the intersection of three distinctly unique and different locations: a Midwestern university setting, an urban elementary school setting, and within the community in which their field experience took place. This dissertation not only reflects the story of these nine preservice teachers, but also their process of collecting stories from university instructors, elementary pupils, cooperating teachers, the community and parents, and their own personal histories. Attention is paid to the significance of these stories in making meaning of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Each of the preservice teachers who participated in the study volunteered to take an additional course on culturally relevant pedagogy, designed to complement the

interdisciplinary methods block program they were required to take as part of their teacher education program. The block program encompasses three method courses: Techniques in Elementary Social Studies; Techniques in Elementary Language Arts; and Reading Assessment. Built into the block program is an intensive field experience where each preservice teacher spends approximately half the semester in the university setting, learning content-specific methods while designing and writing an integrated unit they will teach in an urban elementary classroom. The other half of the semester is in the urban elementary classroom. While the preservice teachers are in the elementary classroom, they teach, assess, document, and reflect upon the unit they designed. This field experience is different from the traditional field experience in that four university instructors (a professor in reading instruction, a professor in language arts, a professor in social studies, and a professor in special education) and a graduate assistant accompany the preservice teachers into the urban elementary schools every day that they are there. University instructors observe teaching and learning episodes, co-teach with preservice and/or cooperating teachers, model-teach with small and large groups of pupils, and provide individual and group coaching. The extra course about culturally relevant pedagogy met an additional hour per week at the university setting *and* participated in one community "field trip" per week for the duration of one semester (14 weeks). The block schedule dictates that the preservice teachers meet three days a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), so we met on campus for at least one hour each Tuesday afternoon for the official culturally relevant pedagogy course. There were very few Tuesdays that we met for only one hour, however; most weeks the course lasted two to three hours because of the preservice teachers' desire to stay and continue to work. In

fact, the course was most often brought to an end due to my schedule and my need to meet other responsibilities. Community inquiry field trips were at various times and on various days depending on the function – some took place in the evening, a few times we met on Saturdays, and other times we met on Thursday. Preservice teachers committed to 4-8 hours each week for community inquiry separate from the Tuesday course meeting times. The community inquiry was divided into two separate experiences: One experience was the inquiry field trips mentioned above, and the other incorporated an individual research project (i.e., student interviews, parent interviews, community involvement, etc.). Thus, preservice teachers were invited to partake in the meaning-making process of culturally relevant pedagogy in three distinct locations. Therefore, this study attempted to understand how nine preservice teachers, enrolled in a teacher education program at a Midwestern university, made meaning of culturally relevant pedagogy. This dissertation reflects a four month (one semester) ethnographic investigation of the experiences of these nine preservice teachers and attempts to provide a piece of the ever-changing puzzle of teacher education for social justice.

Why Storytelling?

Throughout history, cultures have recognized the role of storytelling in teaching values to children. Patrick Lewis (2011) posed the question: "If story is central to human meaning why, in the research world, is there not more storytelling?" (p. 505). Story and storytelling are simultaneously meaning-making tools and meaning-making products. "There is an abiding recognition that existence is inherently storied. Life is pregnant with stories" (Kearney, 2002, p. 130). Stories are, quite possibly, the principal way of understanding the lived world. If we want preservice teachers to hear and

understand the children and families they serve and create more equitable spaces in classrooms, then we need to provide opportunities for listening and telling stories. We also need to pay close attention to whose stories we are telling. The use of stories in this study was the vehicle used for the participants to develop a deeper understanding of the lived world of their students, families, and the community.

In the 1930s, anthropologist Morris Opler recorded that among the Apache groups of southern New Mexico, a person who had acted in an inappropriate way would often be chided with the statement, "How could you do that? Didn't you have a grandfather to tell you stories?" There was a shared understanding in the community of the power of storytelling and stories to shape character in a meaningful way. In addition, stories have the power to reveal the beliefs and biases that are embraced and embedded within a culture. Often, stories show over and over the character traits that are rewarded and discouraged in a community. These stories play a strong part in our identity formation. And the power of the story to teach is most fully realized when it is told aloud and in person, because the teller reveals in a hundred subtle ways his/her own approval or disapproval of the actions and events s/he is narrating. The concept of story provided a particularly useful framework for me as I considered the journey of these nine preservice teachers. It was because of Lewis' compelling argument that I decided to use the metaphor of story to help make sense of the story of these preservice teachers.

Story as metaphor

Within each location (university classroom, elementary urban classroom, community in which the classroom is nestled) the preservice teachers are invited to gain

new insights into culturally relevant pedagogy. Not only do I use the metaphor of story to share the experiences of these nine preservice teachers, but I also use the metaphor of story to help the preservice teachers understand the theoretical foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy, how it is enacted in the classroom setting, and the ways of thinking of diverse families and communities. This happened in several ways: hearing the stories of classroom teachers working towards a more equitable classroom, hearing the stories of the pupils in their classrooms, hearing stories from several people from the community, and using Gloria Ladson-Billings' story *Crossing Over to Canaan*. Presenting these different stories from differing viewpoints shared the complex, multiple-story reality of schooling with often conflicting plotlines. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003) point out that "new metaphors have the power to create new reality . . . this can happen when we start to comprehend our experience in terms of metaphor, and it becomes a deeper reality when we begin to act in terms of it . . . If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our action on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to" (p. 145). The goal was to use stories in multiple voices (academic, disenfranchised pupils, families, and communities) as a vehicle to give the preservice teachers an "insiders" perspective, and to give voice to the unheard stories of the often-voiceless teachers, pupils, families, and communities within the urban school setting.

While much of traditional social science seeks generalizable knowledge derived from quantification of social and human phenomena, other avenues of portrayal focus on first person accounts, derived from the illumination of individual stories and narratives (Josselson & Lieblich, 2001). The focus on story suggests that much is to be learned

from the experiences of individuals, particularly those coping with the constraints of daily life (Coles, 1990). This study is grounded in the belief that in order to support social justice in teacher education, teaching practice must be grounded in knowledge; theory; teaching strategies, methods, and skills; *and*, advocacy with and for students, parents, colleagues, communities, and others involved in larger communities. The participants in this study were invited to be co-researchers of the community within which they taught. They collected stories that reflected the historical foundations of the communities and the people that currently live in them. This study examines the impact of nine preservice teachers, invited to be co-researchers of the local communities and cultures, collecting community stories, on how they perceive or think about culturally relevant pedagogy. How did this impact their vision of their students and the community in which they taught? This study suggests that using the metaphor of story not only helped the preservice teachers understand the socio-historical reality and ways of thinking of the diverse families and communities within which they taught, but also served as a vehicle to critically discuss social identity, what it means to teach in a culturally relevant way, and the political barriers that interfere with teaching in a culturally relevant manner.

Story as a tool to develop deep understandings

According to Pamela Rutledge (2011), our brains respond to content by looking for a story to make sense of the experience. Stories are how we think, and how we make meaning of life. Stories are how we explain how things work, how we make decisions, how we justify our decisions, how we persuade others, how we understand our place in the world, how we create our identities, and how we define and teach social values. In

other words, meaning-making is couched in story where we actively insert our own perception into the lived world, and that process is a process of meaning-making.

I define meaning-making as a complex process of dynamic interactions among: (a) one's existing prior knowledge and experiences, (b) information suggested in the social and physical world, and (c) the sociocultural context. I suggest that meaning-making is at the intersection between what we bring to our social roles (our background, experiences, and personalities) in different contextual situations. I have come to realize that my grandfather's storytelling experiences were a fusion of knowledge, understanding, life experiences, and cultural mores shared through a reciprocal relationship to provoke meaning-making. My grandpa taught me much in my life through his storytelling; it was a process that moved beyond reported meaning to a shared space where I was invited into a reciprocal relationship and thus constructed meaning. Moreover, meaning-making happened at the nexus between self and the social world unique to that time and place.

What I recall most is that my grandpa's stories were not just simple instruments for conveying independent meanings, but were themselves embodiments of meaning. In other words, these storytelling episodes were a full-bodied, heart and emotion experience. The combination of cognition and affect made these stories powerful. They shaped important attitudes and behaviors in relation to my self-concept. What kind of person am I? What kind of person do I want to be? Emotion is central to meaning-making because it is central to thinking and even, as Micciche explains, creates the glue that "adheres" ideas to motivations.

As an elementary teacher and literacy coach I was cognizant of the fact that all children came to school with their own "stories". Each child walked into the classroom with a unique history, life experience, knowledge, understanding, and cultural mores. These were most often very different from mine. We each move through the world in different and unique ways. In order to be an effective educator for these unique individuals I needed to be knowledgeable about content, pedagogy, and assessment, and be able to apply that knowledge in a meaningful way. This meant that I needed to be sensitive to the complexity of meaning-making, creating shared spaces where each student's "story" was respected, honored, and invited into a reciprocal relationship where meaning could be co-constructed in a collaborative effort. I needed to resist "cure-alls" in order to move to a place of understanding.

In my current position as a teacher educator I am committed to helping a group of mostly white, monolingual, and middle-class preservice teachers become compassionate, successful teachers for racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse pupils. However, this does not mean that I view these prospective teachers as a homogenous group. Future teachers' experiences are far more complex, and their beliefs and ideas are much more varied, than what is often reflected in research. Each presevice teacher within my class brought with them their "story" – a story that shaped their identity and was grounded in specific contexts that reflect specific historical and cultural forces and beliefs. In recent years, researchers committed to equalizing educational opportunities have recognized a growing paradox between the demographic profile of children in public schools and those who deliver instruction and control curricula. The orientation of these students of differing background is often foreign to the preservice

teachers and vice versa. The mismatch between the teacher "story" and student "story" requires the K-12 student to not only learn new information, but also learn new ways of learning, and new ways of considering what counts as knowledge worth learning at all. The abyss between the two worlds is deep and wide, and unfortunately places most of the responsibility to create bridges between the two disparate worlds onto the K-12 students. A significant body of research indicates that effective teaching requires a teacher to exercise authority to teach to the unique strengths and needs of a child. The preservice teachers in my class became quickly and acutely aware of how this is often not the case in today's world of scripted curricula and how ill-prepared we and our educational systems are to meet these students in terms that are sensitive to their unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Statement of Purpose and Question

The primary aim of this study was to understand the experience of nine preservice teachers in a Midwestern university teacher education program that involved simultaneous experiences in course work, an intense field experience within an urban school setting, and a community inquiry project. I wanted to understand this experience from the preservice teachers' point of view, using their stories. In other words, I wanted to understand the experiences of these nine preservice teachers as they attempted to make meaning of what it means to teach culturally relevant pedagogy. In addition, I had supportive questions to help guide me: How do you help preservice teachers to actively seek wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with what it means to practice culturally relevant pedagogy? How do preservice teachers conceptualize culturally relevant

pedagogy? How do these preservice teachers view themselves, or think of themselves, in the role of social justice? How do their identities shift over time?

I use the metaphor of "story" throughout my work to illustrate a human relationship and the work of teaching and learning. My aim is to highlight the stories that nine preservice teachers offer us. The preservice teachers' stories share the paradoxes and possible new avenues in teacher education as they orient themselves at the intersection of higher education, an urban elementary school setting, and the community in which they teach. These stories give insights into how the preservice teachers made sense of these experiences and how their identities shifted over time; they also give insights into the complex social production of racial identities and how the broader systemic structures intersected with the shaping of teacher identity. The purpose of sharing these stories is not to give answers but to think about the meanings these stories offer. This "story" is about the work and lives of these preservice teachers, each a thoughtful human being, who made a conscious effort to take up the work to engage in a more equitable educational model – a model or way of being that would help to create a bridge between their life story and the life stories of their current and future pupils.

Significance of the Problem

For my mother, the thinking was simple: we had to go to school so we could all learn about America. A cousin took us to register at Battle Creek Elementary first. There was a white woman with curly hair wearing a red turtleneck and a sweater with a reindeer on it. She was the tester, and she told us to say our ABC's. I said, "A, B, C." Then I stopped. She said for me to say my ABCs again

and my cousin said for me to say the letters again, so I repeated them again, "A, B, C." The woman tried more times and then she shook her head. She held up cards with different colors and I smiled each time she changed the card. Say the color. I said them in Hmong. She shook her head. We had only been in Battle Creek Elementary for a few days and the adults believed that it was a good school, but they didn't want us because we couldn't speak English well enough, and they didn't have the special teachers we would need. This is my first memory of feeling embarrassed. (Yang, 2008, pp. 139-140)

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) asserts that "all teacher candidates must develop proficiencies for working effectively with students and families from diverse populations and with exceptionalities to ensure that all students learn. Regardless of whether they live in areas with great diversity, candidates must develop knowledge of diversity in the United States and the world, professional dispositions that respect and value differences, and skills for working with diverse populations" (retrieved Feb. 1, 2011, from http://www.ncate.org). Teaching all children has been clearly stated as a goal of great importance at the national, state, and local level. Yet stories like Kao Kalia Yang's tell of a journey filled with great struggles as she and her family attempt to navigate the public school system. Had any of Yang's teachers had any preparation in how best to work with diverse learners? It is becoming increasingly evident that the way in which educators and the community respond to issues of diversity will affect the self-esteem and academic success of students. Instruction of the type that has traditionally been offered in schools fails to meet this goal.

In the 1960s, many social scientists and educators began examining what was termed "culturally deprived" or "culturally disadvantaged" children and youth. The major tenet underlying this perspective was that children who were not White and middle class were somehow defective and lacking. Was the origin of Yang's embarrassment a product of her being culturally disadvantaged, or was it the teacher who was culturally deprived? Traditionally, the school's role was to compensate for the children's presumed lack of socialization and cultural resources. In Yang's first experience in American schools, she understood that it was a school not designed for her. Riessman's (1962) *The Culturally Deprived Child* was known as being one of the most influential books published for teachers and other educators in the 1960s. His text positioned White middle-class cultural expression as the normative or correct way of being in school and society. Thus, the historical background of our current educational system reflects that the interpretation of a presumed deficiency in a diverse society should be placed onto the child and family. This rewards children born into White middle-class culture and positions "other" children as being inadequate for school norms and values.

Many teachers, preservice teachers, and teacher educators are stuck in the educational reforms, mandates, and instructional and assessment practices that are grounded in this deficit way of thinking, which negatively impacts the educational experiences of many children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Hilliard, 2006). Like many other multicultural scholars, Hillard (2006) calls for a new breed of teachers who are eager – and trained – to awaken the natural genius and brilliance of children of color by implementing practices and beliefs that are culturally relevant and affirming (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1999). Doing so

asks teachers to teach "against the grain" (Cochran-Smith, 2001, p. 3) by being advocates for student rights and responding to scripted programs and standardized testing. Moving away from the historical underpinnings that have tainted the current school practices requires careful cultivation of a new generation of teachers who are willing to examine teaching and learning in relation to the worlds of learners and the worlds that influence their learning.

In the face of these issues, the question of how teachers are recruited and prepared has become a hot topic in educational discourse.

The focus for my study was exploring preservice teachers' development of culturally relevant pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is a theoretical model developed by Ladson-Billings (1994), Gay (2000), Howard (2003), Irvine (2009), and others that situates teachers as change agents employing three distinctive pedagogical practices: demanding high levels of achievement, helping students to accept and affirm their cultural identity, and cultivating critical perspectives within their students. Ladson-Billings believes that CRP empowers students "intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 17-18). At a time when disparities in academic achievement between children of color, the poor, and those born into the White middle class are recognized at the national, state, and local levels, many teacher development programs are searching for how to better prepare teacher candidates to teach children who may be culturally, linguistically, and economically different than them.

According to Zumwalt and Craig (2008), 43% of the public school population is made up of children from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, 84% of the teacher workforce and preservice teachers are White, middle-class, and female. As the demographic profile of children in public school has changed, that of the people who deliver instruction and control the curricula has remained static. The large number of studies that focus on changing demographics and the growing mismatch between teachers and students is an indication of the level of concern among researchers and educators. In addition, research gives attention to the significance of the teacher's role in influencing student achievement. The difference between teacher culture ("story") and student culture ("story") within the classroom coupled with the important role that a teacher has in impacting *opportunity* gap points to the need to give more and more attention to preparing teachers for diverse students. Thus, the purpose of my research is to explore how one teacher education program can better prepare preservice teachers, with a diverse range of understandings, to positively impact the lives of children from diverse backgrounds.

This study focuses on the preparation of preservice teachers to teach in a culturally relevant manner. Research shows that teachers, who are primarily white and middle class, have received little coursework or guidance to understand the background knowledge, experiences, and cultural resources that their diverse students bring to the classroom (Futrell, Gomez, & Bedden, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006). I am interested in looking at the interrelated nature of the complex process of becoming a teacher that transforms teaching and learning to be

more equitable, and in looking at what ingredients are needed to prompt preservice teachers to engage in a more equitable educational model.

Description of Chapters

My study builds on and converses with literature in the fields of critical teaching and learning, culturally relevant teaching, teacher education, and scholarship on the discursive minimization of social oppression. In the chapter that follows, I provide a review of relevant research in these areas that has helped me make sense of my experiences in teacher education.

Chapter 3, "Research Design," invites readers into the research setting and process. I explain my critical approach to ethnography, describe the site, and introduce readers to the participants. I also share some of the practical and ethical dilemmas I encountered in the field and in my writing up of the work.

In the fourth chapter, "Meaning-making at the Intersection of Cultural Other and Racial Self-Identity," I illustrate the stories the preservice teachers shared as a result of hearing testimonies offered in a culturally relevant pedagogy course. More specifically I illuminate: (a) The moments of silence, and (b) The preservice teachers revisiting the racialized fables of their youth. The preservice teachers and I learned, together, that there were important things that could be learned by revisiting the moments of silence and the "fables" of our youth. We uncovered both the covert and the overt ways these stories helped to produce and shape the racial structures of our backgrounds. At the same time we learned that it is arduous work to mine and disrupt the stories of our past.

In Chapter 5, "Meaning-making in the Midst of the Complex," I describe how meaning-making occurs in the complexity of the elementary classroom and the community and that theory and practice can be learned simultaneously. During our final focus group, the preservice teachers pointed to a synergistic approach that they reported had an important effect in understanding culturally relevant pedagogy. Reflected within this chapter are the voices of the preservice teachers as they share stories of the varying connections made with their pupils and the members of the community. Findings suggest that the participants found that meaning-making was done as they saw how things are related and interconnected in the midst of the complex. I then describe how these nine preservice teachers challenge how teacher education should be done. More specifically, they challenge the structure of teacher education that creates individual courses that are often divorced from each other. I describe how it becomes clear for these preservice teachers that an interdisciplinary approach helped form a whole-to-parts understanding of what it means to teach and learn. I provide insight into the lived experiences of nine preservice teachers as they discussed the elements they felt were crucial to the meaning-making process I relate to culturally relevant pedagogy.

Chapter 6, "The Social Negotiation of Meaning-making," explores the process of meaning-making as a social negotiation. I use the terms *adaptation* and *viability* to describe the struggles the preservice teachers experienced as they recognized the political nature of schooling. This chapter reveals how preservice teachers are not passively responding to the social meaning of their field experience, but actively negotiating it. For some of the preservice teachers, there was a disjuncture between the aspirations of their version of the ideal teacher and the teacher they were being socialized to become in order

to be considered a viable candidate. This illusive presence of power acted as the "gatekeeper" of school. Preservice teachers reported that the "gatekeeper's" cultural expectations did not mesh well with many of their pupils and espoused mission statements, thus leaving them with cultural conflicts and differences that they felt undermined their effectiveness as educators.

The closing chapter, "Insights," concludes my research and reflects on how the stories shared in the previous chapters allow readers to expand their notions of White teacher identity and teacher education.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

What Does The Current Research Say About The Preparation of Culturally Relevant Teachers?

The infamous opportunity gap, placed front and center by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), highlights the great divide between school culture and the homes of historically underserved pupils. As the public school demographics highlight the increasingly diverse population of the pupils it serves, teacher education programs continue to remain homogeneous: predominately White, female, monolithic, and middle class (Swartz, 2003). This discrepancy is problematic because teachers often rely on their personal experiences in trying to discover what their students know and can do. What is relevant for a White, female, middle class teacher is not necessarily relevant for her culturally diverse students. The growing cultural gap between teachers and students is not new, but the question of how to best prepare teachers with limited cultural knowledge of diverse backgrounds remains unanswered. Teacher education programs have placed great emphasis on the importance of addressing culture, with attempts to provide stronger preparation for teaching preservice teachers, with limited cultural knowledge, of diverse backgrounds. One such theory taught in teacher education is culturally relevant pedagogy. This review summarizes the research on how culturally relevant pedagogy is being used by teacher educators, and how it might affect what preservice and inservice

teachers learn about teaching, including what they come to know or believe about diverse learners, as well as how they engage in the practice of culturally relevant pedagogy.

This review is divided into multiple sections. First, I will discuss what is meant by culturally relevant pedagogy and the theories and principles of culturally relevant pedagogy. Second, I will cover the methods for the review. Next, I will address key practices and experiences within teacher education programs designed to prepare teachers for culturally relevant pedagogy. I will then conclude this review with a discussion of the strengths and gaps in the literature.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In Ladson-Billings' (1994) study of eight successful teachers of African-American students, she attributed their success to what she called culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Drawing from critical race theory, critical pedagogy, multicultural education, and Afrocentric feminist epistemology, she determined that the theory rested firmly on three criteria: academic success, cultural competence, and critical or sociopolitical consciousness. She conceptualized the term as a "pedagogy that [empowered] students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (pp. 17-18). Ladson-Billings insists that "not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence; they must help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (p. 476). Because she believed that these teachers used academic success, cultural competence, and critical or sociopolitical consciousness in markedly different ways, she went on in further writings to broadly define teacher behaviors that would identify a

culturally relevant pedagogue. For example, in discussing cultural competence in her book *Crossing Over To Canaan* (2001) she states that cultural competence occurs in classrooms where: (a) the teacher understands culture and its role in education, (b) the teacher uses student culture as a basis for learning, (c) the teacher takes responsibility for learning about students' culture and community, and (d) the teacher promotes a flexible use of student's local and global culture. Thus, the knowledge a teacher gains about the students he/she works with as well as the world in which they live can empower educators to help their students achieve academic success "by ensuring that the student learned that which was most meaningful to them" (p. 160). In other words, culturally relevant pedagogy is a theoretical model that situates teachers as change agents employing three distinctive pedagogical practices: demanding high levels of achievement, helping students to accept and affirm their cultural identity, and cultivating critical perspectives within their students.

Method

The original purpose that framed this review was to explore current knowledge about the practices of teacher education programs in preparing teachers for culturally relevant pedagogy. Thus, the objectives of the review included (a) the identification of studies where teacher education programs prepare teachers in culturally relevant pedagogy and (b) an examination of current practices being used in teacher education to train teachers to embrace schooling that is better equipped to meet the educational and social needs of marginalized students.

Because so few studies in this area make the difficult connection between the instructional strategies and experiences used in teacher education and what is learned by the pupils of prospective teachers, this review focuses more on outcomes of instructional strategies and experiences for the preservice teachers themselves, rather than for their pupils. These outcomes include changes in preservice teachers' beliefs, knowledge, dispositions, and attitudes.

To answer this question, I began a search of existing literature by using the general terms "culturally relevant pedagogy", "culturally responsive teaching", "social justice", "teacher development", "diverse learners", and "diverse student populations" in combination with "teacher education" and "preservice teachers"; I searched research literature between the years of 1990 and 2010. Most of the research collected was between 2000 and 2012, as I wanted to focus on current experiences and knowledge in teacher education programs in relation to culturally relevant pedagogy. I extended the dates to include some earlier research on culturally relevant pedagogy from the early 1990s, in part because of the importance of including original studies conducted by Gloria Ladson-Billings. I used a variety of strategies for my search, including electronic databases such as Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Educational Full Text, and Social Science Abstracts. I also did searches combining seven subject areas (English, math, health, social studies, science, art, and foreign language) with the terms "culturally relevant pedagogy" and "teacher education", in order to catch research conducted on culturally relevant pedagogy within those subject areas. I also examined the reference sections of books, book chapters, and articles of this literature. Finally, I looked at reviews of teacher education in the Handbook of Research on Teacher

Education, Review of Educational Research, and The Handbook of Research on Teaching.

Employing these strategies, I found more than 200 articles related to culturally relevant pedagogy. I focused only on studies that dealt directly with the preparation of candidates for teaching diverse students within the context of teacher education programs in the United States. Thus, I did not include the plethora of research on successful teaching practices for diverse students. Such research offers major insights and has influenced the content of the preservice curriculum and raised expectations for the teaching practices of preservice candidates. However, the focus of this review is on the preparation and learning of preservice teachers in relation to culturally relevant pedagogy. I analyzed the underlying theories, perspectives, and ideologies that guided the studies; the research methods used; the findings; and the strengths and weaknesses. Researchers have used several research genres to study culturally relevant pedagogy, but the majority of the studies were qualitative and the study of one's own practice. Often the researcher studied their own students and/or program. Their own learning and the improvement of their own practices appeared to be the primary motivation for the work, though there were a few that appeared to study their own practices for the explicit purpose of contributing to the broader understandings of teacher education. There were a few studies of other's practices and surveys.

I first coded articles and book chapters using keywords such as "additional courses/course work", "field placement", "service learning", "curriculum development" "internship experience", "field immersion", "community based experiences", "obstacles", and others. From there, I looked for patterns by which to group keywords into themes

that addressed my question. Thus, the keywords used are "an additive approach,"
"relocation to urban settings," "social action," and "obstacles." In general, my literature
search revealed that these studies focused mainly on changing preservice teachers'
attitudes and beliefs about diversity. Each study used different perspectives, and varied
in completeness when describing CRP experiences in teacher education programs.

<center>The Preparation of Candidates in CRP</center>

An Additive Approach

The studies in this category focused on teacher education practices intended to
teach CRP as an "additive approach". Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001) stipulated that
"additive refers to the adding on of multicultural material in order to address what has
been heretofore ignored" (p. 96). They believe that this approach shares both
conservative and liberal elements: conservative when it is viewed primarily as a
"perfunctory gesture" toward fairness; liberal when its importance is viewed as a
substantive addition to a study of the diversity of the American experience and when
sufficient curricular time is devoted to doing so. For example, a teacher educator might
include, in addition to what is already taught, a lecture or reading on African-American
students in the classroom because s/he feels that this population of people have been
unfairly ignored. This approach implies that there is more to teach, not less. Similarly, I
use this term to describe the impact of particular practices in teacher preparation intended
to help candidates develop CRP.

A majority of the studies reported on the impact of adding a course to the program
or additional content to their already existing courses. Many of these studies explored

preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about diversity. Several of these studies used

the terms "multicultural education" and "CRP" interchangeably. Milner (2006)

investigated preservice teachers' learning and understanding as a result of a course

designed to help them develop the knowledge, skills, disposition, and attitudes reflected

in CRP to teach in highly diverse and urban school contexts. Reflective writings that

Milner calls "relational reflection" and the class discussions of the 14 students indicated

that the class interactions and reflective journaling had a positive impact on the

candidates. The preservice teachers in the course reported that they had become more

aware and developed a better understanding of the perspectives of others and their own

perspective as a result of the course. Grant (2002) reflected on a course where she

introduced popular films to challenge preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching diverse

students. Candidates viewed movies such as *Dangerous Minds, Stand and Deliver,* and

187 to illustrate how movies reinforce the naïve belief that teachers are defined by their

personal involvement with students as they rescue them from their homes and

communities. The researcher found that these movies provided a strong impetus for

discussing preservice teachers' conceptions about urban schools and reported it to be an

essential first step before entering their field experience.

Based on concept mapping and comparative essays as an evaluative measure,

Trent and Dixon (2004) investigated 26 preservice teachers enrolled in an introductory

special education course learning about CRP in a one-semester multicultural teacher

education course at Michigan State University. Candidates were invited to design a

concept map on the first and last days of classes, illustrating what they believed to be

effective education for culturally diverse students. The researchers concluded that

candidates learned through self-reflections, concept maps, and information provided by the instructor and class discussion. The quantitative results showed there was a statistically significant difference in the total number of responses and qualitative results indicated that candidates were able to integrate more content as well as create more sophisticated maps.

Some research using CRP as a theoretical framework provided mixed results. For example, Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) reported mixed outcomes based on a pre- and post-test survey. The participants were 25 White middle-class candidates enrolled in a multicultural education course emphasizing CRP. The data found that the preservice teachers taking the class felt it had positively influenced their attitudes toward issues of diversity. However, some reported that they still felt ill equipped for teaching diverse students because of their limited cultural knowledge, teaching experience, and exposure to issues. The data also presented some disconcerting views. A high proportion of the participants did not see the benefit of multicultural education. Another disturbing finding was that the majority of the preservice teachers believed that parents' lack of value toward education is responsible for students' low academic achievement. The researchers proposed that issues related to diversity should be infused throughout the courses offered in teacher education programs. One short semester was not enough time to disrupt previous biases and beliefs.

Silverman (2010) studied preservice teachers' beliefs about various understandings associated with terms such as diversity, advocacy, culture, etc. She believes that a clear understanding of the use of terms such as "diversity" and "multicultural" is a precursor to research on the ways in which teachers can be

empowered to promote educational equity. The 88 White Christian female participants in this study were enrolled in a semester-long multicultural education course. A researcher-developed survey indicated a disparity in understanding these constructs. She argues that the ambiguous terminology makes it difficult for preservice teachers to conceptualize socially-just teaching and affects teachers' implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Another study examined White female preservice teachers' talk in and about an antiracist teacher education course aimed at raising students' awareness of racial inequities. CRP theories and principals were at the heart of this course. Case and Hemmings (2005) conducted a study analyzing a class where the White women distanced themselves rather than fully engaged in the classroom discussions. They used strategies of silence, social disassociation, and separation from responsibility. They used these strategies in response to perceptions that they were being placed in the position of "racist." Qualitative research methods were used to collect data on how students enrolled in the course reacted to the curriculum, especially during classroom discussions. Data included observations and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. I think it is important to note that none of the researchers were course instructors or involved in the planning of the course. Findings indicate that the White women in the study tried to position themselves as color-blind in their relations with people of color. This color-blind stance provided a roadblock that prevented these women from engaging in critical reflections or developing the level of cultural consciousness needed to begin to become a culturally relevant pedagogue.

Collectively, the above studies generally reported positive outcomes, but they also help us to understand some factors that interfere with candidates' abilities to acquire knowledge and skills related to the development of CRP. Silverman (2010) illuminates the ambiguity of terms such as "social justice", "culture", and "diversity". The ambiguity of these terms can interfere with teacher candidates creating a clear image of CRP. Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti (2005) reminds us we need to scaffold and integrate CRP throughout the teacher education program as well as to interpret these findings with caution. Looking at Case and Hemmings' (2005) study, I wonder what went wrong. Will scaffolding the curriculum help for someone who has appeared to "dig their heels in" as these women have?

Most of these studies were conducted in courses, and the researcher was the course instructor. Candidates' responses may have been influenced by their perceptions of the instructor's expectations. Additionally, the dual role of instructor and researcher may have influenced the interpretation of the findings of the study. There are many reasons to study one's own practice and there is nothing inherently wrong with teacher educators studying their own courses. The problem, for me, is that in these studies the researcher did not discuss how they dealt with taking up both the role of teacher educator and researcher.

Relocation to Urban Settings

According to Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001), a transformative approach to curriculum requires that the internal structure of the curriculum be changed to incorporate the "fabric" (p. 97) of the racial, ethnic, and social experiences of different minority

groups. Some teacher education programs attempt to provide these authentic social experiences of different minority groups through the relocation of teacher candidates from rural or monocultural settings to urban or culturally diverse settings for field placements. Culturally relevant pedagogy has had a direct impact on how field experiences are organized, as well as on fieldwork requirements such as community experiences and service learning. The literature indicates that more field experiences are taking place throughout the teacher education program rather than being left until the last student teaching semester. The following studies reveal some of the practices and outcomes of culturally relevant pedagogy on providing candidates with social experiences.

Capella-Santana (2003) explored the experiences of 52 majority White candidates attending a major urban Midwestern university for 1 ½ years. During the candidates' first week in the teacher education program, the researcher asked them to fill out a questionnaire to establish baseline data on multicultural attitudes and knowledge. The questionnaire was given again after taking a multicultural education course and after the participants completed a 30-hour field experience in an urban setting with culturally diverse learners. At the end of the study, statistically significant changes had occurred in the participants' attitudes and knowledge regarding (a) bilingual education, (b) building minority pupils' self esteem, and (c) culturally related behaviors. The variables most frequently reported as influencing their attitudes and knowledge were (a) pupils and parents with whom they worked, (b) field experience, and (c) classmates.

Wiggins, Follo, and Eberly (2007) studied the experiences of two different preservice groups enrolled in a program that provided a direct connection between the

course work and the field experience. Group A was placed in a course that incorporated a field experience for one semester. Group B had one year of field experience. In addition to the extended time, the course was taught at the school in conjunction with the field experience. As a result, students spent additional time in the school setting. The preservice teachers in group B reported greater involvement with the parents and students in the community. Group C was a control group of substitute teachers with much experience teaching in an urban school setting. The scores of groups A and B were compared against group C to confirm the impact of the immersion program. The researchers found that students in the year-long experience (group B) showed the greater change. Groups A and B both benefited from the intense field experience and the researcher reported attitudes about working in culturally diverse classrooms that were as positive as those of the comparison group.

Donnell (2007) studied the experiences of nine White middle-class preservice candidates, concentrating on how beginning teachers experience the complex process of learning to teach in an urban setting. Candidates were interviewed throughout an 11-month period. Based on qualitative analysis of interviews, the researcher found that candidates who strove to learn with and from their students experienced a greater sense of efficacy. Candidates in the study developed an aspect of "relational knowing" (p. 235) that helped them to develop transformative practice by placing a premium on learning about the interests, aptitudes, backgrounds, goals, fears, and lives of the specific pupils they taught. She also reported that these preservice teachers learned how to adjust their teaching to respond to their pupils rather than to prescribed instructional techniques for curriculum. The study suggests that beginning teachers benefited from more

individualized support in generating, reflecting on, and building their knowledge about urban teaching while actively engaged in their field experience.

Along similar lines, Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, and Haviland (2009) studied the experiences of one White beginning teacher's negotiations with cultural competence during a lesson in her student teaching experience. This "teaching moment" is part of a larger 2-year study of beginning teachers enrolled in Teachers for Tomorrow (TFT), a program designed to prepare prospective teachers for careers in urban and underresourced schools. In this larger study, four researchers followed five participants through their first two years of teaching in underresourced schools. The participant followed for this particular study wrestled with the challenges of reflecting on students' lives and her own identity in the quest to practice culturally responsive teaching, specifically cultural competence. The study indicates that cultural competence cannot be thought of as a capacity that students develop in a gradual motion of forward progress. It is often an arduous and recursive journey.

Seidl (2007) examined 12 elementary candidates' development in an Elementary Masters in Education Program at The Ohio State University. The candidates were invited to be involved in a community partnership with Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, an African-American church in Columbus, Ohio. The primary purpose of the partnership was to provide prospective teachers with the experiences they will need to begin to develop culturally relevant pedagogies. Candidates spent 2 to 3 hours a week for an entire academic year working in programs created for children from the community. The candidates reported that one of the experiences that most dramatically influenced their understanding of the culture, language, and politics of race was attending church at Mt.

Olivet. For the White students in the group it challenged them to "move beyond Eurocentered experience" and to consider how their perceptions have been influenced by a White monocultural experience. Seidl suggests that more time should be devoted to exploring the process of learning about culture than producing a model of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Roose (2001) studied the experiences of five preservice teachers during their junior year who served as participants in a cross-cultural education internship. The two primary goals of the internship were to experience what it is to be "other" (the majority of the college's students were of the dominant culture), and to experience schooling in a different way. Data sources included field journals of personal learning and a 12- to 15-page paper on their learning objectives and how what they learned affected who they will be as future teachers. The graduates reported that based on their "othering" experience they believed they saw more clearly how change, or the possibility of change, could take place in schools. One graduate shared how she learned that "different" did not mean bad and how she had developed a new understanding that learning could happen in a variety of ways. The researcher reported that the candidates had developed a "habit of mind" of paying attention to their students' individual needs and ways of learning. This was attributed to their experience of being a "fish out of water" as cross-cultural learners.

These field experience studies focused on the opportunities for candidates to learn about students from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds as well as about different school conditions. The researchers indicated that these experiences with diverse populations had a positive influence on them and increased the preservice teachers' diversity beliefs and commitment to diversity. In the studies that I came across that

discussed field experiences, not one reported candidates feeling inadequately prepared and/or uncomfortable in their new setting, and all had identified aspects of the experience as helpful and useful to them as teachers.

I came across one study that examined the role that cooperating teachers play in developing culturally relevant pedagogy knowledge and skills among student teachers. Cooperating teachers in the field have a tremendous impact on the experience a prestudent or student teacher may receive. Tillez (2006) followed five cooperating teachers working in California, each of whom had extensive and successful experiences teaching CRP curricula. They were asked to describe how they encouraged their student teachers to engage in the materials and strategies they promote. The cooperating teachers reported that their most successful student teachers were those who came to understand the difference between expecting high-quality work from their students and sympathizing and identifying with their students' plight as low-income Latino children. The researcher also reported that cooperating teachers used very different strategies than what you would find in university-based courses. Unlike traditional courses in multicultural education, the cooperating teacher could draw the student teacher's attention to the classroom, the very place student teachers wanted to be successful. A shortcoming of the study is that the researcher did not explore, with the student teachers, their views on what they learned (or did not learn) from their cooperating teachers.

In this section, I review studies of what I call "putting it all together". Few studies address all three of Ladson-Billings' criteria – academic success, cultural competence, and critical or sociopolitical consciousness. Most studies focused on culture and becoming culturally competent. I argue that preservice teachers' ability to engage in

culturally relevant pedagogy is influenced by their ability to put all three of the criteria together. The third component is especially important in that it prepares young people to take social action against structural inequality. Often teacher education programs do not provide preservice teachers with the type of teaching that will give students an opportunity to practice democratic principals in the classroom.

Putting It All Together

Lenski, Crumpler, Stallworth, and Crawford (2005) encouraged preservice teacher to question the power relations that are embedded in society in order to move beyond awareness to deeper understandings of the complexities of culturally diverse teaching. The participants of the study were 34 preservice teachers who were engaged in a year-long professional development program as their last year before teaching. The preservice teachers were enrolled at a large Midwestern university and had relocated 150 miles away from the university to a suburb of a large urban area for 16 hours of coursework and clinical hours in schools. The preservice teachers were asked to make ethnographic observations in the community in order to observe and learn from the cultural groups represented in the community. Data sources included (a) students' responses to a question about diversity before beginning the project, (b) students observational field notes, (c) students final ethnographic papers, (d) videotapes of students' discussions of their participation in the program, and (e) exit conversations with eight students. The researchers reported that preservice teachers voiced concerns throughout the project about being asked to conduct ethnographies. They resisted seeing themselves as researchers. Data suggested that preservice teachers shifted from an initial awareness to an understanding of how culture shapes teaching and learning as well as

developed a more critical stance. It was this critical view that makes this study stand apart from the rest. Results indicated that the participants in the study began to view themselves as agents of change.

Balwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill (2007) combined course work with a service learning experience to help future teachers cultivate a deeper understanding of diversity, social justice, and themselves. Participants were from a mid-Atlantic university and a rural Southwestern university. Participants included 41 undergraduate preservice teachers in a content literacy course. Data were captured in interviews and reflective papers. The results revealed that service-learning in conjunction with course work could have an impact on preservice teachers. Findings suggest that service learning, emphasizing culturally relevant pedagogy and social justice, had the potential for empowering prospective teachers to confront injustices and to begin deconstructing lifelong attitudes and constructing socially just practices.

These two studies investigated candidates' abilities to accept and affirm their pupils' cultural identities while developing critical perspectives that challenge the inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. This is important because these studies reflect and demonstrate research that addresses a crucial but often ignored component in the triad of essential elements in culturally relevant pedagogy: critical or sociopolitical consciousness.

Review of Literature for Research

Overall, the literature that is reviewed here emphasizes several important points that apply to culturally relevant pedagogy. Preservice teachers do not always come with

the background or intellectual tools to reflect on school problems in terms of social, economic, political, and historical issues. It is imperative that teacher education programs provide the experiences necessary for candidates to become successful in diverse classrooms. As some of the literature illustrates, a single semester-long course is not enough. Opportunities to explore and experience culturally relevant pedagogies need to be embedded throughout the program. Field experiences can be an important tool to facilitate and provide those experiences for culturally relevant pedagogues, and are often reported as positive experiences by the participants in the studies. However, more firsthand experience in and of itself will not necessarily provide our future teachers with what they need to be successful in teaching all children. We need to do much more than just send preservice teachers out into the field. The studies that reported the most significant results provided candidates with mentors to help facilitate the complexities of an urban classroom.

Findings indicate that the ambiguity of key terms such as "multicultural", "diversity", "race", and "culture" disrupts the process of creating a clear vision of what it means to enact CRP in classrooms for teachers. Grossman and McDonald (2008) argue that the absence of a "common technical vocabulary" (p. 186) limits the ability of novices to access a preexisting body of knowledge regarding teaching. In my search for literature for this review I found varying definitions of the terms "multicultural education", "social justice", and "culturally relevant pedagogy". There also appeared to be nuanced meanings to "culturally relevant pedagogy". Some research focused only on facilitating learning and helping pupils to maintain their culture while navigating in the dominant culture. Focusing only on these two aspects of CRP ignores an important component:

challenging issues of power and openly confronting racial and social injustices. Preparing teachers to critically analyze structures of power and to challenge them is critical in disrupting the status quo.

Another common theme I came across in the literature is one of student resistance. Many studies reported resistance by the preservice teachers. Milner (2006) states that this often results when mostly White students are introduced to such topics in stand-alone courses. He believes that many preservice teachers do not make progress in stand-alone courses that focus on diversity because of their "resentment and/or resistance to multicultural doctrine, instruction, application, and interaction" (pp. 325-326). Merrfield (2000) believes that it is the interrelationships across identity, power, and experience that lead to a consciousness of other perspectives and recognition of the multiple realities. In other words, simultaneously addressing multiple realities and exploring identity and issues of power is messy work at best, but is necessary to transform teaching and learning.

There are several gaps in the literature. My review showed that research linking instructional strategies used in teacher education to what is learned by the pupils of prospective teachers is skeletal. In my search, I was not able to find research that addressed this issue in relation to teacher education and culturally relevant pedagogy. Thus, we know little about how culturally relevant teacher education practices impact ethnically and linguistically diverse students academically.

What is the best approach to encourage preservice teachers to embrace schooling that is better equipped to meet the educational and social needs of marginalized students?

This question should be a central concern to critical educators. This is particularly important given that existing research suggests that we have yet to discover the answer(s) to this question. Many researchers have taken up this issue and have provided a rich foundation on which to stand as educators and researchers. I am extremely grateful to the researchers and educators that have come before me and have graciously and courageously shared their work. It is on their shoulders that I humbly stand and take up my work. As a teacher educator who is passionate about creating more equitable spaces in all teaching and learning environments, I want to understand the experience of nine preservice teachers as they actively seek wide, deep and thoughtful engagement with what it means to practice culturally relevant pedagogy. I also wondered how these preservice teachers view themselves, or think of themselves, in the role of social justice. How does this impact their identity? In the next chapter, I invite readers into the study. I outline the research design and illuminate the dilemmas I faced in collecting the data and writing up the study.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Teacher educators face the challenge of preparing our current recruits for teaching

students who may be culturally and linguistically different from them (Darling-Hammond

& Bransford, 2005). Strategies noted in the literature are *culturally relevant pedagogy*

and *funds of knowledge*. In this study, I examined nine participants' dialogic reflections,

journals, and lesson plans, as well as observed the act of teaching and their interactions

within the classroom and the community, using Ladson-Billings' framework of culturally

relevant pedagogy and an inquiry approach similar to Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez'

(2005) funds of knowledge. The theoretical proposition that is the foundational

framework for this inquiry is that the participants who (a) reflect not only on teaching and

learning, but also on how racism and classism can negatively impact students'

opportunities as learners; (b) attempt to get to know children and their families through

inquiry and authentic relationship building; (c) examine current values and norms in

public schools; and (d) practice CRP strategies in the context of an urban/suburban

setting. This theoretical proposition was applied as I investigated the following research

question:

- What are the experiences of nine preservice teachers who actively seek wide,

    deep, and thoughtful engagement with what it means to practice culturally

    relevant pedagogy at the intersection of three distinctly unique and different

    locations: a Midwestern university setting, an urban elementary school setting,

    and the community in which their field experiences took place?

This next section describes my research including, my researcher approach, my researcher identity, the setting, the course layout and the community inquiry project, the data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Approach

Van Manen (2007) states that when a researcher adopts one research approach over another, the choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion. "Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (a parent or teacher) in the first place" (p. 2). My own struggle to find an appropriate research design that would allow me to speak to my identity as a teacher and researcher is not a unique one. Like many other teacher researchers attempting to research within the field of their work, I knew I needed to find an appropriate research design that allowed me to not only "maintain a certain harmony," but also allowed me to follow my heart. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) note:

> The unique feature of questions that prompt teacher research is that they emanate solely neither from theory nor from practice, but from the critical reflection on the intersection of the two. (p. 6)

Like Cochran-Smith and Lytle, I argue that learning from teaching inquiry is not only integral, but woven into the very fabric of teaching. Because I have situated myself in the roles of teacher and researcher, within my study, it would seem like a natural choice to choose action research or practitioner research as a research method. I have conducted many research projects using action research as a method and have found it to legitimize my teaching. As a teacher I find that teaching supports my research agenda and my

research agenda enriches my teaching. It is a reciprocal relationship that empowers me as an educator. As I think about my role in this research project or any other that I may take up and my multiple identities, I am unable to detach and disembody myself as an experienced elementary teacher or a teacher educator from myself as a researcher.

To help me determine what methodological approach to embrace for my study I looked to my question and the objectives within the study. This helped me to locate a methodology that remained true to not only who I am, but also the purpose of my study. When I revisited the purpose of this study – What are the experiences of nine preservice teachers who actively seek wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with what it means to practice culturally relevant pedagogy? – I was reminded that ethnography attempts to explain how people think, believe, and behave, situated within a local time and space. In contrast, a major purpose of action research is to solve practical problems and/or to improve practice. As stated above, no matter what type of research I engage in it will have an effect on my teacher identity as well as my researcher identity and thus indirectly will impact my teaching; however, it is not the intention of this research project to place my teaching practice at the forefront.

Another distinction in my study is the role of action. In action research there is an explicit goal of intention, such as to increase reading fluency or comprehension strategies. In other words, it focuses on particular information, strategies, or techniques to change conditions in a particular situation. One might say that this is exactly what I am doing within my study, and I would hope that my research does contribute to the larger body of research out there on CRP; however, it is not the intention of this study to present a "silver bullet." The goal is to give rise to the voices of these nine preservice

teachers' experience. Paying close attention to these voices makes it possible to uncover the social, structural, and cultural bases of choices and actions that might appear natural or predetermined. Their story gives us some new stories to consider in teacher education, and some new insights, thus, distinguishing my work from action research. An ethnographic approach became the theoretical orientation that guided and shaped my work. It allowed me to move beyond an explicit goal, strategy or technique to orient my research and consider what Goetz and LeCompte (1984) describe, "as a way of studying human life . . and representing the world view of the participants being investigated" (p.3). In addition, I believe an ethnographic research method allows me to coalesce my multiple identities while exploring a more humanistic and qualitative research approach.

The Nagging Need to Justify being Instructor/ Researcher

In my writing, I want to paint a picture that portrays the cultural landscape of teacher education coupled with the complex life of today's classroom's in detail rich enough for others to comprehend and appreciate. I want my writing to at least begin to unravel some of the complexities of my research into teacher education, culturally relevant pedagogy, racial identity formation, and a practicum experience within an urban setting. On one hand, I feel fortunate that I was able to combine part of my professional work with my research study. On the other hand, I recognize the closeness between my teaching and my research may be problematic because of my perceived lack of neutrality and objectivity, which is always expected of more traditional research. I want to divulge the journey of the participants from the "actors' point of view" (Erickson, 1986, p. 119), telling their story from their perspective, as well as reveal my personal struggles without feeling a sense of fear of my personal engagement in the journey, in order to convey my

understanding of a reality lived, experienced, and constructed. Wolcott (2008) helped me

to grasp an understanding of what I was struggling to come to terms with and to

recognize that I can establish a reason for adopting an ethnographic approach. Wolcott

(2008) claims that,

> Ethnography is founded on firsthand experience in naturally occurring events.
> Today, we no longer have to pretend to a level of objectivity that was once
> fashionable; it is sufficient to recognize and reveal our subjectivity as best we can,
> thus to maximize the potential of fieldwork as a personal experience rather than to
> deny it. (p. 49)

With this understanding of ethnography, in mind I began to recognize that the knowledge

that I construct through experiences, encounters, and interactions with the world is

legitimate. Wolcott voices this in the following way. "Firsthand experience through

field experiences is both the starting point and the filter through which everything else is

screened as we make sense of all that we have observed" (p. 53). Wolcott helped me to

appreciate the power of my personal journey as it becomes woven into the fabric of the

wider world of my research.

However, I still have the feeling or need to justify this dual position within my

research – being the instructor and the researcher. At the precarious nexus between

instructor-researcher, participant, and observer, I am aware that I am bringing my

constructed map of reality, through my readings and life experiences. Fetterman (2010)

states that ethnography is about telling a credible, rigorous, and authentic story – a story

that gives voice to people in their own local context, even though the idea of authentic

story intersects with the researcher's story. Patton (2002) believes that the "researcher's story becomes part of the inquiry into the cultural phenomenon of interest" (p. 116). Fetterman and Patton reinforce the concept that the researcher's identity has a strong influence on the research process, but the same holds true for the participants.

> The self of the knower and the larger self of the community of inquiry are, from the very starting point, intimately woven into the very fabric of that which we claim as knowledge and of what we agree to be the proper ways by which we make knowledge claims. It is to say that the knower and the known are one movement. Moreover, any inquiry is an expression of a particular other-self relatedness. (p. 658)

Through these authorities, I am beginning to understand that ethnographers understand themselves to be involved somatically in a group process whereby the researcher becomes part of the research. Heshusius (1994) informs us that to be "involved somatically means to be involved bodily – that is physically, ethically, morally, and spiritually, not just in one's capacity as a "researcher" concerned with methodology" (p. 4).

Because I wanted to engage in research that exposes relations of power and exploitation, I could not ignore the hierarchy reflected in the power structure of the customary instructor- researcher and student relationship. Traditional ethnographers usually set the research agenda, collect the data, and write the account with relatively little input from the "actors." Thus, not inviting research actors to co-construct their ethnographic accounts.

Freire's (2005) work was most influential in my sense of disrupting power relations between instructor and student. His critique of traditional schooling practices emphasizes the passivity of students in traditional pedagogies, and the reduction of learners to objects when they should be subjects of their learning. He names this sort of education the "banking conception of education":

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry; by considering their ignorance absolute. . . The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. (p. 72)

Freire believes the banking concept works as a way to dehumanize power and invites educators to instead take up "problem-posing education". Through problem-posing education, he believes that the teacher-student contradiction can be resolved by engaging students in dialogical relations. "Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist, and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers" (2005, p. 80). Freire's pedagogy seeks to upset this power relation with the student voices, and help students actively participate in making sense of the world around them.

My role as the teacher/researcher was to encourage, orchestrate, and support the preservice teachers in finding their voice, their students' voice, and the voice of the larger community. Thus, I invited the preservice teachers to become co-researchers as they went out into the community to hear the voices of their students, their students' families, and the larger community. I want to bring together these multiple voices through dialogue to help not only the preservice teachers to be heard, but also their pupils and the community from which they come. More precisely, I hoped to bring all these voices together to work collaboratively while creating a trusting non-oppressive relationship between the researcher, the co-researchers, and the community. The power of ethnography using the strategy of participant observation takes us into the moment and into the fibers of daily life, allowing us to not only see people, but to hear the meaning from their point of view, thus potentially upsetting power relations through dialogue.

The Researcher's Identity

There are several layers to my interest in culturally relevant pedagogy and education. Probably the most personal is the color of my skin, especially in contrast to the color of my family's skin. I am a middle-aged woman who appears to be White. Growing up in a Native American family in Northern Wisconsin, I had a front row seat to see how race and class lines can be drawn. It was not until my adulthood that I consciously recognized how deeply these experiences shaped my life. From a young age, I witnessed how the color of your skin can grant you access and power. In addition, I approach this research with previous experience as a mother of five children, as a grandmother, as an elementary teacher, a literacy coach, and a teacher educator.

In elementary classrooms today, I see how the curriculum presented in classrooms continues to present one dominant culture that attempts to eliminate all other cultures. It is not an accident that we have tremendous opportunity gaps in education today. We are now in the middle of enormous cultural and social transformation brought about by changing demographics. I believe educational resources and opportunities must include integrating the child's language and cultural experiences into the social and intellectual fabric of schools. The public school system continues to work as a system that colonizes people of different races, cultures, and classes, and that privileges White children. Because I am a product of the public school system, I have a firsthand sense of its strengths and limitations with respect to the students who are traditionally marginalized in it. Even as a small child, I recognized that the color of my skin granted me privileges that my cousins were not granted. I was also strongly aware of how when my teacher became aware of my family's race, my status, in her classroom was diminished.

I am often surprised by the strong emotions that still erupt after years of confronting these issues. I feel angry as I write about these issues. In a way this anger and passion for social justice drove me into the field of education. I spent ten years as an elementary teacher and literacy coach. As I became a teacher, I had hoped that there were many more teachers such as myself entering the field of education: educators who hoped to teach *all* children; educators who wanting to make school a much different experience than what I had experiences. What I found were teachers who were ignorant of the injustices and violence performed in elementary schools. Many of my colleagues expressed that they were unprepared, overwhelmed, and discouraged when teaching children from a culture different then their own.

Currently, I write primarily from the vantage point of a teacher educator. I am disheartened to find that many preservice teachers express these same concerns. I appreciate the sense of being overwhelmed as preservice teachers confront their own identities in new and different ways. My multiple experiences within the public school system provide me an "insider view" from many vantage points. I know what it feels like to have my voice silenced as an elementary student. I appreciate the frustrations and sense of loss as teachers are often asked to transform teaching and learning without any clear guidelines, models, or examples. I know the power of systemic forces influencing teaching and learning in classrooms.

I have long felt a special sense of responsibility that comes precisely from my social and political location as a member of a community lacking in voice, status, and representation. This sense of responsibility can be considered a strength and a weakness as a researcher. Acquiring my voice has been inseparable from my role as an advocate for others who have also been silenced. Even though I have firsthand knowledge of the violence that can be enacted in schools, I must be careful not to project my own journey onto my perceptions of the classroom. I must remember, as Erickson (1986) states, to present meaning from the "actor's point of view" and not only my own.

Setting

This study took place at multiple sites. The first site was the elementary teacher education program at Belwin University. The second site was the nearby community that was home to the two field placement schools and the final site were the elementary classrooms within these two schools.

University Setting

The university is located in a rural area situated in the Midwest. The population of the city in which the university is located was 14,889 at the 2010 census. The teacher education department is located within the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS). CEPS is home to approximately 1,400 students preparing for professional careers in communicative disorders, counseling, exercise science, school psychology, social work, and teaching.

The elementary teacher education program admits undergraduate students with an interest in obtaining either a P-8 or 1-8 teaching certificate. Students entering the program have met the admissions requirements of (a) successfully completing core college curriculum courses, (b) a grade point average of 2.75, and (c) passing scores on the basics skills portion of the state's assessment for the certification of educators.

Faculty members in the elementary program are proud of the school partnerships that have developed over the past 30 years. The program strives to use field-based experiences and coursework to develop each candidate's knowledge and ability to select and implement developmentally appropriate resources and activities for teaching and learning.

The Community and the Schools

The two elementary schools that provide the research sites for my study are located in a somewhat nearby community. The schools are located approximately 29 miles from the university site (approximately a 45 minute drive). The population of the larger city that houses the two schools was 285,068 at the 2010 census. Even though

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these schools are within close proximity of each other (2 miles), they each have their own unique culture and climate. Both schools are located within the city limits, and are located along the southeast border of the city. Much of the district is residential. The layout of streets, homes, and shopping centers makes it visually and culturally more suburban than much of the larger city these two schools are nestled in.

The demographics of the community have changed rapidly over the past two decades, with an influx of non-White residents. In 2000 there were a total of 20,063 people living in the community, and the overall growth of the area has been close to the average for the city. However, between 1990 and 2000 there was a sharp decrease in the White population, from 90 percent of all residents to 68 percent. Over this same time period, the Black and Asian populations of the district doubled more than three times and the Latino population doubled twice. Many of the new residents of the community are recent immigrants or refugees.

School #1 is home to many recent immigrants or refugees. In 2000, eleven percent of all residents within School #1's community had been born outside of the United States, and six percent had immigrated within the last 10 years. An East African community including many Somali refugees has formed on the southern region of this community. The school is a P-6 school that enrolls around 400 students. School #2's neighborhood contains large Southeast Asian and Latino populations, including many Hmong immigrants. It is a K-6 school and enrolls around 500 students.

According to the district website, School #1 has a median household income of $47,121; 61% of students are African American (this percent reflects Black-Americans

and immigrants from Africa), 20% are Asian, 1% are American Indian, 11% are Hispanic, and 7% are White; and 89% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch. School #2 has a median household income of $42,098; 26% of students are African-American (this percent reflects Black-Americans and immigrants from Africa), 38% are Asian, 2% are American Indian, 18% are Hispanic, and 16% are White; and 72% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch.

Research has shown that children are often disproportionately affected by poverty. Both schools (#1 and #2) reported similar results in relation to poverty level in 2000, with School #1 reporting a slightly higher income level. They reported that 21 percent of all children under the age of 18 were living in a household with income below the poverty level, compared to 12 percent of total residents. Seventeen percent of families with children were below the poverty level, and poverty for families headed by single mothers was almost twice as high, at 33 percent. The child dependency ratio, when calculated by dividing the number of children (under 18) by the number of adults of working age (18-64), yields an interesting result for the area encompassing both these schools. In this area, the ratio of children to adults is 82 percent, or 82 children for every 100 adults. This is almost twice the average for the rest of the district as a whole. School #1 has the highest incidence of poverty in the city, with School #2 running a close second.

Preservice Teachers

According to data collected from 2009-2010, students who were admitted into the teacher education program had a mean age of 25.5 and were 94% female. Additionally,

the racial characteristics of students include: 96% White, 1% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Nearly all of the students enter the program as freshmen. Less than one percent of the students are asked to leave the program and/or school placement assignments.

Nine participants, all enrolled in the undergraduate elementary teacher education program, voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The preservice teachers, identified by pseudonyms, responded to an email inviting all elementary teacher candidates to participate in the research. There were 46 potential preservice teachers this particular semester. Of the 46 potential participants, 45 identified as White (1 identified as Filipino-American) and 43 were female. Initially, 15 preservice teachers responded to the invitation and expressed an interest in becoming a participant; however, after I contacted each of them and discussed the time commitment of the study, five found that it would not fit within their schedule. Thus, I started the semester with 10 preservice teachers enrolled in CRP; one needed to drop out due to a medical emergency. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term "preservice teacher" describes those within approximately one year of graduation from the professional development sequence, and "cooperating teacher" refers to the teacher in whose classroom they are teaching during the apprentice portion of the semester.

The first participant, Brian, was White, 31 years old, and a elementary school preservice teacher. He was a fifth-year senior minoring in social sciences. Brian grew up in Georgia, and after high school he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. He left the Coast Guard after five years upon the birth of his first child. Brian and his first wife were divorced shortly after the birth of their child. His interest in signing up as a participant in this study stemmed from the fact that his ex-wife is now in a same-sex marriage. He

struggles with the treatment his son receives from teachers, classmates, and other parents when they find out he has two mommies. Brian has also had heated debates with his family surrounding this issue. "They just don't understand and it isn't fair that my son is judged by such ignorant people" (initial interview, Sept. 9, 2011). His professional goals are to create safe spaces for all children within schools.

The second participant, Mary, was also a fifth-year senior, double majoring in elementary education and TESOL. She was 21 years old and self identifies as Filipino-American. She was born in Manila, Philippines, and moved to the United States at the age of seven after her parents finished their tour with the United States Air Force. Tagalog (a dialect in the Philippines) was her first language, but she also speaks a few other dialects and English. Mary was a dedicated, hard-working student who was always wearing a smile. She was not only putting herself through college, but she was also putting a cousin in the Philippines through college as well. When I expressed shock at this, she said it really wasn't that big of a deal because it was extremely cheap to go to college in the Philippines. When asked why she signed up for this study she stated: "I remember coming here to the United States going to school the first day. I could not understand anyone. I had the nicest teacher. I didn't know what she was saying but she kept on smiling and reassuring me that it would be ok. I will never forget her. I want to be a teacher like her" (initial interview, Aug. 30, 2011).

The third participant, Suzie, was from a very small town in the Midwest and reported that she spent much of her time growing up playing "school" with her baby dolls. She had always loved going to school and volunteered at many of the local schools.

Suzie was a passionate 22-year-old White woman. Suzie stated the following when asked why she wanted to enroll in this study:

> I not only want to teach, but make a difference. I want to make a difference in the lives of the students that walk in the door daily, and the ones that I pass in the halls. I do not want to stop there, however; I want to make the school a better place. I strive to not only challenge myself daily but to also challenge my co-workers and school district. I want to bring fresh ideas to education and not be afraid to act upon them. I want to be the voice of my students; I want to provide them with the best education possible. (initial interview, Sept. 6, 2011)

The fourth participant, Lacy, grew up in a small rural community in the Midwest and was a native English speaker of European descent. She self-identified as a White female. Lacy was a conscientious student. When asked to list her two strongest values she said: "I am a Republican and I am Roman Catholic." She also stated: "I am also the kind of person who pushes my religion onto others and could not imagine a life without faith and beliefs" (initial interview, Sept. 6, 2011). She came from a long history of farmers, and her grandma still lived on the farm that has been in the family for over 100 years. Lacy's reason for volunteering for the study was as follows: After taking the Multicultural course and tutoring in the "inner city" schools, she realized that she needed to know more about how to work with kids who were different from her to be a good teacher.

The fifth participant, Nancy, was a White 22-year-old female who grew up in the Bay area of California. Nancy was very creative, thoughtful, and reflective. She said

that she loved learning something new and finding a way that it connected with other things she already knew. When asked to describe who she was, she stated the following: "I don't think I can answer that question at this point. I spend a ton of time trying to figure out what I believe and usually become frustrated. While working at a Boy Scout Camp this past summer, every time I saw a falling star, I would wish for clarity" (initial interview, Sept. 9, 2011). She stated that the reason she volunteered for this study was to better understand how to teach students who were not like her.

The sixth participant, Jenny, was also a White 22-year-old female. Jenny was an extremely quiet student who was minoring in Early Childhood Education. She had moved several times during her childhood and claimed this had had a profound effect on her ability to connect with people. Jenny claimed that it took her a long time to warm up to new people. Even though she had moved several times growing up, each new home was in a rural small town in the Midwest. When asked why she agreed to participate in the study, she shared a story with me. Jenny was a very spiritual person and volunteered to go on several mission trips with her church. Her last mission trip was to New York. While there, they worked in a homeless shelter. The volunteers lived at the shelter with the people who would come for food and shelter. This had a profound effect on her understanding of the different paths and ways people move through life. Since then, she had become more involved in the community she lived in. Her hope as a result of this study was to be able to better meet the needs of her students and understand the community in which they lived.

The seventh participant, Amy, was an Early Childhood minor and also identified as a 22-year-old White female. Amy was a serious student who was passionate about

serving the needs of her students. She grew up in a suburban community in the Midwest. She was an intelligent woman who was often able to identify student concerns long before her cooperating teacher. She was gifted at connecting with her students in a deep and meaningful manner very quickly. When asked why she chose to volunteer to be a part of this study she stated: "I want to experience different cultures and lifestyles; I also want to learn positive and effective ways to connect with my students and with my future students" (initial interview, Sept. 8, 2011).

The eighth participant, Emily, was an elementary preservice teacher minoring in social sciences. She had started out as a pre-law major and then transferred to teacher education at the end of her junior year, thus she was slightly older than the average student. She was 26 years old and self-identifies as White. Her pre-law background and her passion for the civil rights movement was the reason she stated for volunteering for the study. Emily was an excellent academic student. She loved to critically analyze education and enjoyed engaging in rich dialogue; however, she struggled to connect with her students during her practicum experience.

The ninth and final participant, Ashley, was a hard working student who took teaching very seriously. She spent a considerable amount of time creating lessons and materials that her students would find interesting and meaningful, while at the same time making it appear effortless. She was always wearing a smile and could always find the positive side of problems. Ashley was the type of teacher that stood out, and was the type of teacher that parents would go to great lengths to have as their child's teacher. She self-identified as a White female who was 22-years-old. She grew up in a rural community in the Midwest.

The Course Layout

As participants of the study conducted during the fall of 2011, each preservice teacher learned about CRP. The course was initially divided into three distinct sections: What is CRP?, Implementing CRP, and Practicing CRP. The first third of the semester, we read several texts by Gloria Ladson-Billings and engaged in discussion. We read Geneva Gay's book *Culturally Responsive Teaching* and compared and contrasted Ladson-Billings' work with Gay's work. Our goal was to come to a common vision and a deep understanding of what CRP looked, sounded, and felt like in the classroom. The second part of the semester we looked at lessons the preservice teachers were writing for their method courses, but now to look at them through a CRP lens. Each lesson that was going to be taught in the schools (at least six) was gone over in small groups to see how they were best designed to fit their students' strengths, provide academic rigor, and invite critical analysis. By the final portion of the semester, the preservice teachers had taught and video recorded a couple of lessons. Thus, we got into small study groups and looked through the videos for evidence of CRP. This opportunity let the preservice teachers use video of their own teaching to launch professional discussions centered on CRP.

The Community-based Inquiry

The preservice teachers and myself engaged in a community-based inquiry. Below you will find a list of the weekly "field trips."

Week	Destination
1	Orientation

2	Community Tour with the Executive Director of the City: Tour with information on history, demographics, strengths, and struggles of the community (Driving)
3	Walking Community Tour: shopping, parks, etc.
4	CRP Teacher Panel
5	Somali Story time and Individual Story
6	CRP School Tour and Lunch at International Global Market
7	Dinner with Somali Community (families)
8	Community Center
9	Meet with Kao Kalia Yang to discuss the reading of her book and then attend her lecture.
10	Parent Interviews (as total group)
11	Meet with Dr. Todd Savage: LGBT
12	Crossing guard for a day—Each participant was paired with a 6th grader to help with crossing guard duty before and after school.
13	Spanish Story time –We visited the local public library Spanish story time. During this time we interacted with children and families who attended. Immediately following we interviewed the storyteller.
14	School Celebrations!

In addition to the weekly "field trips" the preservice teachers engaged in an individual community-based inquiry. Each preservice teacher was required to interview

and audio record at least one member in the community, ride a school bus with some of their pupils or walk students home from school, and engage in at least two local community events. Examples of some of the community events that preservice teachers engaged in were: volunteering at the public library, attending Muslim Friday Prayer Gathering, attending a community council board meeting, attending Adrian's Elementary Culver's Night, attending a Parent Group Meeting, and volunteering at the local community center. Each preservice teacher exceeded the required number of community-based inquiries. For example, one preservice teacher, after the initial community tour, signed up to be a part of the Welcome Wagon Team. This required her to do home visits in the community to welcome new members every other Saturday. Several of the preservice teachers attended each "Culver's Night" to help raise money for their school and dine with their students and families. Another preservice teacher agreed to be a coach for a youth soccer team. The preservice teachers involved reported that they felt that the community-based experiences helped them develop relationships and mutual understandings with the home communities and the students. They expressed empathy for parents who were overcoming great obstacles in order to create opportunities for their children. This was similar to Burant and Kirby's (2002) findings. They reported that when preservice teachers are provided with experiences rooted in the community, "the preservice teachers involved expressed that they learned that all students deserve the best, that parents face great structural obstacles and most want the best for their children, and that the community around the school can be a fruitful resource for teachers" (p. 571).

In the field of education, ethnography has been used to help make sense of the complexity of people and culture. It provides us with an opportunity to look beyond our preconceptions and immerse ourselves in the world of others (Wolcott, 2008). In this study, I examined a variety of data sources – nine preservice teachers' reflections (written and dialogic), video and audio tapes of university class discussions, documents (lesson plans, photo essays, pupil-generated work), pre- and post-interviews (audio/transcribed), teaching and learning episodes (video and in-class observations), and interactions at the multiple sites within the community – to gain insights into how the participants conceptualized CRP, their racialization process, and how they made sense out of their experiences.

Examining nine preservice teachers' experiences and reflections provided an opportunity to analyze and interpret complex facets of learning to teach in an urban school setting. Having a larger sample would have provided me a greater pool of stories to interpret, but it would have made it much more difficult to explore these experiences in-depth. Ethnographic methodology allowed me to become a participant-observer who "lived with and lived like those who are studied" (Van Maanen, 1996, p. 264). This insider view provided rich insights into how preservice teachers made sense of CRP.

I would like to illustrate this with a story about one of our van rides that we took to a particular community inquiry event. On this particular day, we had met quite early at the university, around 8:00 am. We were leaving early to attend a Somali story-telling at the community public library and afterwards we were then going to meet with a young

Somali woman who had agreed to share her story. We usually traveled together in a 15 passenger van to our weekly community-based inquiry events. I was always the driver. The week prior, the preservice teachers had met with a panel of four teachers who had agreed to discuss how they take up the work of creating more equitable spaces in the classroom. As we started on our journey, the preservice teachers initiated small talk (What did you do last night? Who did you see?), but the conversation quickly turned into a discussion analyzing and interpreting the meaning of the story presented by the teacher panel. Without prompting or guidance from me they were trying to make sense of what CRP meant to these veteran teachers and how they enacted it within their classrooms. As we got closer to our final destination, the preservice teachers switched their conversation to how what they had experienced last week might translate to what they were about to see/hear/experience today. During the 45 minute drive, rich dialogue transpired between the preservice teachers as I became a quiet member of the group. At times I just listened and the fact that I was driving the van almost made it feel as if the preservice teachers had forgotten that I was there – as if I had become a "fly on the wall." At other times questions were posed to me and I was invited into the conversation. Sometimes questions were addressed to me as the course instructor, but more often they directed questions/comments to me as a colleague. I don't believe that in these moments the power differential between instructor and student had disappeared, but there was a shift towards a more equal and reciprocal relationship of meaning-making.

This vignette demonstrates how in any setting (even a van ride) people can have complex interactions with each other, with objects, or with their physical environment. The multiple locations of this study provided me many opportunities to go where the

action was: communities, schools, homes, recreational sites, sacred sites. It also highlights how at times I observed and leaned about the things the participants did in the normal course of their lives. This means that at some level they accepted me as more than their instructor, and to some extent as someone they could "be themselves" in front of. This was the result of time spent together building rapport, observing and participating in a sufficient range of experiences, conversations, and relatively unstructured interviews. I also believe that because the participants did not see me only in the physical environment and traditional role of instructor in a classroom, I was able to step out of my role as instructor and into the role of researcher. This allowed me to interact with the participants at a different level. Erickson (1986) characterized interpretive participant observational research's goal as investigating, "the immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors' point of view. . . thus, the immediate (often intuitive) meanings of actions to the actors involved are of central interest" (pp. 119-120). The participant observational role allowed me to glean a holistic understanding of the preservice teachers' point of view.

Data Collection

Ethnography produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents (Genzuk, 2003). These can be in the form of interviews, videos, audio, photos, observations, participant observations, and artifacts/documents. Because I am focused on research between and among the multiple experiences these preservice teachers encountered and how this awakened their racialization process as they encountered issues of race and racism, I wanted to capture their 'story', or point of view, and thus I collected the following types of data: field notes, students' written reflections

(journals), students' autobiographical reflection paper, lesson plans, video of preservice teachers' teaching, video of focus groups and CRP course time, audio recordings of interviews and CRP course time.

Observations and field notes: To collect data, I became a participant observer in a CRP course. I observed the course as a researcher and simultaneously was the instructor for one semester. In consultation with the Honors Program, I sent a solicitation email to potential candidates of CRP. Field notes were taken at the field sites of the university classroom, the elementary classroom, and in the community. I collected copies of student writing (i.e., journal writings or weekly reflections, lesson plans, essays, and focus group discussions) from the teacher candidates who participated in the study. Finally, to keep track of my research process, I kept process notes or "writing stories" (Richardson, 2000) where I monitored day-to-day activities, methodological notes, decision making procedures, and personal notes of experiences with informants.

Video and audio of course sessions: I recorded each teacher education class either through video or/and audio recordings. I started out by trying to just video each class session by setting up a video recorder in the corner of the room. After the first two classes I realized that it was difficult to position the camera in a way that allowed me to pick up all the discussions that were being held in the class. Many small group discussions happened simultaneously, thus I added an audio recorder positioned at the opposite side of the room from the video recorder. I was then able to capture dialogue throughout the room.

Interviews: I conducted a series of individual interviews with candidates. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. Interviews took place in my office and took in an unstructured approach, or what Fontana and Frey (2000) call "the open-ended, ethnographic (in-depth) interview" (p. 652). The interviews were of a relaxed nature and invited the participants to start off by telling me the "story" of how they had decided to become a teacher. My intent was to have a dialogue with my informants that was "collaborative" (Fontana & Frey, 2000). I interviewed the candidates once during the first week of the course, and once at the end of the semester.

Videotape of teaching: I asked the candidate to videotape at least three lessons to determine if a relationship may exist between the experience provided in the university classroom, the community inquiry, and the elementary classroom. I was also looking to see if there were differences between what preservice teachers said and did in the classroom and what they said in written reflections and lesson plans. The videotapes were used by the participants to analyze and reflect on their own teaching in small groups of 2-3. Preservice teachers chose a 10-15 minute clip of their teaching that they felt demonstrated culturally relevant teaching or reflected an problem they were struggling to solve in their teaching (in relation to CRP).

Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe analyzing data which relies primarily on ethnography as "social anthropology" (p. 50). They state that researchers using this approach seek to provide detailed descriptions across multiple data sources. While useful and important ideas can emerge during analysis across multiple data sources, the most

powerful insights come from a rigorous analysis of systematically collected data (Fetterman, 2010). Merriam (1998) asserts that qualitative research generates huge amounts of raw data, so it is essential to maintain the data in an organized and timely fashion. Heeding the warning from experienced researchers, data analysis in this study was ongoing and occurred throughout the data collection process and well after. After all the interviews, classroom experiences, and community inquiry experiences, discussions were recorded and transcribed. This was a laborious process and took me about six months. My careful attention to what they were saying, how they were saying it, and even the silences and hesitations, added new layers of understanding to my analysis. In addition, doing my own transcribing kept me close to the data. Throughout this process I wrote memos and took notes on initial thoughts, questions, and intuitions. When I was done, I had over 500 pages of transcription to add to the five notebooks of fieldnotes. It was time to start making sense of the mountains of data.

To begin my formal analysis, I open-coded interview transcripts and four months worth of fieldnotes, identifying possible ideas, issues, and themes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I then took all the themes, issues, and ideas and grouped them into major themes. Throughout this process I was writing memos, listening and re-listening to recordings, viewing and re-viewing videos, and filling up notebooks with questions, ideas, and insights about what was going on in my data. I read through all of my fieldnotes chronologically numerous times.

I began to write in order to analyze. I first recorded my thoughts and the beginning outline of the dissertation in notebooks. Afterwards I saw these early writings as a combination of reflection and a graphic organizer of sorts. It was a place I could

"sneeze on paper" while at the same time hold my thoughts so that I could view them and make sense of them. Simons (1978) states "simply to record our behavior is to interfere with it" (p. 18). It helps the writer draw linkages between thoughts, actions, behaviors, beliefs, and values (Berthoff, 1987) and offers opportunities to make meaning from experiences by reflecting upon them in writing. Eventually, three chapters began to take shape.

The original chapters started to reveal the nature of al the work that these preservice teachers took up. The preservice teachers' story shared that they, and myself, had become dizzy trying to interpret and understand the complexity of their work as it moved beyond a course exploring CRP and a community-based inquiry project to an understanding of themselves as racialized human beings. I believe these were important ingredients of my research, but I believed the preservice teachers' stories indicated there was more things to learn about the complex nature of becoming a teacher. I was guessing that there was something about the relationships of their beliefs and ideas as they interacted with the experiences provided. I decided to focus on the stories of the preservice teachers that gave insights into this complex and dynamic relationship. I used the writing process described earlier as a way of coming to know their stories and work through the data. More importantly, drawing on what these preservice teachers shared, I tried to capture each preservice teacher's experience in ways that the reader might understand their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The following chapters are retellings and interpretation of some of the stories the preservice teachers shared.

CHAPTER 4

Does a metamorphosis begin from the outside in or the inside out?

--The Dreamer, Pam Munoz Ryan

People were happily listening to the music while eating. The server weaves her way through the overcrowded restaurant carrying a bejeweled sombrero over her head. She makes her way to a table in the corner and places the sombrero on a boy who looks about eight. It quickly slides over his auburn hair and the rim hides the light brown freckles that pepper his nose and cheeks. He lifts the brim to reveal a beaming smile. Two other servers join the table presenting a deep fried ice-cream with a single candle aglow to the boy and they start to sing, "¡Feliz cumpleoños! . . .

As the door to the restaurant opens, Suzie waves and Amy makes her way to our table. We had agreed to meet at the local Mexican restaurant across the street from the university. Our plan was to enjoy a nice dinner together before heading over to meet with Kao Kalia Yang. She was giving a presentation in the Riverview Ballroom as part of the Performing Arts and Lecture Series on campus. Ms. Yang had agreed to meet with a small group of university students that had been a part of a book club. As part of the culturally relevant pedagogy course, we had all read The Latehomecomer and decided to attend her presentation as one of our community-based field experiences. As we enjoyed our dinner, we chatted about the book and several of the preservice teachers expressed excitement at the opportunity to be able to meet her in person.

The preservice teachers were not disappointed with their private meeting. They found Ms. Yang to be as kind and gracious as they had imagined her to be. They had

come prepared with books held in the crook of their arm, loose leaves of paper jutting out

from the edges, bent and frayed. They had prepared questions and comments to explore.

Soon our time came to an end, and she was being escorted out as we made our way to the

ballroom. Suzie and Brian led the group to the second row. Looking down the row they

quickly determined that it had enough open seats for our large group and they stepped

aside to let the group find their way. I had had the privilege of hearing Ms. Yang speak

on several occasions so I positioned myself at the end so as to observe how the preservice

teachers responded to the presentation. Ms. Yang's words resonated with not only the

preservice teachers, but the entire audience, often eliciting strong emotional reactions.

Several of the preservice teachers dabbed at tears during the presentation, but all

remained glued to her every word.

At the end of her lecture, the preservice teachers led the audience in a standing

ovation. Without hesitation they jumped to their feet and were heartily applauding. I

noticed that they did not look around or wait for others in the audience to start to move to

their feet. It was Mary who was the first of the preservice teachers, and of the audience,

to leap out of her chair to begin the showering of accolades. It was several minutes

before the audience quieted down and Ms. Yang made her way to the back of the room to

autograph the many books that were being displayed across a large fold-out table. As

the audience started to leave their chairs and make their way to the exit or Ms. Yang, the

preservice teachers remained standing. They stood in silence for at least ten minutes as

the rest of the crowd made their way to the back of the room. As the chairs around them

became more and more empty they started to move closer together. Brian and a few of

the others that were sitting at the edges made their way to the row directly in front of

where we were sitting. They knelt on the chairs to face their peers but were not speaking. A few of the preservice teachers were dabbing at tears as they flowed down their cheeks. The only sounds or movements were the few preservice teachers who reached into their purses and pockets to retrieve tiny travel-sized packages of tissues. They passed around the tiny packages without speaking. Some quietly dabbed at their noses while others started to place an arm around another's shoulder. A few held hands.

Silently they stood, looking down at their feet as if not able or willing to look up. The longer they stood the more they shifted their bodies to almost form a circle. Slowly, they moved chairs out of the way to make the process of creating a circle, and getting closer to each other, easier. As I stood there I was mesmerized by what I was seeing. Nothing was being said, but yet I had a sense, a hunch, that something important was happening. I was afraid if I spoke I would disrupt the "sanctity" of the moment. So we all just stood. Looking down. Leaning into each other.

Amy was the first to speak. In almost a whisper she says, "It makes me so sad to know that people are treated that way." Tears streamed down her cheeks as she looked up. This whisper broke the ice and the dialogue began. Preservice teachers echoed Amy's words and shared stories of injustices they had observed during their childhoods, at the university, and in their field placements. How long did they stand there? Ms. Yang's lecture ended at approximately 9:00 pm. It wasn't until Ms. Yang had signed her last autograph and shook the hand of her last guest that we began to make our way to the exit. As we walked slowly toward the door, I looked up at the clock and noticed that it was 10:30. Together we walked out the door, down the stairs, and to the back parking lot. At the entrance of the building everyone stopped again. No one seemed willing to

leave. When we left the building and stood outside to say our goodbyes there was a long

hesitation and then we parted.

Meaning-making at the Intersection of Cultural Other and Racial Self-Identity

The culturally relevant pedagogy class created spaces for the participants to listen, comprehend, and interact with stories from multiple points of view. The stories varied in length and topics, but each brought to life a lived history and revealed the cultural nuances of the story teller. Aguirre (2003) defines stories as "social events that instruct us about social processes, social structures, and social situations" (p. 3). The preservice teachers attended several "social events" during the semester where they listened not only to the narratives of individuals' lived lives, but also to social relations as they bumped up against issues of race, class, sexuality, and gender. Bonilla-Silva (2004) makes a distinction between two types of racial stories: story lines and testimonies. He defines story lines as "the socially shared tales that incorporate a common scheme and wording" (p. 556); these are often impersonal and provide little narrative detail. On the other hand, he defines testimonies as "accounts in which the narrator is a central participant or is close to the characters" (p. 557). A determining distinction between story lines and testimonies, according to Bonilla-Silva, is that testimonies provide the aura of authenticity that only firsthand narratives can furnish. He further explains that testimonies involve "details and personal investment" (p. 558) and are often framed through the lens of racial narratives and understandings about the world. For the purposes of this research, the terms "story" and "testimony" will be used interchangeably,

and are referring to a personal account that is framed through the lens of racial narratives and understandings about the world.

One way in which the preservice teachers came to understand and talk about culturally relevant pedagogy was through the testimonies they heard, such as in Kao Kalia Yang's presentation. But what is often forgotten or ignored is that each of these preservice teachers came to these experiences and listened to these testimonies from their own racialized stories.   Regrettably, much research in teacher education has drawn on and repeats conceptions of the racial identity of White future teachers as static, ignoring historic and social context (Lensmire & Snaza, 2010). Because all stories are told within particular ideological formations, it is important to recognize the racial stories that the preservice teachers know and tell, and that in turn shaped their identity.

This chapter moves through the relationship between the teller and the listener in stories and examines the space that Louise Rosenblatt defines as a transaction. Transactional theory suggests "a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship" (Rosenblatt, 1986, 86). Rosenblatt rejects the term "interaction" to describe a reader's unique response to and relationship with a text (or for the purposes of this study, the "listener" and the "story teller"). Rosenblatt argues that the term "interaction" conjures a picture of separate objects encountering one another but remaining essentially unchanged, like billiard balls bouncing off one another. Rosenblatt prefers the term "transaction", and thinks of meaning-making as a reciprocal exchange between the text and the reader. She writes, "The mind fits the word and shapes it as a river fits and shapes its own banks, each working its effects upon the other" (1982, pg. 86).

This chapter focuses on the stories the preservice teachers shared as a result of hearing testimonies presented in a culturally relevant pedagogy course. The preservice teachers in this study had entered into a meaning-making reciprocal "exchange" with the pupils in their class, as well as the families of the pupils and the members of the community. This "exchange" changed how these preservice viewed race and racism. More specifically, I illuminate: (a) moments of silence, and (b) preservice teachers revisiting the racialized fables of their youth. The preservice teachers and I learned, together, that there were important things that could be learned by revisiting the moments of silence and the "fables" of our youth. We uncovered the often covert and overt ways these stories helped to produce and shape the racial structures of our backgrounds. At the same time, we learned that it is arduous work to mine and disrupt the stories of our past. It takes a willingness to become vulnerable. For these preservice teachers, 'story' became an important tool to develop deep understandings of their identities and racialization processes, as well as how the relationship between their own stories and the stories they encountered worked to disrupt the fables of their past.

Race, Identity, and Reaction

The story of the preservice teachers' reaction to Kao Kalia Yang's presentation at the beginning of this chapter illuminates the reaction of the preservice teachers as they encountered stories that represented another path or way of moving through life. I chose to begin with this story because it was the most dramatic, but at each community-based inquiry there was a moment of silence and coming together. The moments varied in length of time, but they were very much present. As we moved through the semester, I felt that these moments of silence were more pronounced and punctuated the end of each

storytelling experience. The "circling-up" was not as pronounced as it was at the end of Ms. Yang's presentation, but what I did notice is that there was a physical coming together of the group. There was a strong sense of community in these moments of silence. In my field notes, I compared what happened after Ms. Yang's presentation to a scene I once witnessed at my great-grandmother's funeral. I wrote:

> *I am haunted by these moments of silence at the end of our community field trips.*
> *Tonight I am particularly disturbed for it was much longer and more exaggerated*
> *than usual. Tonight as I looked at the preservice teachers grouped into a circle, I*
> *couldn't help but to be reminded of "ma's" funeral. I remember it was a*
> *beautiful day and my grandma and all her siblings were sitting together in a*
> *circle. Not one of them was looking at each other—they were all looking down. I*
> *remember seeing a picture of this moment when I was older. I remember how I*
> *thought this photo captured such raw emotions—loss, grief, and despair. Is this*
> *what the preservice teachers are experiencing? I can't help but to see similar*
> *emotions displayed. Even the very formation is so oddly similar. What is*
> *happening in these moments? I want to ask during the moments, but there is this*
> *feeling that something important, almost holy or spiritual, is going on and if I*
> *speak I will somehow break or disrupt the sanctity (Fieldnotes, September 1,*
> *2011).*

My response in this situation on that day caused me to consider these moments more closely. As a teacher educator, when I look into the faces of the preservice teachers, I cannot help but envision the hundreds of little faces that these preservice teachers will interact with over the course of their careers. Thus, I am interested in how White

teachers construct identities of people different from themselves, but these moments caused me to shift my lens, for a moment. The visceral response from the preservice teachers had indicated to me that after hearing these stories the preservice teachers had expanded and deepened relevant connections that left them changed. This change was about more than best practices. What I mean by this is that there was more than a set of skills or strategies introduced to create a certain outcome. In these moments race had been brought to the forefront. Not just the race of their students, families, and the community, but the race of the preservice teacher. I wondered if they were, for the first time, conscious of their race and what it means to be White. Henry Giroux (1997) reminds us that "racial categories exist and shape the lives of people differently within existing inequalities of power and wealth" (p. 108). Even though the preservice teachers appeared to display similar reactions to the experiences provided, there is an inherent danger of simplification in claiming that all nine preservice teachers derived the same beliefs and understandings from these experiences. Therefore, the next section explores these moments of silence from the preservice teachers' point of view.

Re-examining the Moments of Silence

With the benefit of time and reflection I was hoping the preservice teachers would be willing to shed some light on what they were experiencing in these moments of silence. I felt there was something important in these moments and as I reviewed the field notes and the minimal dialogue, I knew I needed to look deeper. So a month after the course had been completed, I brought eight of the participants back together (Brian was unable to make it), to try and make sense of what was happening in these moments of silence. I sent out an email expressing my need to understand what was happening

from their point of view and if they would be willing to help me understand how they were feeling in these moments. All emailed me back and agreed to come. It was a last-minute family conflict that prevented Brian from returning.

We sat at tables in a u-shaped formation with the audio recorder in the middle of the room. I had typed up my fieldnotes and the minimal dialogue that I had recorded and gave a copy to each participant. Again the room was silent as the participants read over the notes and reflected. I started the conversation with a single question: What do you think was happening in the silent moments? The preservice teachers responded with the following exchange:

Mary: Reflection? (Mary's voice went up at the end)

Nancy: I was speechless!

Mary: Yeah, I was trying to put what I had heard and what I was feeling to words, but . . . I didn't have any to express what I was thinking and feeling.

Silence Imposed

Mary responded immediately, but her response of "reflection" almost appeared as a question more than a statement. It appeared she was questioning her choice of word to answer the question as she spoke it. It wasn't until after Nancy interjected that Mary was able to articulate her lack of words, or vocabulary, to explain the moments of silence. Silence means different things to different people. Mary and Nancy recognized the moments of silence and struggled to find the right words to talk about these experiences. Alerby & Alerby (2003) indicate that one may "elect to be silent, but in some situations

silence is imposed, as one cannot find words, to respond . . . silence becomes a language when the ordinary vocabulary is not enough" (p. 42). Mary is a very talkative young woman and can usually be counted on in class to be the first with a response. She wanted to follow her natural inclination to answer the question that had been posed to her, but silence had been imposed upon her because she did not have the vocabulary needed. One way to understand this is from Thandeka (1999), who might say that Mary's "insights had outstripped her racial vocabulary" (p. 12). The preservice teachers had found themselves remaining silent for several reasons.

> Amy: Yeah, I think I was trying to connect my life experiences to the life experiences of all those people.

> Lacy: I think that is what I was trying to do, too. Those experiences were so hard to comprehend. I thought I had hardships.

> Ashley: Yet, thinking about the successes . . . making this incredible life [Suzie interrupts Ashley]

> Suzie: Their stories were amazing and scary at the same time. They were amazing because these people overcame such obstacles . . . but they were also scary because if that could happen to them . . . how could things like that happen to people today. I mean . . . um . . . it's like some people, when they are born, they just win the lottery. It doesn't make sense.

This conversation shares how, for these particular preservice teachers, the moments of silence were times when they reflected on their lives and recognized the role of culture, power, and oppression. One possible interpretation is that Amy's desire to connect her

life experiences to the life experiences of her story teller is the beginning of a process where she analyzes her own belief systems and personal experiences at the intersection of "other". Another is that it was an attempt to build on the known to make meaning of the experiences of her story teller. Ladson-Billings (2001) contends:

> Typically, White, middle-class prospective teachers have little to no understanding of their own typical culture. Notions of Whiteness are taken for granted. They rarely are interrogated. But being White is not merely about biology. It is about choosing a system of privilege and power. (p. 81)

It seems that Suzie was trying to point to White privilege and power when she says, "It's like some people, when they are born, they just win the lottery." Is her use of the word "some" really directed at herself? Mary and Jenny added to the discussion with the following:

> Mary: I know. Like the Somali story teller. What she had to do to get to the U.S. was different than my experience. I thought all you had to do was get a passport and come.

> Jenny: What got me is when she was talking about family and having to leave family or how important family was. I connected to this because family is everything to me. Her stories about her grandma could be my stories on so many different levels, yet our lives . . . experiences were so different.

The preservice teachers' experiences with listening to the racialized storylines, offered as part of the culturally relevant pedagogy course, had given them insights into how their students and families lived, but at the same time they had offered moments for the

preservice teachers to acknowledge a dominance paradigm. The preservice teachers were recognizing harm that has come to people of color as a result of White dominance and the continuing influence of White dominance. The moments of silence illuminate the struggles of the preservice teachers as they encounter their race, the race of the storyteller, oppression, and position of power. Some expressed this as a new realization, an "aha" moment that left them speechless. Emily added to the "aha" moment conversation with the following:

> Emily: I was dwelling in the aha moments. Soaking it all in.
>
> Teresa: Tell me more. What do you mean by "the aha moments"?
>
> Emily: Well . . . I thought racism . . . well I knew it still existed but I thought it wasn't that bad any more. I mean . . . I thought with the civil rights movement and all . . . (words trail off and inaudible) (Focus Group, January 5, 2012).

The above conversation shared several ideas about what had been happening in those moments of silence, but Emily's aha moment revealed recognition of what had been unsaid by the group. It provided an opening for us to take up the issue of race even though it was difficult. Up until this point the preservice teachers were talking around issues of race instead of addressing it head-on. The preservice teachers were trying to figure out how to talk about race without coming across as racist. Thankdeka (1999) pointed out that White people are not supposed to talk about race, nor does it matter either way (p.10). Within a very short time, the dialogue had revealed some important insights as to what was happening in these moments of silence.

The conversation quickly moved from the "what" to the "how" of racism. The racialized storylines gave the preservice teachers an insider view of racism at work. In

the conversation that followed, Amy, Emily, and Ashley revealed that before taking this course they did not believe that racism was as prevalent as it is. Because they did not experience it firsthand or see the overt displays of racism they had learned about, they assumed that Martin Luther King had eradicated our society of the ills of racism.

> Ashley: I guess because the way I grew up I assumed all people were accepting of others. I can't imagine my mom or dad telling me not to like someone because of the color of their skin or where they live . . . like, I just. . . I just did not hear that kind of stuff in my house.

Amy, Emily, and Ashley expressed a feeling of shock at the realization that people could be judged based on the color of their skin. Bonilla-Silva (2003a) has labeled the racial ideology that glues the post-civil rights racial structure as "color-blind racism". He contends that the main frames of this ideology are the denial of the centrality of discrimination (Discrimination ended in the sixties). Are Amy, Emily, and Ashley products of what Massey and Denton (1993) call the "new racism", where discriminatory practices are more covert in nature? One argument that underpins the color-blind racism or new racism is the framing of racial oppression and injustice as elements of the past that, while regrettable, can't be remedied now. These preservice teachers did indicate a level of shock that racism still existed, but on the other hand they also expressed outrage and compassion, and a desire to make the world a better place. Was their silence due to the recognition that what they had learned, growing up White, was an untruth? Was the silence a realization that they too had been victims, falling prey to the new social structures of racism?

I want to be perfectly clear here. I do not contend or propose that the socialization process of these preservice teachers, though a violence, is comparable to the horrific level of violence experienced by people rendered voiceless or marginalized within our society. What I would like to point to is the possibility that the moments of silence for these young preservice teachers is what Thandeka (1999) calls a "discovery of the unresolved" (p. 12). These preservice teachers, in their quest to become better teachers, indicated that they had just discovered unresolved issues centered on their own history, culture, power, and racial identity. This discovery of unresolved issues left them feeling discombobulated and unsure of important questions such as: Who am I and what type of person do I want to be? Mary explained her unease during the final focus group:

> Mary: Even though I am biracial I have always considered myself a White child. I have never really had that celebrate different cultures thing. Until this semester I think I still thought of myself as White. I mean . . . when . . . this school is the first school that was not all White. These are the first people. . . I heard their stories and . . . I am still trying to figure out who I am as a person and who I am and what my background . . .um. .. .my nationality and how it influences the way I am today. (Focus Group, January 5, 2012)

Mary had moved into more specific talk about race—thinking about her race in comparison to thinking of others in racial terms. In our first interview Mary had indicated that she was aware of being racially different in the classroom, but here she admitted that she is still has some unresolved issues centered on her own history, culture and racial identity. Lacy added to Mary's comments:

I was so ignorant and naïve. . . I have grown up. . . I . . . I am sure I am still a

racist, but I am not going to openly admit this because it is not a good thing.

Mary and Lacy highlight an important aspect in these moments of silence-the preservice teachers had realized that they had indeed learned to think of others and themselves in racial terms. Schmidt (2002) defines racialization as a socially constructed process where race becomes the predominant way of defining oneself or being defined by others. It is also a powerful mechanism for excluding, lumping, or stereotyping. Individuals and society continually communicate values and storylines (covertly and overtly) about racial and ethnic groups, and such messages have implications for how individuals see themselves in relation to others in society. For many of these preservice teachers, this was a new understanding. It was an understanding that ran counter to what they had come to believe: They believed that good people are not racist and racist people *see* racial and ethnic groups. If they refer to themselves as a non-racist person, or as many of the preservice teachers declared, "a good person," they were forced to renegotiate their identity. That is, the preservice teachers had to answer the following question: If I think of others and myself in racial terms, then can I still be a good person?

The preservice teachers came from the vantage point of being able to deny how race commands society. However, as our convesation continued, the preservice teachers displayed an awakened awareness of notions of race and racism. The conversations shifted from reflecting on the course and speakers to unearthing stories from their past. Thandeka (1999) indicates that a racial identity can involve stories and histories in a person's background that have contributed to a complex, and perhaps very private, racial identity. The preservice teachers began to tell personal stories, and the conversation

shifted from one that seemed academic (less personal and more controlled) to one that was more fast paced, reflective, and confessional. At times, the preservice teachers appeared angry. Below, I share stories by Lacie and Suzie that suggest the overall theme of the stories that were shared.

> Lacy: When I was growing up and I was potty training, I got a Barbie every time I was a good girl. So the second time I wanted a Black Barbie and umm . . . Black Barbies were huge when I was growing up they just started to come out and . . . I wanted a Black Barbie so bad. So in the store I was yelling, "Mom, I want that Black Barbie." I didn't know why I wanted that Black Barbie, but I just did. I know that my mom did not want to buy that Black Barbie for me, but I kept on screaming in the store: Black Barbie! Black Barbie! I knew I was embarrassing her, but I kept screaming. She grabbed me by the arm and marched me out of the store. We went home without a Barbie. Even though I wanted the Black Barbie and did not get it what I remember most is that the entire ride home my mother did not speak to me. When we did get home she unpacked the groceries and just left me. She did not talk to me or even help me out of the car. She just ignored me.

> Suzie: My best friend, I have known her since I was eight. Her parents actually owned a Hardees in downtown Anoka and it still isn't very diverse, but the people in the community were of a lower socio-economic level, so the African-American people that were there, so they would come into the store. They actually sold the store because they were afraid of the African-Americans coming in and robbing the place, and even though there had not been an incident – they sold the store.

So, her family has been a bit more racist than mine. I did not say anything

because they are like my second family and I just have to let it roll off my back.

Lacy and Suzie's stories reveal how they were taught to be White through the use of fear – fear of being exiled from the ones they love and care about. Thandeka (1999) would argue that this fear of being exiled is central to the formation of White racial identities. Lacy and Suzie's stories not only give us a taste of the essence of the stories that were being shared by all the preservice teachers, but they strongly resemble the stories Thandeka shared in her work. I have turned to the work of the Reverend Thandeka many times in my research as I tried to interpret the preservice teachers' stories. However, it was stories such as the examples above that provoked me to look deeper. Thandeka helped me to listen, understand, and be more compassionate as I tried to interpret and unpack the meaning of the preservice teachers' stories.

White Racial Induction Process

In 1991, Thandeka embarked on a journey to understand what Norman Podhoretz describes as the "white racial induction process" (p. 28). Thandeka shares that White racial induction is a process in which a new understanding of racism, prejudice, and supremacy cannot be adequately described (p. 2), despite exhaustive research in the field of social sciences of the socialization process. She contends that White children's experiences with White authorities teach them how to be White. For Thandeka, this is a violent process where children learn, often in subtle and implicit ways, that desire for or attraction to people who are outside their white community is wrong.

According to Thandeka, White children, who are still unfamiliar with the codes of whiteness and who have sought love, relationship, and connection with People of Color, frequently have experiences with significant White people in their lives that alert or warn them that there is something wrong with their desires. Warnings to White children may come in many forms, including reprimands, silence, withdrawal of affection, or threats of emotional abandonment. Over time, White children learn to repress their desire for connection to People of Color. To bring this assertion to life, Thandeka shares White people's personal accounts of their earliest memories of race.

The stories Thandeka shares are very similar to the stories shared by Lacy and Suzie. Both preservice teachers shared experiences where important White people in their youth, people they love, alerted them that there is something wrong with connection to or nearness to people of color. However, a distinction that I want to point out is that Thandeka invited people to share personal accounts of their earliest memories of race. These preservice teachers arrived in this moment, a moment of sharing their personal accounts, as a result of a dialogue where the preservice teachers were attempting to answer the question: What do you think was happening in the silent moments?

In my field notes I connected these moments of silence to a memory I had of attending my great-grandma's funeral. The preservice teachers, in discussing these moments of silence, went from power and privilege to misery and defeat. Thandeka (1999) would argue that they ". . . had discovered feelings that did not cohere with their own sense of self. A disjunction in self-awareness is the place of a small death, the death of an unadorned feeling" (p. 17). She offers up a reason for the preservice teachers' behaviors during these moments of silence which produced tears and an inability to look

up. Drawing from Thandeka, the preservice teachers felt shame because they now faced the feelings they had discarded in order to form their White identity.

Shame

In order to understand shame one must have experienced deep shame and confronted it sufficiently to have assimilated it personally, and pursued it cognitively wherever it led, and finally, to have had the courage to risk further shame by exposing oneself in writing.

(Kaufman, 1992, p. xxvii)

Shame, according to Thandeka (1999), is a "misalignment" in one's self, an incongruence between mind (thoughts) and body (emotions and desires). When an individual discovers this incongruence or split, she or he may feel "unloveable," flawed, or lacking a sense of self-worth (p. 12). In the case of White shame, White people may have experiences in which they realize that their racialized thoughts are incongruent with their emotions and/or desires to be affirming of the humanity of all people. The stories from the preservice teachers highlighted how they were struggling with shame. The following story from Mary highlights the misalignment she felt:

> When I hear of an urban school setting I find myself thinking of stereotypes. I want to kill myself when I think this, but I just think it's the area and beliefs that I grew up with. I think stereotypes like Somali children . . . with all . . . have a harder time focusing in the classroom because they don't like socializing with different genders. When I have experiences that counteract what I've been told and led to believe I want to pinch myself and say see I shouldn't be stereotyping. (Written Reflection, October, 2011)

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Sources of shame are both internal and external, according to Thandeka (1999). When an individual becomes conscious of how she or he had had to sever parts of her or his thinking and feeling self ("lack of self-coherency or integration") in order to not experience withdrawal of affection from those around her or him, then the individual experiences feelings of shame via an external source. An individual's awareness of not living up to an "ideal self" can also be a source of shame (Holzman, 1995; Thandeka, 1999). The stereotypical thought captured above illustrates how Mary had been affected by racialization, which was incongruent with her desire to be a good person and a good teacher, her "ideal self."

Conceptualizing identity formation in this way is useful because it can shed light on the racialization process these preservice teachers reported experiencing. Connection is the primary reason we are here, so it makes sense that connection gives purpose and meaning to our lives. Shame is the fear of disconnection, or fear that something about who we are or what we fail to do could threaten a connection. The preservice teachers, during the moments of silence, were grappling with shame and the loss that comes with it. Shame is not something to be named by our head. Shame is a full-bodied, heart emotion. Dr. Brene Brown (2011) argues that shame is an intensely painful feeling or belief that we are flawed and somehow inadequate and unworthy of a connection. She further reports that people who have a high level of resilience to shame physically recognize when they are feel shame, and they know what triggered it. The preservice teachers in this study, during these moments of silence (which I argue are moments of shame), were not aware of what had triggered the shame and did not have the vocabulary

to name the experience. Instead, they cried, reached out to each other, and tried to reconnect.

Conclusion

In the vignette at the beginning of this chapter, I recounted what I called a moment of silence. Revisiting these moments of silence allowed the preservice teachers to, at varying levels, develop a critical awareness of issues of power, race, racism, and oppression. Creating a space for these preservice teachers to reach out, talk, and share their racialized storyline unveiled issues of shame, grief, and loss. We uncovered the often covert and overt ways stories helped to produce and shape the racial structures of our backgrounds and thus our identities. At the same time, we learned that it is arduous work to mine and disrupt the stories of our past. It is also courageous work. It took courage from the preservice teachers to let go of who they should be, as White people, in order to be who they are. When they confronted the painful feelings of shame, they leaned into the discomfort to try and make sense of what they were experiencing. On one hand, we discovered that shame fills us with this fear of disconnection, because of our imperfections, according to White supremacy. But ironically, it was the desire for connection as imperfects that connected us to each other. Our shared humanity was that we are imperfect. Finding the courage to talk about our struggles and imperfections together freed us and gave us power to take up this work.

Addressing issues of race, racism, gender, and sexism are often not taken up outside the university multicultural course. The preservice teachers made this explicit during our time together. The intellectual and emotional process of: (a) disrupting the

silence around Whiteness; (b) retelling stories that carry White shame; and (c) genuinely

reflecting on how one's thinking, feeling, and acting can perpetuate white dominance is

complex and complicated. But it was within "the complex" that these preservice teachers

uncovered significant insights into who they are and how to position themselves as

teachers working to create more equitable teaching and learning spaces. In the next

chapter, "Meaning-making in the midst of the complex," I address the notion that

meaning-making occurs in the complexity of the university setting, the urban elementary

classroom/school, and the community.

CHAPTER 5

To the teacher the simplest and most general appears as the easiest, whereas for a pupil

only the complex and living appears easy.

--Leo Tolstoy—

"Ouch!" I cried out to no one in particular as I shook the hot coffee off my hand.

I was attempting to carry too much: a backpack that refused to close, my purse, and nine

cups of coffee. I was attempting to read the number written on the plastic university key

ring when I upset one of the trays of coffee and burnt my hand. Which van was I driving

today?

I normally did not bring hot coffee for the preservice teachers, but today was a

unique day. All preservice teachers had agreed (on short notice) to get up on their day

"off" and meet in the university parking lot at 6:30 in the morning. We were on our way

to tour and spend the day at Westside Elementary. One of the teachers from the CRP

teacher panel was overheard by her principal in the staff lounge discussing her recent

university visit with a fellow teacher. The story of nine preservice teachers and a teacher

educator engaged in researching ways to create more equitable classrooms piqued the

principal's attention and she invited the cooperating teacher to her office to hear more.

That night I received a phone call from the principal. Ms. Smith was personally inviting

us to come tour her school. She shared with me how she has been the principal at

Westside Elementary School for the past six years, and her mission from day one was to

create a team of teachers who embraced CRP. After six years, Ms. Smith felt she had

come pretty close. Ms. Smith was always on the lookout for exceptional teachers, but she

had a unique teacher in mind. She was looking for teachers who understood and could

enact the three tenants of Gloria Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy. Once

she heard of a teacher she went to great lengths to get the teacher to work at her school.

"They are a rare breed and I want them at my school" (Phone Conversation, October,

2011). She revealed that fellow principals in the district claimed she did not play fair.

Therefore, when she heard that there was a group of teachers seeking to learn CRP, she

jumped at the chance to bring them to her building.

We were warmly greeted by the school secretary and invited into Ms. Smith's

office. An emergency had called her away, but the secretary assured us it would not take

long. Ms. Smith walked into her office and extended a hand to me. Shaking her hand I

said: "Let me introduce you to my co-researchers."

At every community-based research event, I introduced the preservice teachers as

co-researchers. This was not meant as a tool of manipulation – it was a sincere

recognition of the work these preservice teachers took up each week. When we met for

the final class, I came with a typed list of themes that I had generated from the data. I

shared this list with the preservice teachers and asked them to share with me what they

deemed was the most important. I asked them to imagine, if they were the primary

investigator, what they would point to as most provocative. What did they want others to

know and remember from the work they did? This chapter is the result of a shared pen

experience. Together we generated a list of important themes. I brought a typed list of

themes generated from focus groups and interviews. Taking their lead I attempt to honor

the preservice teachers within this study and present what they viewed as something to notice.

Meaning-making in the midst of the complex

Literacy experts long ago began to debate two views – "top down interpretation" and "bottom up processing" – of how we understand language. The advocates of "top down interpretation" argue that background knowledge, previous experience with a situation, context, and topic play primary roles in helping us interpret meaning (K. Goodman, 1992; Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). We use prior knowledge and experience to anticipate, predict, and infer meaning. In contrast, the advocates of "bottom up processing" believe that complexity must wait, and that those "first things" that come first must always be bits and pieces rather than wholes (Arbruster, lehr, & Osborn 2011). In other words, we must walk before we can run, and we must have the skills before we can perform.

This same binary debate is prevalent in the literature I reviewed on CRP. Some researchers believe that we make sense of the world by assembling little bits, by adding up elements, and by pasting together impressions retrieved along our educational career in order to make meaning of the whole. Other researchers state that learners must learn to grasp relationships and to see how things are related – to see the relationship of parts to the meaning of a whole. This conflict leaves us as educators with the question of questions: "How can I understand the whole until I understand the parts? How can I understand the parts until I know the whole?" As mentioned in my literature review, several institutions approach multicultural education as the assembling of the little bits and pieces. A course is added as an addition to what is already taught. It is left up to the

preservice teacher to bring together all the parts and pieces, usually during their student teaching experience. During this student teaching experience, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor is expected to mentor the student teacher in bringing together the bits and pieces. This becomes problematic if the cooperating teacher is unaware of or does not subscribe to the same beliefs in knowledge or practice as the university. In addition, the university supervisor is present in the student teacher's experience at best three or four times during the student teaching field experience. What is often neglected is the bringing together of the parts and pieces to make meaning of the whole. Often this leads student teachers to believe that issues addressed in their multicultural education course are superficial, and so issues of race, privilege, power, and oppression continue to go unexamined.

The nine preservice teachers that participated in this study agreed to take part in a course exploring the tenants of CRP while engaged in a seven-week urban field experience. Thus, these preservice teachers are trying to understand CRP in the midst of the complex environment of the elementary classroom, the university setting and the community that supports and surrounds the school. Using the framework of Gloria Ladson-Billings' CRP and Norma Gonzalez, Luis C. Moll, and Cathy Amanti's (2005) "Funds of Knowledge", the preservice teachers were offered a wider lens through which to develop a deeper understanding of CRP. The preservice teachers' disclosure of their making-meaning process for CRP reveals that engaging simultaneously in a university course, group discussions, reflection, community inquiry, lesson development, and field-based teaching was beneficial for developing an understanding of what it means to understand and practice CRP.

Across cases, I noticed that participants had expressed similar patterns of meaning-making. The findings suggested that participants' meaning-making approaches were similar to the "top down interpretation" presented earlier (i.e., background knowledge, previous experience of a situation, context, and topic played primary roles in helping them interpret meaning). Participants reported that in order to develop key understandings, a dynamic supportive interaction process involving the preservice teacher, the student, and the community was needed. As Suzie put it,

> My favorite part of the whole class is how many different things pull together to make it[culturally relevant pedagogy] make sense. . . like the community tour was really important in helping me understand where my students are coming from; the teacher panel was really important because these are teachers with experience that can really help us be the same way [practicing culturally relevant pedagogy]. The LGBT guest speaker, he was really important because he pulled in another community that gets overlooked . . . you don't often think of. It related to my life in the urban school right now. I don't think . . . without this aspect of teaching. . . I don't think I would feel the same way about teaching as I do now. I don't think I would have the same enthusiasm for doing it [culturally relevant pedagogy]. (Interview, Dec. 2011)

Similarly, Emily described a process of meaning-making that is interactive, in which each individual experience contributes to the process of constructing meaning. She elaborated:

> They [each experience] gave value to me. . . brought it into the context of what we were learning about because without the community tour I don't think I would

have related as much to what they [the students'] were saying because I would not have the background information to reinforce the different component and concepts in my mind. I don't think . . . without the interviews [pause] I would have had all this information about the community and not really knowing exactly how it affects education and the students that live there. It isn't enough to read about it. I had all these facts in my head from the reading in my head. I needed to be there and see it. Once I see it I can see how it can apply. Reading, seeing it, hearing it, doing it, and apply. Now I feel like I can take this information and do something with it. (Interview, May 2011)

Emily, like Suzie, commented on how she needed to see how things were related in order to comprehend the relationship of the parts to make meaning of the whole; she also commented on how this meaning-making process enabled her to deepen her understanding of CRP. In addition, she highlighted a commonality shared among participants. Each participant had expressed how limited prior experiences in an urban school setting had impeded their ability to make the connections that were necessary to truly understand CRP as a theory put into action within the classroom. For example, participants discussed a tutoring experience from their multicultural education course in the initial interviews. They revealed how very important they felt this experience was, but felt this one experience as a tutor left them with the feeling of inadequacy in terms of teaching pupils from a multitude of backgrounds. Suzie shared with me her first experience in an urban school setting during her multicultural course:

I had never been to a city school before. I had no idea what to expect. We walk up to the school and you have to ring this buzzer to have the people let you in and

I was . . . [pause] am I safe here. I don't know what to expect. I have never been to a school where you have to ring the buzzer and the only reason I can think you need a buzzer is because it is not very safe. When we walk in the school it is empty. The students are not there yet. The principle greets us and starts talking about all the refugee kids that are starting to come to this school and how they speak Karen. She said that one little girl sits in the classroom and sobs because when she was escaping her father was killed and her mother had a baby and the baby did not survive. I am already intimidated. Most of these students are ELL. They speak two or three different languages. How am I going to communicate? I don't know anything. These students have been through traumatic experiences. How on earth am I going to relate to this? How am I going to teach these students without being totally insensitive to what they are going through right now? Where do I begin? I was overwhelmed and intimidated.

Suzie's experience was not unique, as each participant revealed a similar story of feeling helpless or inadequate to teach in a setting other than one they had experienced as a child themselves.   Each participant, in addition, shared with me how very valuable the multicultural course was to them and it was often stated as the very reason for taking part in this study. Emily stated the following when asked why she signed up for this course: "Tyra's, [another faculty member], class (multicultural course) was so inspiring to me and it made me really interested in creating equitable education for all students."

The participants of the study were good students. They could recite the main tenants of Gloria Ladson-Billings' CRP. They all had experience reflecting on the purpose for education and some had begun to dig into the work of revealing the hidden

curriculum in teaching. They were skilled at using words that often lurk in the air and occasionally appear on rubrics, words like "culturally responsive", "equitable education", "critical consciousness", and "socio-cultural influences". Yet, each participant reported that it was not until they had the opportunity to engage in a multitude of experiences simultaneously – such as reading about CRP, taking a community tour, interviewing a panel of teachers, interviewing a principal, touring a school that has made CRP its focus, hearing the stories of community leaders within the community they were teaching, interviewing parents, doing home visits, writing lesson plans, and teaching those lesson plans – that they began to give more than lip service to CRP. Brian stated, "I think they just all related so well . . . it just wouldn't be one thing that made it valuable. It would not have been the same without one of them (experiences)."

When the word synergy is taken to its roots, "syn" means together and "ergon" means work. A simple definition for "synergy" as used in CRP is the working together of two or more essential components that result in an effect greater than the sum of their individual parts. The participants reflected on how the process of understanding CRP deepened as they encountered new details and/or other people's thoughts. Evidence from the interviews and field note data suggested that participants felt the work of CRP became more visible when taken up in a holistic manner. The participants above felt that multiple, interactive experiences provided a clearer vision and a taste of the ends described by Ladson-Billings – not just what it sounds like to understand, but how practicing CRP can inform and affect our lives and our students' lives, how it can open our minds and our hearts. Lacy expressed how she felt she had an advantage over her peers who were not participating in the study:

If I wasn't actually in this research group or this class and just exposed to

culturally relevant pedagogy in class with the whole class, I don't think I would

be so willing to want to use culturally relevant pedagogy or aware of all that goes

into culturally relevant pedagogy and the impact this can have. Because I have

had the opportunity to see things in action and have my eyes opened to culturally

relevant pedagogy. . . I think it has allowed me to grow even more as a teacher.

Whereas my roommate who was not a part of the research class, but was in my

section, I think she might view it as less important because she hasn't had the

opportunity to make the connections I have. To see it in action. To see its

importance.

Lacy and the other participants articulated how their process of meaning-making was

based upon a co-construction between self and other ("other" here is used in a broad

sense to mean the multiple experiences encountered during the semester), rather than as

produced by a solitary thinker. She pointed to a meaning-making process that indicated

that the world out there does have an influence upon us and that the personal paradigms

we construct are adaptive, depending on the context and constraints of the environment

with which we interact. She pointed this out in her use of her roommate's experience

with learning about CRP juxtaposed with her experience. The participants in this study

pointed to an interactive relationship that provides an opportunity to attend to all the

parts, interpreting them and what they have comprehended from the parts as a way of

making sense of the whole.

It was difficult for the participants to separate the "parts", or different

experiences, offered within this course for the purpose of understanding what was most

important. "Everything is so important and I learned so much and I am so glad that I took it, but there is so much more to every little part of it and I want to explore everything more and learn more about it." (Suzie, Interview 2, May 2011). Suzie affirmed how the participants saw each experience or part as intertwined and important in the meaning-making process. Suzie's comment asserted how the experiences added up to more than the sum of their parts to create an emotional as well as an intellectual impact. However, I noticed that participants voiced similar themes when trying to identify what was essential. My analysis suggested that participants thought it was important that: (a) they chose to do this, (b) these experiences were connected to a real purpose, and (c) communities were interacted with and created. This following section explores these shared themes.

Choice, Safety, or Fear

When asked to reflect on what elements were essential for understanding CRP, preservice teachers echoed the word choice. Participants stated that it was important that this was their choice to be a part of the study; however, as I listened more carefully to the conversations surrounding their word of "choice" I wondered if really the word "choice" was referring to safety and fear. Each participant at the beginning of the study had indicated varying degrees of commitment to equitable education. For example, Lacy stated, "It was offered as an honors class and I needed to complete my honors work" (First interview, Sept. 2011).   Nancy gave the following reason for taking the course: "Teachers are really good at teaching students who are just like them and I think that is true. I want to be a good teacher to everyone equally. I think this [culturally relevant pedagogy] is really important" (First interview, Sept. 2011). As illustrated above, you

can see that each participants entered the study with different personal agendas. It is also true that all participants had chosen to take the course and made a conscious decision to seek out ways to enrich their teaching. In fact, several of the preservice teachers stated that the reason for agreeing to be a part of the study was to be a better teacher to all. Lacy shared how she felt choice had impacted her:

> It was our choice to be here. I think that was big. . . I don't know if I was forced to be here or. . . I guess you could get as much out of it, [pause] but knowing that you are making a conscious effort to do this work and no one is making you do it . . . definitely impacts how you approach the course and the work. I don't think it should be a requirement. I think it would take too much away from the meaning. (second focus interview)

At the end of Lacy's comment there is a collective "yeah" and head nods from the group. During the preservice teachers' conversation surrounding Lacy's comment, a strong sense of empowerment was highlighted in that each participant had a sense of intellectual agency and ability to know that emerged from a sense of integrity. In other words, the participants felt empowered through choice to direct their own learning – acting as an agent in their construction of meaning that came out of their passion as well as their natural inclinations as curious, exploring, social, and self-determined human beings. Embedded within the design of the course there was an element of choice. I had created a framework, but students had a lot of say in the manner we operated and achieved the stated objectives and goals. Mary defined the group in the following statement, "We are risk takers." Knowing that they had chosen to take up this work had also impacted the participants as a community. Mary and Nancy agreed with Lacy about the importance of

choice and, below, continued the discussion on whether or not a course on culturally relevant pedagogy should be mandatory in their program.

> Mary: I wish our whole Block II could have experienced this . . . what we experienced [collective "yeah" from the group] . . . what we experienced, especially getting that firsthand experience in the school, community, and everything . . . it was amazing. . . [Nancy interrupts Mary]

> Nancy: But if it would have been bigger I don't think it would have been the same experience. There is no way this could have happened when . . . even if we took a bus to a school or took a bus to interview the Somali story teller. It would have never been the same because everyone was like positive and gung-ho to learn about it [culturally relevant pedagogy]. I think when the whole Block II class. . . [long pause] there are some people that will say that this is . . . well this is stupid. I think that would have affected the whole group dynamics.

The group's trepidation for extending this process to the larger group was based on two factors. First, Nancy worried about the technical complications that could arise from moving this experience from a small group of nine to a group of 50. When participants took part in the scheduled field trips (e.g., community tour, school tour, Somali Story Teller, etc.) we traveled together in a 15-passenger van. Each field trip included at least a 45-minute ride each way. During these travel times, the participants often engaged in pre- and post-dialogic reflections. Many of these reflections were similar in regards to the multiple personal and school settings that influence teaching and learning of diverse students. Most often these reflections turned to reflecting on their personal experiences

and how their racial identities, experiences interacting with people from diverse cultures, and family beliefs about diversity impacted their understanding of how to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Furthermore, participants argued that these van ride reflections were imperative in order to take up the arduous work of examining themselves as educators and citizens. Lacy describes these van conversations in the following manner: "These conversations were really, really hard. Don't get me wrong . . . it was a rich and worthwhile experience and I would do it all over again, but they were tough" (Final focus interview). The dialogue that often took place would challenge personal and institutional policies, practices, and structures. Through these rich opportunities for dialogue, preservice teachers declared who they were, what they knew, and what they cared about. These personal responses and individual voices were reported to be integral to the meaning-making process; but it was also reported that they left each preservice teacher exposed and vulnerable. Mary stated the following: "I was taking a risk baring my soul to everyone in the group. It was scary!" (Final focus group). Nancy shared this concern when she stated how a larger group could possibly change the group dynamics. She shared how the open and honest reflection that took place on these van rides would be compromised in a larger group.

Second, the participants indicated that the level of trust and sense of feeling safe to express such intimate details were important aspects of the research group. Furthermore, this sense of safety would be threatened by having to deal with peers who thought this work was "stupid." Because the participants felt safe, they were more likely to make honest and genuine contributions that led to a feeling of camaraderie and respect

towards each other. Hugh Rosen (1996) suggests in *Meaning-Making Narratives* that meaning-making can be construed as a dialogical process between two or more persons, leading to the reconstruction of old meanings and the creation of new meanings. Participants shared this phenomenon when discussing the processing of the information they perceived from prior experience and knowledge and the lived experience they had just encountered; however, they all reported that the personal decision to take up this work was critical to establishing the dynamics for this important dialogue. The shared focus and ability to work as a group were directly influenced not only by their personal beliefs, background knowledge, and experiences engaging in coursework, but from a feeling of being safe to take up this work as well. It was because of choice that there was a sense of safety. Because the group members felt safe, they were able to take up the arduous work of interrogating preconceived notions of privilege and power.

I want to be clear in that I don't think that teachers should be able to choose to take up the arduous work of interrogating issues of power and inequity within schools, but I find it interesting that the preservice teachers pointed to the word 'choice'.   Is this really the word they wanted to take up or was the word covering up a larger issue.   As a group we still at times had fears about talking about race. Thandeka (1999) believes that when white people have things to say and try to figure out about race, they are afraid they will be seen as racist. When Nancy and Mary above share that they were "baring their soul" and it was "scary" are they afraid they will be seen as racist or are they pointing toward to another fear—a fear of being an outsider in their own White community.

Connected to an authentic purpose

Not only had each participant chosen to be a part of the study/course, but there was also choice built into the course. Each participant was to research what CRP meant generally, but also in relation to their own particular classroom, school, and community. Thus, all work was situated within the context of a classroom and community they would be working in for seven weeks. The participants reported a strong sense of purpose in what they were doing as a result of their work being grounded in a particular classroom and community. "It was important that I was learning what I was learning for *my* students. It wasn't just to please my professor or to get a better grade . . . it meant something to the kids in my class" (Jenny, Final focus group, December, 2011). Participants reported that they were motivated to explore and develop lessons that were relevant for the students they were working with not just as a result of being in the classroom, but also because of the community inquiry, parent interviews, and community leader interviews. The participants expressed that they felt their lessons took on a "new life" with each new engagement not only with the pupils in their classroom, but with community members as well (Emily, second interview, December, 2011). They reported that with each encounter with a member of the community – whether it was a parent, store clerk, or community leader – they came to a deeper understanding of the community and the pupils they were teaching. Mary elaborated on this finding, explaining:

"Getting involved in the community was huge for me! Going to Culver's night. The Welcome Wagon experience. Getting to know the community was eye-opening and reenergizing. You saw how much this group of people cared . . .

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they cared so much for the children and the school. If I had not made these community connections I would not have been as effective as I was as a teacher. They were so open and welcoming! They made me feel as if I was a vital member of the community." (second interview, December 2011)

An unexpected result of the community inquiry was the preservice teachers' eagerness to adopt a hands-on approach within the community. Many of the participants believed a stronger sense of purpose, commitment, and connection to the community had been developed. Evidence of this could be found in that several of the participants volunteered beyond the scope of the study in several community events. For example, Suzie volunteered to help with the neighborhood Welcome Wagon. As a direct result of this experience, she found a way to connect her lessons to this community involvement – she had her students write letters and cards to be placed in the baskets that she helped to deliver. Mary helped her cooperating teacher and several parents to start a weekly Culver's night as a fundraiser for the school. Amy volunteered to coach soccer at the local community center. Emily helped with the community garden on several occasions. The participants eagerly rolled up their sleeves and became actively engaged in the construction of meaning around notions of community and society. More importantly, what might have started as just a strong sense to help ended with the preservice teachers not only becoming acquainted with the community, but also beginning to become active members of it. Other evidence of this was when preservice teachers reported making a conscious effort to shop and patronize neighborhood businesses on weekends and after school.

As the participants entered into these relationships with community leaders and teachers, they became more aware of the daily workings and the politics of the community, and as a result their lessons began to reflect the individual needs and strengths of the children in their classrooms. The participants echoed that a stronger understanding and sense of purpose stemmed from a constant negotiation of how to adapt Gloria Ladson-Billings' CRP theory with the research experiences provided to make sense of the individual children "sitting in front of them" (Jenny, final focus group, May, 2011). Mary stated that she needed to "learn to look at things from a different perspective", think about things in different ways, and use a variety of strategies for different purposes. Suzie expressed how her lessons and teaching had changed because they were situated not only in an authentic environment, but with a real sense of purpose:

> Learning about my students help[ed] me to craft my lessons and unit with having them [my students] constantly in my mind. Like . . . are my students going to be able to relate to this? Because the students come from a completely different environment than I came from. (Final focus group, May, 2011)

Here, Suzie is discussing how situating her lessons in the real classroom offer her a new purpose for writing them. She was not just being held accountable to her instructor, but she was also responsible for her students' learning in a manner that she had not thought of before. Emily added to Suzie's thoughts: "Having a sense of purpose means having clear goals that fit into the bigger picture, so that what you do holds meaning and direction" (Final focus group). Ways of thinking about teaching and learning, housed in the authentic classroom and community, had been recast for the preservice teachers. The majority of the preservice teachers had commented on how a sense of purpose guided and

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affected the choices made in the classroom. Lacy added the following comment when preservice teachers discussed the theme of purpose: "A sense of purpose gives you a reason to aim for something . . . like having the meaning of the 'why' you are doing what you are doing, and why it is important. Knowing that what you're doing has meaning for your students helps you to overcome the hard stuff. You know the stuff that wouldn't make sense before, but now it can" (Final focus group).

The preservice teachers no longer felt like visitors within the community they were teaching. What might have started as a "mission trip" for some of them – where they felt they were going in to 'save' these children – transformed into a sense of belonging. I knew a real connection had been made when a group of Somali mothers got together and prepared a traditional meal for us. The children were so excited to have their teachers over for dinner. They ran out of Mrs. Ali's house to greet the preservice teachers. The families were so gracious and kind. The feast that they prepared for us was amazing and left all of us humbled and grateful. As I was introduced to each mother and child, I was embraced as if I was a long-lost relative. It was a magical evening that I don't think any of us will forget. In fact, remembering and speaking of this night seemed to bring a smile to all their faces.

Each preservice teacher commented on the great connections that were made because of the CRP course; however, they felt that they could not point to one event or experience that could stand alone to create the personal transformation that they felt had happened. It was in the midst of the messy and complex that they were able to develop the deep meaning of CRP. As mentioned earlier, the themes and content were shaped by the preservice teachers themselves. In a "shared pen" experience during our final class,

they helped to lay out this chapter. This chapter reflects their voices and the deep connections they made with their pupils and the community members, but many of the preservice teachers also made deep connections with their cooperating teachers.

Though the preservice teachers felt a sense of being at home within the community and the classroom, they reported a feeling of loss with some of the administrative staff that controlled mandates, curricula, and processes carried out in the classroom (e.g., scripted lessons, high-stakes testing, and pedagogy). Their willingness to become advocates not only for their students, but also the community, had positioned them as oppositional, at times, to the systemic powers beyond the classroom and the community. They reported a feeling of misalignment between what building and district mission statements were touting and mandated policies. More specifically, they were confused by, on the one hand, how administrators said they agreed with overarching goals of reducing the achievement gap and using culturally relevant teaching to meet the individual needs of the pupils, and on the other hand, what they were told they *must* do in their classrooms. The preservice teachers felt that mandates and policies generated by the district created barriers for teachers in their daily work that would support the district's mission. The next chapter, "The Social Negotiation of Meaning-Making," explores the preservice teachers' frustrations and senses of alienation and incongruence as they try to negotiate their new sense of self and the politics of education.

CHAPTER 6

"Goodbye," said the fox. "And now here is my secret,

a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly;

what is essential is invisible to the eye."

"What is essential is invisible to the eye," the little prince repeated

so that he would be sure to remember.

--Antonine de Saint-Exupery

The Dance

Nancy has a classic ballet dancer appearance: tall, willowy, blonde, with light-blue eyes and fair skin. We decided to meet in my office for the final interview. I was standing outside my door when Nancy came around the corner. As she started to walk toward me I sang: "Happy Birthday to you!" Today was Nancy's 23rd birthday. As we walked into my office, the plans of her birthday celebration bubbled out of her. She was excited and happy. I wish I could say that the tone established at the onset of the interview continued, but as with most of the interviews within this study, our conversation seemed to bring out overwhelming feelings that resulted in tears.

I placed the audio recorder on my desk, turned it on and we began. Nancy was a creative, carefree spirit who moved through space not only with the grace and strength of a dancer, but also with great kindness. She enjoys kidding and joking around and having fun. In fact, she started our interview with a joke, but there came a point in the interview where tears brimmed Nancy's eyes and she was unable to speak. Prior to the tears, we

had been talking about race and racism and how she thought it presented itself in her classroom. Nancy's voice became quiet as she shared the following thoughts: "I will not truly be able to understand these concepts in a full embodied way. Not in the way my students do every day. Because of the way I look and the way I grew up." As she shared this, she started to become very emotional. Tears filled her eyes. She was unable to speak. I wanted to be respectful and gave her a minute to collect herself. I offered her a bottle of water and a tissue and asked if she needed to take a few minutes. She nodded slowly. After a few moments I asked if she wanted to go for a walk and come back at a later time. At this she busted out in nervous laughter. "What! Go out looking all red-eyed and crap! Every person I meet will want to know what is wrong or think I have just flunked out of college. I would rather not be seen like this." We laughed a nervous laugh together.

Nancy loves to dance and in past classes used dance to express herself. So, after a long moment of silence I asked if Nancy might be more comfortable expressing herself in a dance. She lifted her face to look up at me and she nodded. As Nancy moved her arms in large sweeping motions, she appeared to dance while sitting in her chair, in my office, as she narrated the meaning behind the movements as well as painted a picture of the entire stage. In all honesty, it was the combination of the movements and Nancy's story that made it so provocative and compelling. I captured Nancy's words via the audio recorder, and I have done my best to present her dance/story as accurately as possible below, but being confined to the linear sharing that restrains all storytelling limits the several layers of embodied meaning within Nancy's story. Nancy's

dance/storytelling illustrates how race and racism presents itself in the classroom on multiple levels. Below I will try to share Nancy's dance in words.

Nancy's eyes shifted toward the ceiling as if envisioning the stage, the dancers, the movement, and the meaning she wanted to share. After a short moment she began.

Nancy: So, if I were to create a piece of the injustice of racism I think probably the costumes would be very pedestrian. We always use the word pedestrian in dance, but this just means everyday clothing: not in tights or leotards or dance clothing. It would be everyday clothing because it's an everyday situation.

I think the lighting would change from being darker to showing times of containment to light in one area to show what you are seeing of the privileged group . . . [short pause]maybe.

And then the dancer's roles would be really abstract. It wouldn't be someone who is being discriminated and another person who is doing the discriminating. I think it would be really loose and maybe the dancers would even take turns . . . moving back and forth. The dancers wouldn't be necessarily acting a role, but maybe showing the feelings of both sides.

[At this point Nancy starts to move as sitting in her chair. She brings her hands up to her mouth.]

There will be a movement where all the dancers cover their mouths with their hands. We will stand like this for a really long time. To me this is like being silenced. Someone doesn't want to hear what you have to say or isn't letting you say it. To me anything that

covers the mouth is a very powerful thing. It is like not having a voice or not necessarily

a voice but not having an impact. So, I will hold my hand over my mouth and if I could

just describe that.

T:[I nod]

So I think the thing that I am frustrated with in education is that through the first four

years, here at the university, I was so excited to be a teacher. Everything I was learning

was so exciting and inspirational. I couldn't wait to get out there and make these

changes so that I could teach students better than I had been taught. I think with this

semester it went BAM! [slaps hands together]. Just . . . there are frustrating things . . . it

is not going to be easy . . . like my dreams of how I was going to be a teacher. It is not

going to be easy, it's going to take a lot of work, and it might even be impossible.

Learning that not everyone is going to be on board with this [culturally relevant

pedagogy] and it totally shifts my fantasy of what a teacher was going to be. So I think I

will call my piece "Islands." The dancers would actually stand on their own flattened

cardboard box for the majority of the piece. That is like our island and because we are

on this island we have trouble connecting with each other.

So, it starts off and I am sort of this washed up startlet – someone who almost had it all

and lost it. So I thought I am almost a teacher – that is my dream. It is sort of the glory

that I want to find.

[Nancy starts to move her arms in these large swooping graceful movements as she

shares the story behind her dance.]

The first part of the piece is explaining it. It is wonderful and I had it all and it was so

great, but then there were hard things. When I think of a classroom management issue or

something that just doesn't go right, but I am still teaching and going through it and then

things start to get worse and worse. Things like standardized testing, prescribed scripted

curriculum, pressure to be on a certain workbook page on a certain day, and

disagreements with other faculty members because we are all supposed to teach the exact

same way no matter who our students are.

[Nancy stops moving.]

So all this stuff starts building on, but then I see something on the ground and I go and

pick it up [She leans over in her chair to imitate picking something up]. To me it is a

student – a child. So, I take that to me and I bring it into my heart and it gets me to keep

going but it's a frantic movement now. I am trying to teach as hard as I can, but it is so

very hard. It's still very frantic and there are still all these problems [Nancy is now

moving in very short choppy movements]. I just keep on going and then there's my

shadow, which is another person which is kind of my shadow, but still her own person

with her own different dream. So we start moving together and then we see whatever it is

together and we pull that in. We see more and more and we just kind of pick them up. To

me it's just like all these things that have gone wrong and I am just trying to reach out

and hold the students to me. To remind me that this is why I have to keep going, but in

the chorography something goes really wrong and you just start to throw them down. I

don't think that I am physically chucking the students at the ground, but it is sort of like

get away from me. [At this point Nancy's voice starts to shake and tears brim her eyes

once again.] I can't do this right now! It is too much! Get away! So we start sweeping everything off from our box – to get it away. Then we sort of become calm.

At this point Nancy stops her dance, tears running down her cheeks.

The Social Negotiation of Meaning-Making

I was powerfully affected by watching and listening to Nancy's "Island Dance." I was struck by the depth of emotion due to issues of personal struggles with teaching and learning. Moreover I was fascinated by the way Nancy used dance to describe the messy complicated nature of teaching and learning. Darling-Hammond (2006) states "much of what teachers need to know to be successful is invisible to lay observers" (p. 1). Nancy captured the complex and complicated nature of teaching. Teachers need not only to be able to keep order and provide useful information to pupils, but also to be increasingly effective in enabling a diverse group of students to learn ever more complex material. However, Nancy's dance addresses more than the complicated nature of teaching within the classroom. Her dance becomes frantic when larger political issues (standards, high-stakes testing, scripted curriculum, etc.) impact the classroom in negative ways. Additionally, I found it quite profound that a dance choreographed, on the spot, to address how issues of race and racism presented itself in the classroom highlighted a system that claims to repudiate issues of race and racism.

While it was evident that Nancy was experiencing emotional discomfort – one might even say she was experiencing pain – it is important not to equate her pain to the pain or damage done by racism to People of Color. Whites as Whites have not been lynched or enslaved, had lands stolen, suffered forced relocation onto reservations, been

bombarded by dehumanizing messages and ideologies, and so on. Nor am I attempting to take up what Bell hooks (1994) warn us against: "a narrative of shared victimization." Nancy was feeling loss, grief, and shame in her consciousness of what Whites give up as human beings to a racist system. "But there is a pain, a psychic wound, to inhabit and maintaining domination" (Segrest, 2001, p. 45) Segrest (2001) suggests that for White people, the significance in acknowledging "that emotional cost helps keep our White/ethical/political solidarity from slipping over into a new form of paternalism" (p. 45). The onset of Nancy's tears was due to the realization that she would not and could not begin to comprehend the level of racism her pupils experience on a daily basis. The additional tears were a new awareness of how this played out in very complex ways within the classroom. She was aware how she played a key role in the construction of racism. Furthermore, she felt a strong sense of grief that the classroom space that she thought was safe for her students is not necessarily free from the power of a racialized social system. In addition, hearing and witnessing firsthand how race created barriers for her pupils as well as an intense violent wounding to their psyches, made her acutely aware of her own White racial identity. Why tears? Nancy felt shame, grief, loss, and powerlessness.

Nancy was trying to point to additional matters that were leaving her feeling voiceless as a new teacher. As her "dance" progressed, she discussed the feelings of frustration as she attempted to practice CRP under systems that mandated teachers to teach a more traditional pedagogy, which could easily be described as the antithesis of teaching in a culturally relevant manner. Nancy had become acutely aware of how race and racism had impacted her own racialization process. Still reeling from the pain and

shame of this, Nancy felt she was bumping up against issues of oppression and power in education similar to the way she had been socialized to be White. The institutional power asserted over her and her teacher autonomy left her feeling voiceless and helpless. Furthermore, she made a connection to the racialization process experienced in her youth. Nancy believed the institution that she had placed all her faith in for creating just and equal spaces was socializing her in what it means to be a White, female, middle-class teacher within our society. But how is the public school institution defining what it means to be a teacher within our society?

Klaus Hurrelmann (1988) defines organizational socialization as the process whereby an employee learns the knowledge and skills necessary to assume his or her role. As newcomers become socialized, they learn about the organization and its history, values, jargon, culture, and procedures. They also learn about their work group, the specific people they work with on a daily basis (p. 78). In other words, socialization functions as a control system in that newcomers learn to internalize and obey organizational values and practices. Elizabeth Martinéz (2004) makes the point that racialized social systems assume the superiority and desirability of the White race and all that is attributed to it. This racialized and racist ideology is "usually associated with the (taken-for-granted) socio-political realm," influencing societal opinion, behavior, and worldview in ways that "allow a commanding control that . . . benefits some people at the expense of others" (Risner, 2006, p. 290). In other words, White culture operates to render "people . . . literally invisible to each other", and "unequal distribution of visibility" teaches us "to identify our interests with those at the economic top" (Zandy, 2006, p. 178).

With regard to the field of teacher education, the study of Whiteness seeks to have teachers and the teacher candidates examine their overall understanding of their racial identity; the ideologies with which they enter the classroom, and the impact of those ideologies on their teaching practices and their interactions with students (Tatum, 1992; Sleeter, 1993). Additionally, it seeks to interrogate the connection between race, power, and education. As teacher education programs across the nation are providing teacher candidates with opportunities to explore their personal attitudes and understandings of the way in which their racial acknowledgement and social positioning inform their actual practices and interactions with pupils, the larger political landscape of education has feverishly embraced a conservative educational paradigm. Thus, notions of equity, diversity, and anti-racism practices have been marginalized. Additionally, the move towards the standardization of the student curriculum and pedagogy along with high-stakes testing, is making it more and more difficult for teachers to teach to the strengths and needs of their students critical component of culturally relevant teaching. Was Nancy's pain, in part, due to a realization of a socialization process within the educational system? This study points to ways that organizational socialization worked as a function to control systems and processes in which to educate teachers to internalize and obey organizational values and practices in education – experiences critical educators typically position in need of interrogation and critique.

In doing so, this chapter shares the stories of the nine preservice teachers in this study as they highlight ways that the political landscape of education and its move towards standardization of the student curriculum and pedagogy created challenges and barriers to enacting culturally relevant pedagogy. What I try to do in this chapter is to

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show how the messages (overt and covert) that the preservice teachers received from the larger educational political landscape were in misalignment with the culturally relevant mission statements touted by the school system.

The trouble – the messiness – emerges when we recognize that the contradictory messages not only impact the curriculum, processes, and pedagogy taken up in the classrooms, but also impact the new teachers entering the field of education. It is important to recognize that the larger political landscape does leverage oppressive practices in schools under the guise of "teaching all children." The way of framing new policies through colorblind discourse to minimize racism often works in covert ways to actually reproduce power relations. As Bonilla-Silva (1997) states, "Racism springs not from the hearts of 'racists,' but from the fact that dominant actors in a racialized social system receive benefits at all levels (political, economic, social, and even psychological), whereas subordinate actors do not" (p. 558). This chapter is an acknowledgement that dominant actors and a racialized social system unfold in classroom spaces in ways that make it difficult for new and current teachers alike to enact CRP.

Political Landscape Issues

I had arrived at the university elementary science lab early. I wanted to push the tables together to form a space large enough for all the preservice teachers to see each other easily as we engaged in dialogue. I had planned on presenting a model of a teaching/learning video. The preservice teachers were videotaping their teaching and next week I was hoping to have them get together in their video study groups. The preservice teachers would use the videos of their teaching to launch discussions about

student interactions, questions, and responses to instruction through the lens of CRP. I began the class with the following question: "Is there anything that you want to share or talk about before we begin today."

> Amy: This week I taught one of my lessons. My students' couldn't wait until I taught. When I was being observed, one of the students told Teresa that this was super-duper fun. It just went really well. I just think they [students] don't get to have lessons that are relevant and meaningful to them that much. I mean, my teacher wants to . . . [pause] but they have to follow the curriculum. It is really strict. My teacher tries hard so it isn't that my [cooperating] teacher doesn't want to do CRP, it's just that everything is so structured and the kids and teachers don't get to be creative.

> Suzie: I was there observing the lesson and another I thing I noticed . . . so, you let them pick three things that represents themselves and their community. The kids were so engaged. It was somewhat noisy, yes, but they were so very engaged in what they were doing and they were getting so much out of that lesson. I don't know why you couldn't teach like that all the time. They were meeting the standards they were supposed to, but they were having fun while they were doing it.

> Amy: Yeah! So, I guess what I learned is children enjoy learning when it is relevant to them.

With Amy's announcement of her celebration and "aha" moment for the week, she had unveiled a raw frustration and concern for the group. The preservice teachers had all

volunteered to take a serious look at race and issues of power within education. They all expressed an interest in researching ways to create more equitable spaces in the elementary classroom, but they felt frustrated when their efforts were not allowed or accepted in the elementary schools. It was obvious to me that this was a pressing issue for all the preservice teachers. Therefore, I set my planned lesson agenda to the side. Instead we addressed Nancy's question below:

> Nancy: I have a question. How do you make it [culturally relevant pedagogy] work with scripted lessons and mandated curriculum? How do I stop myself from falling into the trap of teaching the same old way– to stop from falling into what is easy?

> Brian: Yeah. I think for me, as a teacher doing CRP is having a lot of open assignments . . . assignments that are still tough, but are relevant to the kids. You know . . . assignments and opportunities to share about themselves– who they are. So assignments are so strict in my school. Everything is about teaching to the test or passing the test.

> Emily: Yeah. It is only November and the test doesn't happen until March or April and I am so sick of it. I can't imagine how the kids are feeling.

> Ashley: TEST SCORES!! [Exclaims in a loud, over exaggerated, exasperated voice] All these people come in their suits from . . . from . . . I don't even know where from and it is like their only job is trying to do everything to raise test scores and be the teacher police. They are stalking the halls just waiting for a

teacher to veer from the mandated curriculum. And all it looks like to me is they're band wagon jumping and it is not working.

Nancy: Something I learned this semester is the pressures from standardized tests is bigger than I thought.

According to Darling-Hammond (2007), laws focused on complicated tallies of multiple-choice test scores have dumbed down the curriculum, fostered a "drill and kill" approach to teaching, mistakenly labeled successful schools as failing, driven teachers and middle-class students out of public schools, and harmed special education students and English-language learners through inappropriate assessments and efforts to push out low-scoring students in order to boost scores. The preservice teachers would agree with Darling-Hammond in that a focus on test scores had negatively impacted teaching and learning within the classrooms where they were teaching. But the conversation above is not only critical of the high-stakes testing and its ability to generate academic success, but also of how institutional power asserted over teachers is holding classrooms hostage to a prescribed curriculum that benefits some children at the expense of others. Mary shared a how her cooperating teacher often teaches in a manner that is incongruent to her beliefs because of institutional power asserted over her.

Mary: My cooperating teacher was amazing! I learned so much from her! She genuinely cared for each of her students and she was so skilled at meeting the needs of each child socially, academically, and physically. But, I was disappointed to see that students were separated based on abilities. I was like . . . this is a load of whoopee! When I asked my cooperating teacher about this she

was like . . . I know. . . I know. . . this is so bad, but she said she had to. At first

she just made the groups the way she wanted and didn't think anyone would

notice or check, but somehow the principal found out and the next field trip she

wanted to take the kids on, well, . . . she was denied. She said she learned her

lesson.

Mary's cooperating teacher had learned a lesson when she tried to flex her teacher

autonomy. A few of the preservice teachers shared similar accounts. I myself have run

into similar issues when working with principals to place preservice teachers with

cooperating teachers for their practicum experience. In my first few years working at the

university, when I sat down with the principals to find appropriate placements, the

principal was comfortable handing the responsibility over to me. I would conduct many

observations from hallways and classrooms. These observations were done prior to

placing a preservice teacher in a classroom. My goal was to locate cooperating teachers

who would make good mentor teachers. Once this process was completed, I would

basically just give the principal the list of teachers we would like to work with. Some

valued teachers had worked with us for years.

However, recently it had become a much more difficult task. A couple of years

ago, principals started giving us the list of teachers who would be hosting preservice

teachers. Often this meant our preservice teachers were placed in classrooms that did not

match our philosophical orientation. This created several issues for the preservice

teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor. We also were no longer

allowed to work with cooperating teachers that we valued greatly. The principals

reported that this was due to new policies and procedures within the district. Because I am a guest in the school, I took my list and went to visit with the cooperating teachers.

I didn't get down the hallway very far before I ran into several teachers who were outraged by this. When I asked if they knew the reason why, they were quick to share. The teachers who were not following the new scripted curriculum to the letter were being punished. The teachers who the principals could count on to be on the correct page in the text on the appointed day, teach only the way that was stated, and "ignore the needs of their students" would be awarded privileges within the building (Cooperating teacher, conversation, 2011). Teachers who chose to teach "against the grain" (Cochran-Smith) would be denied certain benefits (i.e., extra funding, field trip requests, paraprofessionals, student teachers, etc.). Some critical theorists (Apple, 1990; Spring 1997) argue that the public education system was set up by those in power to maintain the status quo. Such thinkers argue that many institutions and social structures dictate our lives, and operate to promote those individuals who they have identified as having talent and ability in the way that those institutions and structures define those terms. Not only had the school district dictated the teachers' lives and ways of operating in the classroom, but the cooperating teachers passed on this message of power with preservice teachers, as well. This raised the level of fear and concern with the preservice teachers. As Brian stated: "I am afraid that a parent, or the cooperating teacher will say something about me straying from the curriculum and it could cause me to not get a job or lose a job in the future." (focus group, November, 2011.

The preservice teachers were excited about all that they had learned during their time at the university. They could not wait to get into the classroom to try out some of the theories and strategies they had learned. Each preservice teacher had designed an interdisciplinary unit that was created for their unique community, classroom, and pupils. However, their hard work was not always well received in the scripted lesson environment.

> Nancy: In my classroom that I am in right now, it is as if all the things that I have been taught is colliding with my classroom experience. Not seeing in the classroom all these things that I am learning and want to teach is really causing me a great source of frustration. For example, the math lessons I witnessed in the classroom was an example of everything that I was taught NOT to do. I have written down in my notes and I go back to them sometimes and right in my notes it says never teach least common multiples and greatest common factor right in a row because it is so confusing to students. When I got back to the classroom they had just learned least common multiple and greatest common factor. The students were so incredibly confused, just like I learned that they would be and so I was frustrated seeing that.

What made this even more frustrating to Nancy was the fact that the cooperating teacher knew this would be confusing to the students, but because it was presented in the new text book in the following way and was approved by the curriculum committee as being the official sixth grade math text, it was mandated for all teachers to follow. Nancy's

cooperating teacher was new to the district and was afraid that if she veered from the mandated curriculum that she will not be offered a contract for next year.

Due to the fact that the preservice teachers were not considered "teachers" in their practicum placements, they were granted more freedom with the curriculum and were allowed to teach the integrated unit they had written. However, several cooperating teachers told preservice teachers, "Don't think that teaching in the real world is like this. You won't have this luxury again to teach what you want" (Final Focus Group). The preservice teachers started to notice a difference in how the pupils reacted to their lessons versus the prescribed curriculum.

> Lacy: One thing that I really noticed in comparison to when my cooperating teacher taught is engagement. For example, when they were given an assignment from my cooperating teacher they would do it, but do it quickly and be done in about ten minutes. But when it came to my lessons, the kids worked on their collage for over 40 minutes and wrote for 40 minutes and that is a really long time for kindergartners, but they were so into it. Just noticing the behavior that they were more engaged and how much more effort they put into it because I was not expecting them to have the quality of work they did based on what I had noticed in other work. They were just so beautiful that I just wanted to cry . . . you know. It was amazing!

It was not just the preservice teachers that noticed a difference in how the pupils responded to their teaching. When I would stop to do observations or check in with a preservice teacher, the cooperating teachers often commented on how they always tried

to host a preservice teacher so that the pupils could benefit from the lessons they brought to the classroom. I found this ironic and tragic because often the very same cooperating teacher that shared this with me would be reported to be the one that demonstrated to the preservice teacher how best to follow the prescribed curriculum. The messages the preservice teachers received were often very contradictory. On one hand, they were applauded for the integrated unit they wrote, while at the same time they were being told, "This is not how we do things here" (cooperating teacher, conversation, 2011).

> Amy: As a new teacher, I am still struggling with how to make the curriculum more culturally relevant because I would love to do all sorts of things, but to try and take these lessons that are already given to you and to be like every day they have to be at a certain spot or they get in trouble. The added pressures on a teacher now . . . like my cooperating teacher and I stayed really late one day to talk about the new trends in education. Like scripted lessons and moving away from interdisciplinary or integrated curriculum. She says it's a lot less planning and thinking on my part. I just have this little box, but it is boring. So, I haven't figured out a way to make it fun and relevant to them. And I am just like, oh, if an experienced teacher can't figure it out how will I. So, I was just like let me know when you figure this out. This is my biggest concern. I can handle getting to know my students, their family, and the community, and even putting in the extra time and effort to find resources for them. It's the being made to follow a curriculum that is not relevant to my students that scares me.

Amy's fears are more than just trying to figure out how to negotiate an educational mine field. She is struggling with issues of what Thandeka (1999) defines as shame. She

realizes from discussion and observations of her cooperating teacher the she must sever parts of her thinking, and herself, in order to not experience rejection from the dominant group she hopes to belong to. This fear may be a reaction of her awareness of not being able to live up to her own image of the ideal teacher. Amy wants desperately to be included into the education community, but if she wants to be included in this community she must become what Bonilla-Silva (1997) calls a "dominate actor" in a racialized social system to receive the benefits of this group. What scares Amy is that she will become socialized into a system that works hard to maintain the status quo. This brought about a strong reaction from Amy and other preservice teachers as they tried to negotiate the rock and the hard place they felt lodged between – do they continue to push for a CRP or surrender to the organizational practices?

Ashley, who had been relatively quiet for the day, suddenly stood up with a force that caused her chair to fall backwards. As she stood up, she threw her books to the floor and exclaimed, "If all I need to do is follow a recipe to teach then why am I doing all this? Why am I taking the time to learn all this stuff? They don't want me, they want a robot."

The preservice teachers, as new teachers in the field, had an idealized understanding of what it meant to be a teacher. However, the school system was quickly asserting its power and influencing the knowledge and skills the preservice teachers deemed were valued for them to assume their role as a public elementary school teacher. Several times, the knowledge and skills learned ran counter to what they were learning in their educational courses at the university. Exposed were values, jargon, culture, and procedures that are unique to the educational field. These values and cultures were

situated within a historical context rich with racialized and racist ideology. The preservice teachers were repeatedly told, "this is how we do things here" and this "taken-for-granted," "normal" way of doing things worked as a way to command control and force teachers to internalize and obey organizational values and practices. These preservice teachers recognized the misalignment between their desire to teach in a way that affirmed the humanity of all people and the racialized ideology present in public schools. What will happen when the preservice teachers attempt to get a job within the system? Will they choose to buy into institutional power or will they continue to seek to interrogate the connection between race, power, and education?

CHAPTER 7

But there comes a time—perhaps this is one of them—

when we have to take ourselves more seriously or die

when we have to pull back from the incantations,

rhythms we've moved to thoughtlessly

and disenthrall ourselves, bestow

ourselves to silence, or a severer listening, cleansed

of oratory, formulas, choruses, laments, static

crowding the wires.

No one who survives to speak

new language, has avoided this:

the cutting away of an old force that held her

rooted to an old ground

the pitch of utter loneliness

where she herself and all creation

seem equally dispersed, weightless, her being a cry

to which no echo comes or can ever come.

From "Trancendental Etude" by Adrienne Rich (1978)

For many, a driver's license is a rite of passage into adulthood. Because I was

raised in a rural community in the Midwest, I learned how to drive the summer I was

twelve years old. What made twelve the magical age? You were usually tall enough to

reach the gas, clutch, and brake pedals (and all at once if you needed to). I distinctly

remember my first lesson. I climbed into the truck and hugged the large steering wheel

to help me scoot to the edge of the seat so I could reach the pedals. My dad closed the

driver's door behind me, then stuck his head through the driver's window to see if I could

reach the pedals adequately. Obviously he was satisfied, because the lesson continued.

My dad, standing outside the 1972 Hawaiian-blue Chevrolet half-ton pickup, proceeded

to give me the directions needed to operate the truck well enough to pull a trailer loaded

with two cords of wood with an additional ½ cord in the bed of the pickup. He wanted

me to drive the truck and the trailer the eight or nine miles home while he followed with

the tractor and another trailer loaded with split oak.

My father instructed me to push the clutch pedal and hold it to the floor.

Reaching through the window he placed his hand over mine on the gear shift located on

the steering column. He demonstrated where to locate neutral, first, second, and third

gear (I guess he didn't think I needed reverse as of yet). It was a three speed – a "three-

on-the-tree". He helped me bring it back to neutral. My next lesson was to learn how to

place my right heel on the brake while placing my right toe on the gas pedal,

simultaneously, while my left foot was holding in the clutch. There were quite a few hills

and valleys, and he was worried that when I stopped at a stop sign and tried to start

again the heavy load in the truck and trailer would cause me to roll back, and I would

need to know how to move forward without rolling back. After this he moved a couple of

steps away from the truck. He told me to start it and drive around the edge of the field.

I drove around the edge of the field, by myself, in first gear the entire time. I was

probably only driving five miles per hour, but as I bounced on the seat of the truck I

thought I was zooming across that field. I came back to where my dad stood and he

waved for me to stop. I pressed on the break without pressing in the clutch and killed the

engine. His only response was, "Well, I guess you learned not to do that." I don't

remember him telling me how to stop. The next time around the field he instructed me to increase my speed, so that I could practice shifting into second gear. I drove around the field a couple more times until my dad waved me down again. I came to a stop, without killing the engine this time. I was definitely making progress. He showed me how to shut the truck off and instructed me to get out. He then proceeded to back the truck up to the trailer of wood. Once he had hooked the safety chain to the trailer hitch, I pulled out of the field and onto the county road. After a short lesson, I was driving home.

Insights

The poem at the beginning of this chapter by Adrienne Rich is urging us on to clarity and thoughtfulness: to a new kind of awareness. I share the story of me learning to drive because it reminds me of what it is like to learn how to teach. Much research has been dedicated to teacher education and to teaching and learning; however, we rarely hear the voices of preservice teachers talking about their experiences in the classroom (university and K-12) and the way their behaviors in the classroom are shaped by broader political and social forces. These forces largely lay outside of their control. I argue that this is a serious omission in understanding the process of becoming a teacher. The preservice teachers' stories in this work suggest "thoughtfulness and a new kind of awareness" (Green, 2008) in creating more equitable spaces in education.

Learning to teach is a complicated and complex task within a dynamic and ever-changing environment. In addition, we place teachers in front of classrooms with little time or experience (similar to my 20-minute driving lesson above) in the teacher role. Yet on the other hand, we hear more calls for teacher effectiveness than ever before, and

we are seeing that teacher effectiveness is becoming a significant part of the national

discussion on education. Everybody agrees that what teachers do in the classroom

matters deeply. A recent investigation into the practices of the world's top 25 school

systems put it this way: "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of

its teachers" (McKinsey et. al., 2007). In fact, a wide body of research shows that the

single greatest factor affecting student achievement is classroom instruction.

Traditionally, teacher educators provide future teachers with a series of skills, or

the "what to do" in the classroom (similar to the basic skills I needed to get the truck

moving).   Even if one agrees that there are desirable knowledges and skills for teaching,

many people believe that anyone can teach. However, those first attempts in teaching,

like my first experience in driving using a manual transmission, take an extreme amount

of concentration and thought (push in the clutch; hold it to the floor; move the gear shift

to neutral; start the engine; first gear means pull toward yourself, then move straight

down until it stops; slowly let out the clutch; while gently pushing on the gas; second

gear means push in the clutch, then push out and move straight up; etc.). As a first-time

driver, those skills and strategies that I needed to use to be technically successful were all

I could handle at that moment. Until these motions became part of my natural way of

operating, they consumed a great deal of thought process.

Now imagine adding the radio. Locate your favorite station. Turn the volume

up or down while trying to shift into another gear. This could be analogous to

considering curriculum and theory while learning to teach. Locate the appropriate

curriculum, supplies, and meaningful activities based on solid research. Maintain the

appropriate level of behaviors including volume, movement, and pacing of the teaching.

Now add the children. It is not unusual for beginning teachers to be so consumed by what they need to do that they forget about the students sitting in front of them. Using formative assessments to monitor learning and reading the engagement level of the students causes us to speed up, slow down, or even stop while teaching. This could be comparable to me driving on the county road to get home. I was successful in getting home, but it required more than the basic skills of driving for me to do that. I needed to have an understanding of the rules of the road. I needed to understand what side of the road to drive on, how to read traffic signs, what the speed limits were, etc. Not only did I need to understand the rules of the road, but the drivers that I met needed to understand the rules I was following as well. In addition to the (overt) mandated state and county laws, I was hoping the drivers I met were cognizant of the (covert) rules or understandings of growing up in a small rural community within the Midwest. It was not that uncommon to have twelve year olds driving on the road. It was often overlooked by local authorities, and everyone that grew up in that area knew to give a wide berth and to approach such a young driver with caution. Whether we were cognizant of the fact or not, we were all operating under shared cultural understandings. Now imagine I had instead pulled onto a country road in the United Kingdom, but had still operated the vehicle using the rules of the road of the rural-Midwest community in which I grew up. Not only would I not have been successful, but I would have put my fellow drivers in great danger. New preservice teachers are not only trying to master the skills and strategies of teaching, but are also trying to make meaning of the beliefs and biases (rules) they are operating from while simultaneously determining the belief and biases (rules) of their pupils.

Teachers need to critically analyze the rules they are operating from (their beliefs, biases, and historical underpinnings) and then juxtapose them against the rules their students, families, and communities are operating from. Gay (2000) asserts that teachers must begin their multicultural training with self-reflection and self-knowledge. She wrote,

> Unless European American teachers seriously analyze and change their cultural biases and ethnic prejudices (toward self and others), they are not likely to be very diligent and effective in helping students to do likewise. Part of this self-examination is unpacking their own ethnicity and understanding themselves as racial and cultural beings. (p. 5)

The life experiences and positionality of many teachers often make it challenging for them to understand the relevance of teaching from the culturally relevant perspective called for by the literature on successful teaching of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Chochran-Smith, 2004; Jordan-Irvine, 2003). Long before preservice teachers enter teacher education, they have beliefs, attitudes, and biases that are not simply erased once they begin their training or their teaching careers (Tatum, 2007; Wise, 2005; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2000).

To place my driving story in the context of the current generation, imagine that I was also texting my best friend while I was shifting, trying to look over the steering wheel, stopping without killing the engine, and acknowledging the rules of the road (mine and others). Adding this final component of texting or talking on a cell phone without a doubt puts all drivers on the road in danger, including myself. I equate the

addition of texting – while learning the skills and strategies to drive (skills and strategies of teaching), adjusting the radio station (learning theory), and learning my rules and the new rules of the road (culturally relevant teaching) – to the political issues that preservice teachers bump up against. New and veteran teachers alike are bumping up against issues of oppression and power within the socio-political realm of education. However, I argue that new teachers are subjected to a socialization process that asserts control over them in order to teach them to internalize and obey organizational values and practices. If you think back to Nancy's dance, it was at the point of trying to address political issues while learning to teach, becoming conscious of her self-racialization process, becoming cognizant of her pupils' funds of knowledge, and becoming knowledgeable about the community in which she taught, that she started to feel overwhelmed and unable to move forward as a teacher.

Why the learning to drive metaphor?

I realize that this is an overly simplified metaphor of the complex nature of teaching and learning and this is perhaps an overly sympathetic interpretation of the preservice teachers' actions and stories. I also recognize that my metaphor does not do justice to how race, power and education connect in ways that benefit some people at the expense of others. What I want to draw attention to in the above metaphor is the idea that learning to teach is messy, complicated, and multi-layered – yet critical for the success of future pupils. I argue that the stories the preservice teachers tell us can give us new tools to better instruct future teachers: What is it like to be a preservice teacher in a teacher education program today? When preservice teachers are sitting in the classroom (university or K-12) looking around at their peers, their pupils, their instructors, and their

cooperating teachers, what does that feel like and how might it be different?   The

purpose of telling my first driving story as a metaphor for learning to teach was to try to

give a picture of how the preservice teachers often reported feeling throughout the

semester – overwhelmed and paralyzed with fear. If we indeed want to help new teachers

become effective educators for all, rather than the privileged few, we need to understand

the dynamics that contribute to positive educational outcomes in a much more

complicated way. If a new teacher is going to be an effective educator that is

knowledgeable about content; pedagogy; assessment; his/her racial and cultural historical

background; the racial and cultural historical background of his/her pupils, the families,

and community; and how issues of race, power, and education collide, we need to be

more sensitive to the complexity of teaching. My metaphor points to just the tip of the

iceberg. The preservice teachers within this study were very much engaged with all that

it means to learn to teach; however, as a result of this study they also found themselves

within spaces of unlearning.

Let me take a minute to remind you, the reader, this is not about feeling sorry for

how hard it is for White middle-class teachers. Teaching is hard work and it should be an

arduous process to become fully prepared before entering the classroom. Looking at

these stories I hoped to provide insights into how preservice teachers interpret and

understand what it means to teach CRP. Currently, there is something in the environment

that is not equitable, and that is allowing some students to be privileged over others.

Examining the stories in the previous chapters enables us to think more broadly and to be

more sensitive to the complexity of learning to teach children and families of color in

urban communities and to look at the complicity of different forms of dominance

involved. The preservice teacher stories in this research suggest that spaces are needed

for unlearning. In these sites of unlearning, preservice teachers were suddenly and most

keenly aware of the Whiteness process of their upbringing, and the differential power

levels of not only their cooperating teacher, but the larger political structure. Within

these sites of unlearning, preservice teachers used the place of tension to find new

meanings. In other words, these places of tension were used to create new spaces to

provide a different vantage point.

Learning from Moments of Silence

Caranfa (2011) argues that an inner state of silence is necessary for mental, moral,

and spiritual growth of the human self. The preservice teachers within this study were

discovering their human selves at the intersection between what they brought to their

social roles and the testimonies of their pupils, families, and the community. Using story

as a metaphor brought the preservice teachers' racialization stories and the stories of their

pupils, families, and the community within the urban school setting to the forefront.

These stories and faces left a lasting impression on these preservice teachers, but also

served as a vehicle to critically discuss social identity. This brought the preservice

teachers face-to-face with the fact that racial categories shape our lives with inequalities

of power and wealth (Giroux, 1997), or as Patti Lather (1991) put it, working in the

inevitable blind spots of our knowing. They were unlearning who they thought they were

and learning to inhabit new identities. Their encounters with different people, different

realities, and different experiences provided an impetus to deconstruct their notions of

race, oppression, and power, and to take them out of their comfort zone. In all honesty,

being White was largely unnoticed by them until they were placed in the social circumstances they had found themselves in for this study.

This brought about an extremely emotional experience for the preservice teachers that left them in moments of silence. These silences were the only language that could reflect the grief, loss, sadness, and shame that they felt. Thandeka defines White peoples' fear of disconnection as "White shame" – the fear that something about who we are or what we fail to do could threaten a connection to the people we love most. Listening to the stories of others increased the preservice teachers' capacity to see into themselves and their situations more acutely, sometimes disregarding previous lenses of distortion. The moments of silence illuminated the struggles of the preservice teachers as they encountered their race, the race of the storyteller, oppression, and positions of power.

Preservice teachers in these moments of silence were transformed as they were split, and lost in radically uneven social spaces as they considered their own belief systems and personal experiences, in interactions with others. Cheri Huber (2000) points out that "to judge what we see as good or bad derails our efforts to see *what is* (original italics)" (p. 31). The meaning-making reciprocal exchange of the preservice teachers' stories highlighted the social processes, social structures, and social situations of not only the storyteller, but of the teachers themselves. The power of the story allowed the preservice teachers to embrace getting lost in the "what is". Looking at the "what is" required the preservice teachers to unlearn looking for deficiencies and instead learn to look for "what is". Thus, stories were important. Listening was important. Stories helped us to acknowledge that we are part and parcel of a powerful racist construct from which we benefit. The moments of silence were an attempt to reconcile inner anxiety and

dread as preservice teachers attempted to come to terms with the cost to their own humanity.

Making-meaning in the midst of the complex

In the story I shared at the beginning of this chapter one might come to the understanding that I believe learning to teach in the complex is the wrong approach in teacher education, but the truth is quite the contrary. I do ascribe to a process of whole-part-whole interpretation. I would argue that background knowledge, previous experience of a situation, context, and topic play key roles in helping us interpret meaning. The preservice teachers' disclosure of their process of making meaning of CRP reveals that engaging simultaneously in a university course, group discussion, community inquiry, lesson development, self-reflection, and field base teaching is beneficial for developing an understanding of what it means to teach and practice CRP. They reported that the synergetic aspect of the experience was crucial to a deep and meaningful understanding of CRP.

What the preservice teachers were pointing to is that meaning for them was located in human practices, or what John Dewey (1905) referred to as radical empiricism: where the experiencing subject and experienced object constitute a primal, integral, and relational unity. In other words, meaning-making is grounded in human construction, cooperative action, and community relation. Maxine Greene (1988) makes the important claim that Dewey's "attentiveness to the actualities of life" allows us to better understand how learning, personal growth, and transformation result from experience. Greene calls this transformation the "dialectic of freedom . . . the capacity to surpass the given and

look at things as if they could be otherwise" (p. 3). Green and Dewey encourage us to embrace getting lost in the messy and to situate inquiry in the living. The preservice teachers gave themselves over to the complexity of the experience in order to act in less dangerous ways. This act of courage did at times leave the preservice teachers feeling overwhelmed, but they also felt that it helped them to move forward with purpose and confidence.

The Social Negotiation of Meaning-Making

The preservice teachers reported that they were dazed, impassioned, and exhausted – frozen into paralysis as they bumped up against larger political policies within education. They felt that the larger political arena was touting culturally relevant practices, but that the policies enacted were misaligned and ran counter to CRP tenets. As novices in the field of education, the preservice teachers were constantly aware of the uneven workings of power between themselves, their cooperating teachers, and their university instructors. Furthermore, engagement in this study had revealed to them the unequal power structures within a racialized society. In many ways, this new understanding of how issues of power affect education radically changed the way some of the preservice teachers took up the work of teaching. However, when they encountered political policies that presented a mandated curriculum aimed at teaching students a particular way of fitting into the racial hierarchy in the United States, preservice teachers were left feeling as if they were fighting the windmill giants along with Don Quixote.

A serious omission in research, and in education, is the voices of teachers talking about their daily work, their experiences in the classroom, and the ways in which their behaviors in the classroom are shaped by broader political and social forces, which largely lay outside of their control. Kevin Kumashiro (2012), speaking about the achievement gap, stated: "When we look at several of the initiatives put into place they are not looking at structural changes to education a lot of the initiatives around what teachers can do better. The burden of the achievement gap is being placed on the victim (families, students and teachers) – reinforcing the notion that if we just tried a bit harder – work harder meritocracy" (p. 19). The preservice teachers felt the impact of the burden that forced them into knowledge practices that produced different knowledge and produced knowledge differently than what was needed by pupils within their classrooms. The relationship between the larger political hegemonic and oppressive system left the preservice teachers feeling disenfranchised and unable to dismantle the powerful structures that hinder teachers from being able to make meaningful decisions within the classroom.

Returning to the Research Goal

This study examined the impact of nine preservice teachers, invited to be co-researchers of the local communities and cultures, collecting community stories, on how they perceive or think about culturally relevant pedagogy. The goal was to use stories from multiple voices (academic, disenfranchised pupils, families, and communities) as a vehicle to give the preservice teachers an "insiders" perspective, and to give voice to the unheard stories of the often voiceless and to use the metaphor of story as a way to help

the preservice teachers understand the theoretical foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy.

In Gloria Ladson-Billings' book *Crossing Over to Canaan* (2001) she states that cultural competence occurs in classrooms where: (a) a teacher understands its role in education; (b) the teacher uses student culture as a basis for learning; (c) the teachers takes responsibility for learning about students' culture and community, and (d) the teacher promotes a flexible use of students' local and global culture.

What follows is a brief explanation of how the previous data chapters explain how the preservice teachers, within this study, come to a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations of CRP:

A teacher understands the role of culture in education

As demonstrated throughout the chapters, many of the participants reported three main understandings in relation to the role of culture in education: the teachers' culture; the students' culture and the broader culture of the community. The participants echoed the importance of revisiting the fables of their youth to help them uncover both the covert and overt ways these stories helped to produce and shape the racial structures of their backgrounds. The moments of silence story was emphasized to share the fact that uncovering these covert and overt ways is an intellectual and emotional process. This intellectual and emotional process is arduous, complex and complicated when the goal of the work is to genuinely reflect on how one's thinking, feeling, and acting can perpetuate white dominance. They reported that this was important for them in order to understand how the racial structures of their backgrounds shaped their biases and identity and in how

they came to view "normal" schooling. The participants felt this unveiling was crucial for them in understanding how people coming from cultures unlike theirs are often marginalized.

This brought many of the participants to a sobering realization that they, as future teachers, played a critical role in creating equitable spaces for teaching and learning as well as disrupting the current white dominance model. This led to the majority of the participants reporting an understanding of how school is often designed for "some" students and not for all. What all the participants reported as most meaningful was connecting this awareness to the understanding that the schools do not function in a vacuum, they are situated within a larger community, yet many participants' reported that they felt that schools often ignored the culture of the community in their decision making processes.

The teacher uses student culture as a basis for learning

Much of the discourse (university classroom and van rides) was couched in the participants' awareness of the pupils' home lives and the ways the community, parents, and siblings helped construct the pupils' identities. These discussions were the result of participation and experience within the students' culture. All described the importance of these experiences in conjunction with the university course work in acquiring the knowledge needed to create learning opportunities within the classroom that built on prior cultural knowledge. Because of this deeper understanding the participants reported they were motivated to explore and develop lessons that were relevant for the students they were working with. They expressed that their lessons took on a "new life" as they

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attempted to use the knowledge they gleaned from the students, parents and community to make connections with the objectives of their teaching and learning episodes.

The teacher takes responsibility for learning about students' culture and community

Once introduced to the community through the initial group tours all the participants went above and beyond what was expected of him or her in terms of his or her individual community inquiry. The roles and tasks they took up in the community varied, but the outcome was similar. All reported a strong connection to the community within which they were teaching. This connection at first, for some, started as a "savior mentality", but as the participants spent more time in the community I noticed a shift in the purpose and mindset for the extended community inquiries. The participants were shifting from being guests to becoming new members of the community. With this shift the participants began to feel a sense of commitment and need to give back to the community. Participants started to shop in the community, attend church, go to restaurants in the area, coach local soccer teams, etc. As a result, participants often created relationships with pupils outside of the classroom. These bonds were evident when I would stop by the classroom to observe the preservice teachers. Often I would hear a student start a conversation with one of the participant's by saying, "I saw you last night at . . . "

The teacher promotes a flexible use of students' local and global culture

This study points to ways that organizational socialization worked as a function to control systems and processes in which to educate teachers to internalize and obey organizational values and practices in education – experiences critical educators typically

position in need of interrogation and critique. The moments highlighted in Nancy's dance highlight the struggles that some of the participants bumped up against as they attempted to use students' local and global culture within their teaching and learning episodes. The move towards the standardization of the student curriculum and pedagogy along with high-stakes testing, is making it more and more difficult for teachers to teach to the strengths and needs of their students—a critical component of culturally relevant teaching. This left the participants frustrated and angry. As a group they often discussed ways in which they could work around the system in order to teach to the strengths of their students; however, there was also much discussion centered on whether they would do these covert actions in the presence of an administrator or colleague. Participants reflected a fear of being dismissed or not even getting a job.

Closing:

I want to return to my initial use of the metaphor of "story" to illustrate a human relationship to the work of teaching and learning. Gloria Ladson-Billings' story of the culturally relevant teacher is one of human relationships as well as action. Ladson-Billings' story provided a particularly useful framework for the nine participants and me as we considered her story as a tool to develop a deeper understanding of what it might look like to seriously take up the work of CRP in teacher education. Her story helped to shape how to think about CRP. Carefully, listening to her story, the story of the nine preservice teachers and others who share how they made meaning using CRP can empower and awaken life experiences to actualize CRP into people's practice, making it part of their daily work. We need more people to share stories about the practice of successful teaching and learning for students who have been traditionally poorly served

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by our current system. I believe the answer lies in brining into the open the stories, from multiple voices, to bridge connections between people. Perhaps then mindfulness can be cultivated and the norms and conditions of more equitable spaces will be fostered.

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