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The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the ways in which four elementary preservice teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching and began authoring their professional teacher identities. It examined the influence of course work and internship at a culturally and linguistically diverse school on their understandings and developing teacher identities. The study employed ethnographic methods of data collection including formal individual interviews, focus groups, audio recordings of seminar meetings, personal documents and artifacts, and observations during intern site visits. Data were analyzed using constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and discourse analysis (Gee, 2005; Rogers, Marshall, and Tyson, 2006). Sociocultural and dialogical theories of identity formation informed the analysis of the preservice teachers' talk (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2005; Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain, 1998; Rogers et al., 2006). Analysis occurred in two stages; within-case analysis sought to fully understand the individual experiences and understandings of each focal participant, and cross-case analysis was used "to build abstractions across cases" (Merriam, 1998, p. 195).

Study findings suggest the understandings of culturally responsive teaching that the preservice teachers came to during teacher education were complex and influenced by a variety of factors including what the students brought with them to teacher education (i.e., their life histories, constructions of race and class, and personal experience with

discrimination and knowing culturally diverse individuals), their course work, and the internship experience. Their visions of teaching and their negotiation of the tensions encountered during teacher education were influenced by these understandings, ultimately influencing the trajectories of each participant as they developed professional teacher identities. This study offers insight into the complexity of developing a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways among preservice teachers. Implications of this study suggest the importance in teacher education of developing experiences for preservice teachers to work in culturally diverse settings, reflect on and engage in meaningful dialogue about such experiences, and reflect on their emerging teacher identities.

AUTHORING PROFESSIONAL TEACHER IDENTITIES: A JOURNEY FROM
UNDERSTANDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING TO
IDENTIFYING AS CULTURALLY RESPOSNIVE TEACHERS

by

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To Martha

Your belief in me gave me inspiration to aim high.

Your encouragement and support gave me strength to persevere.

Your love gave me space and time to accomplish my dream.

To Jackson and Jacob

You brought a new purpose to my life and work.

Thank you for the many sacrifices you each made

during this long journey.

APPROVAL PAGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Learning to teach is a complex process. Preservice teachers come to teacher education with strong images of teachers, both positive and negative, that influence how they approach the process of becoming a teacher as well as what they learn and experience in the program (Britzman, 1991; Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Richardson, 1996). Personal experiences during their K-12 schooling have led many to hold strong beliefs about what good teaching and learning look like and what it takes to be an effective teacher (Pajares, 1992). Lortie (1975) contends that the years preservice teachers spend in school as students, what he calls the "apprenticeship of observation," causes them to enter teacher education with the belief that they already know how to teach. He found that preservice teachers tend to have positive experiences with their own schooling and identify positively with the role of teacher. They often believe "what constituted good teaching then constitutes it now" (p. 66). Preservice teachers also tend to be highly optimistic about their own abilities and often believe that learning to teach should be done through experience in the classroom (Lasley, 1980).

Such beliefs can cause preservice teachers to devalue the teacher education program and new knowledge gained through course work. Some alternative routes to teacher licensure (such as Troops to Teachers, Teach for America) have also worked to devalue the teacher education program, assuming that learning to teach is simply a matter

of learning on the job or figuring it out as you go (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005). But the reality is that learning to teach is a much more complex process including the preservice teachers' negotiation and development of identities as teachers. One aspect of this process involves preservice teachers' beliefs, values, and understandings of cultural diversity and how they influence teaching. Examining the understanding preservice teachers have of cultural diversity and culturally responsive teaching and how it influences the way they author their teacher identity is vital as we encounter significant shifts in school demographics resulting in a cultural gap between students and teachers.

The Need to Develop Culturally Responsive Teacher Identities

The United States has seen a dramatic population increase in the number of ethnically and racially diverse people in recent years. More than 6 million legal immigrants settled in the United States between 1991 and 1996 and this trend continues with approximately a million immigrants coming to America each year (Banks, 2000). These statistics do not reflect the number of illegal immigrants moving to towns and cities across the country. This rapid growth is reflected in our nation's schools as well. In 2006, 40 percent of public school students (K-12) were students of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2006); projections estimate they will make up 48 percent of the nation's students by 2020 and be a numeric majority by 2035 (Banks, J. & Banks, C. 2005; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). African-American and Latino students are more likely than other students to be concentrated in high poverty schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While 17 percent of children in the

United States live below the official poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006), 41

percent of the fourth-graders are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs in the

nation's schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). In 2002 over one in seven

children (5-17 years of age) spoke a language other than English at home (Villegas &

Lucas, 2002a). Between 1979 and 1999 the number of 5-24 year olds speaking a

language other than English at home increased 118 percent and the number of those who

struggled with English rose 110 percent (Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005).

As the ethnic, racial, and linguistic make-up of our schools has changed rapidly,

over 86 percent of the teaching force in the United States is made up of White, middle-

class females (Cross, 2003). The majority of preservice teachers in the 1990s was under

the age of 25 and did not have experience attending or graduating from urban schools

(Haberman, 1996). While 21 percent of students under the age of 18 lived in poverty in

1995 the vast majority of teachers were from lower-middle or middle-class (Villegas &

Lucas, 2002a). More than one in seven students speaks a language other than English

while the typical teacher is monolingual (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Although teacher

demographics have shifted slightly over the years there remains a cultural mismatch

between teacher and student.

The results of this mismatch have serious ramifications for ethnically, racially,

and linguistically diverse students. Studies show that students of color score lower on

standardized achievement tests, fall behind their White peers by up to four years by high

school, are more likely to be retained a year, have higher dropout rates and lower post

secondary education rates, are grossly overrepresented in special needs categories while

underrepresented in gifted programs, are more likely to be on a lower academic track in middle and high school, and have higher representation in vocational curricular tracks (Farkus, 2003; Howard, 2003; Lee, 2004; Mickleson, 2003; Talbert-Johnson, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

As the teaching force has grown more homogeneous and student population more diverse, teacher education has been slow to respond to the changing demographic landscape in today's schools (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Traditional programs remain universal in nature despite criticism that such learning and experience does not adequately prepare teachers to teach in ethnically and racially diverse urban schools. In response to such criticism, traditional teacher education programs across the country began adding courses such as "multicultural education" or "urban education" to their regular program (Haberman, 1996), drawing attention to the need for what Gay (2000) calls culturally responsive teaching. Often preservice teachers are exposed to the theory without experiences within racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse schools; opportunities to see culturally responsive teaching in practice; or the chance to develop culturally responsive dispositions and pedagogy in their own practice. They rarely have the opportunity to begin developing culturally responsive teacher identities. Rather, the focus is often on learning the technical and pedagogical knowledge needed for teaching.

Becoming a Teacher

Maxine Greene (1981) explains that "learning to teach is a process of identity development…it is about choosing yourself, making deeply personal choices about who you will become as a teacher" (p. 12). Learning to teach is also about negotiating the

move from student to teacher. It is about *becoming* a teacher. The development of teacher

identities is much more complex than learning content, pedagogical theories, and

classroom management techniques. It is about coming to see oneself as a teacher,

learning and then enacting the responsibilities of a teacher, and being seen by others as a

teacher. This process does not occur in isolation, it happens within specific contexts and

through interaction with others.

This interaction is dialogical in nature and involves preservice teachers in what

Bakhtin (1981) called the process of *ideological becoming* where they are "selectively

assimilating the words of others" (p. 341) and creating their own systems of ideas

(Freedman & Ball, 2004) about what it means to teach. Bakhtin saw this as an "authoring

of self" where individuals are constantly negotiating the meanings of the words of others

and reshaping them to create personal meaning. His theories of discourse offer insight

into how developing a teacher identity is a "struggle between negotiating authoritative

and internally persuasive discourse and the discourse of education…and teachers"

(Britzman, 1994, p. 64). One's authoring of a teacher identity, along with its

commitments and beliefs about teaching, are constantly being renegotiated and are

influenced by multiple discourses from institutional contexts (e.g., teacher education

programs and intern placements), lived experience, historical and cultural notions of

teaching, and social interactions. Learning to teach then requires more than simply

acquisition of technical professional knowledge; it requires the negotiation of

authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of education and teaching, the

appropriation of a discourse of teaching that is internally persuasive, and the construction of teacher identities through social interaction.

This process of becoming a teacher is even more complicated as preservice teachers must negotiate the discourses of education surrounding cultural diversity and their own beliefs and assumptions about diversity. In an attempt to address the growing cultural mismatch between students and teachers many teacher education programs are working to help beginning teachers see and respect the cultural diversity within American schools through multicultural education course work and introduction of culturally responsive teaching practices. There is much research on preservice teachers' reactions to taking such courses and confronting racism (Cross, 2003; Milner, 2003; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Tatum, 1992), their beliefs about diversity (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Pohan, 1996; Pohan & Aguilar, 2001), and how to prepare them for cultural diversity (Bennett, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Haberman, 1996; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Irvine, 2003; Milner, 2003; Rogers, Marshall, & Tyson, 2006; Sleeter, 2001; Villegas & Lucas 2002). There is, however, little research that explores how preservice teachers actually come to understand culturally responsive teaching (Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007) and none on how they incorporate this understanding into the ways in which they author their teacher identities. A better understanding of this process, may help teacher educators provide quality courses and experiences that deepen understandings of cultural responsiveness and begin to foster the development of culturally responsive teacher identities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore preservice teachers' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and how these understandings influenced their developing professional teacher identities. I looked for factors and experiences that influenced their understandings, paying attention to life histories, course work, and internship in a culturally and linguistically diverse school. By examining the ways elementary preservice teachers talked about and described their experiences during course work, seminar, and internship, I explored the tensions and dilemmas they faced in negotiating the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses encountered during teacher education as they worked to identify "possible teaching selves" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008) and ultimately enact their own teacher identities.

Research Questions

There were two central questions guiding the collection and analysis of data in this study. Each question had two sub-questions that aided in the collection and analysis of data.

1. How do elementary preservice teachers understand culturally responsive teaching?

    1a. What factors, beliefs, and experiences influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

    1b. How does an intern placement in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

2. How do elementary preservice teachers begin to author culturally responsive teacher identities in response to their teacher education program and their experiences in a culturally and linguistically diverse intern setting?

    2a. How do elementary preservice teachers describe their process of becoming a teacher?

    2b. How do preservice teachers negotiate the tensions between multiple authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of others presented to them in their courses, seminar, and intern setting?

Significance of the Study

There is a good amount of theoretical literature on culturally responsive teaching and its importance in addressing the cultural gap between students and teachers as well as studies on culturally responsive teaching or pedagogy in the classroom (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Howard, 2003; Lasdon-Billings, 1994, 2001; Irvine, 2003 Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). There is also much research on dispositional beliefs of teachers in regards to cultural diversity (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2000; Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Cross, 2003; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Pennington, 2007; Solomon et. al., 2005; Talbert-Johnson, 2006). There is, however, little research into how preservice teachers come to understand or personalize culturally responsive teaching (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007) and less on this understandings' influence on their developing teacher identities.

This study examined four elementary preservice teachers' experiences during teacher education. It sought to trace changes in their understandings of culturally

responsive teaching over time and identify factors and experiences influencing these understandings. It explored the complexities of becoming a teacher through discourse analysis of the preservice teachers' talk during interviews, course work, and internship. It examined the influence of people, authoritative and internally persuasive discourses, and context on these understandings and developing identities. Such knowledge about preservice teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching can help teacher educators provide better opportunities for students to explore their own beliefs and assumptions about diversity, begin to see and accept other world views, and develop a vision for culturally responsive teaching. This knowledge may ultimately help teacher educators design preservice programs that promote the development of culturally responsive teacher identities.

Definitions of Terms

Identity is a very complex concept that is claimed by several fields of study such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. When discussing identity I view it as not being a fixed attribute but rather one that is "fluid, constantly being made, unmade, and remade" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 65). Individuals enact their multiple identities within specific contexts that are mediated by historical, cultural, and social influences. There are times that our multiple identities intersect in such ways that certain situations cause confusion in how we should act. Identity is determined by who we have been in the past, who we are now at any given moment in a specific context, and the possibilities of who we might become. Identity is rooted in dialogical interactions as we are recognized and validated as a certain kind of person in dialogical relation with others

9

(Gee, 2001). Therefore, identity is 1) dynamic and changing, 2) socially constructed and contextual, 3) and rooted in dialogical interactions with others.

Ideological becoming refers to the ways in which we develop our beliefs, values, and ideas, or more broadly our way of viewing the world. It involves the struggle preservice teachers go through in making choices about the language and ideological points of view or approaches to teaching that they will take up and use. The ideological becoming of a preservice teacher is influenced by many things such as the teacher education program, internships, life histories, personal experiences, and the ideological environment that is encountered in the teacher education program. An ideological environment characterized by a rigid authoritative discourse offers limited possibility in their ideological becoming where as one characterized by multiple diverse voices offers challenges as well as opportunities for expanding preservice teachers' understanding of teaching and the world. Part of the process of ideological becoming involves this encounter with multiple voices where one struggles to assimilate both authoritative and internally persuasive discourses.

Authoritative discourse is fused with authority and "demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342). It is transmitted to us with an authority that has been acknowledged in the past as well as present. Religious dogma, scientific truths, traditions, and professional discourses such as that within education are all examples of authoritative discourse. The coursework, internships, and student teaching in teacher education are each authoritative discourses that become powerful influences on how preservice teachers author their teaching identities. They are expected to learn

10

specific practices and take on specific beliefs about education as they are conveyed through coursework.

It is acknowledged, by the author, that authoritative discourses of education, in a strict Bakhtinian sense, would include such discourses as No Child Left Behind, laws and policies, or federal, state, or district mandates. For this study, the theory of culturally responsive teaching was considered an authoritative discourse in the sense that "the discourse of the professional development that originates in the university presents itself as authoritative" (Masterson, 2007, p. 7). Culturally responsive teaching gained a sense of being authoritative because of its presence in the curriculum and discourse of teaching at the university. Likewise, because the theory was presented by a teacher educator who seemed more knowledgeable and held a position of authority, it was infused with a sense of authority from the beginning. So when referring to culturally responsive teaching in this dissertation, it is from this understanding that it will be called an authoritative discourse.

Internally persuasive discourses are those authoritative discourses that we have taken in and "affirmed through assimilation" (Bakhtin, 1981), meaning that it is "half-ours and half-someone else's" (p. 345). When static authoritative discourse becomes our own and is interpreted freely, further developed, and employed in new conditions or with new knowledge it becomes internally persuasive (Bakhtin, 1981). When we "learn from people different from ourselves; we incorporate their voices *as living presences* within us" (Morson, 2004, p. 326). Preservice teachers struggle to assimilate authoritative discourses they experience in course work and intern settings as well as honor the already

internally persuasive discourses within them about issues such as teaching, learning, diversity, and culture.

Teacher discourse is the authoritative discourse of education that is used in schools, colleges, teacher education, and among those in education. It is the professional language of education that preservice teachers enter into when they begin working in schools as an intern and are no longer a student. A vital part of becoming a teacher is entering into this discourse. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to this time as *legitimate peripheral participation* where preservice teachers join in the actions and talk of teachers "as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the 'culture of practice'" (p. 95).

Dialogic narratives are stories told within the context of related utterances and discourses (Bakhtin, 1981; Rogers et al., 2006). Identities are authored in the context of dialogue thus the narratives preservice teachers tell are part of the process of constructing their professional identities. These narratives over time can be seen as that "process of selectively assimilating the words of others" that Bakhtin (1981) called ideological becoming (p. 341).

Cultural diversity in the United States is seen to include differences in race, ethnicity, social class, language, religion, ability and geography. Some people within our society benefit from their social position within these categories while others are marginalized or disadvantaged. It is important for teachers to not only recognize cultural diversity but to see the ways in which one's cultural background influences one's world view, learning, and interactions with others.

Culturally responsive teaching is the recognition, validation, and incorporation of the cultural knowledge, life experience, and world views of culturally diverse people into school curriculum to make learning more meaningful, effective, and transformative for *all* students. I draw on several authors for this definition (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Howard, 1999; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Nieto, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). (For a greater discussion of culturally responsive teaching see chapter two.)

Culturally responsive teaching dispositions are those dispositions within preservice teachers that demonstrate awareness to the role that culture plays in teaching and learning. Such dispositions can be identified through belief statements of preservice teachers, their actions in classrooms as students and teachers, and their dialogue in course work and intern. Sociocultural consciousness, cultural competence, an ethic of care, a belief that all students can learn, and having high expectations for all students are all dispositions required to teach in culturally responsive ways.

Sociocultural consciousness is awareness that one's world view is not universal but is profoundly shaped by one's life experiences, as mediated by a variety of factors, chief among them race, ethnicity, social class, and gender (Bennett, 1995; Howard, 1999; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Preservice teachers with sociocultural consciousness have an understanding that differences in social location are not neutral and some come with power and privilege (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

Cultural competence is an understanding of the complexities of culture and its role in education (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Preservice teachers displaying cultural competence

13

see it as their responsibility to learn about students' culture and community. They know they must work to build bridges between students' knowledge, culture, home, and school learning and "work with (not against) individuals, families, and communities" – drawing on "family histories, traditions, and stories as well as demonstrating respect for all students' family and cultural values" (Cochran-Smith, 2004, pp. 72-73).

Summary

In this chapter I have introduced the reasons for studying preservice teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching and the complex process of learning to teach, provided the research questions that guided this study, and defined the key terms that were used. In Chapter 2, I will situate the study within critical perspectives of education and dialogical theories of identity formation. I will review the literature on culturally responsive teaching (which is grounded in critical theory), beliefs in teacher education, and teacher identity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will situate this study within critical perspectives of education and dialogical theories of identity formation. The research on identity will be discussed next with an emphasis on the dialogical nature of identity formation and the use of narrative to study identity development in preservice teachers. Then I will return to culturally responsive teaching and provide a synthesis of its characteristics drawn from the major theorist. Finally, I will explain the significance of identity and culturally responsive teaching to this study.

Framework for the Study

Critical Perspectives of Education

The origin of culturally responsive teaching comes out of critical perspectives of education that frame this study. Teaching and learning occur in social contexts as people negotiate meanings with one another. Critical theory sees this process as political and a means of reproducing dominant ideologies and practices in American society (Giroux, 2006). The questions of what knowledge should be taught, which values should be promoted, and whose culture will be validated in schools is prominent in critical perspectives.

Michael Apple talks of curriculum as "never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge…[but rather] part of a *selective tradition*, someone's selection, some group's

vision of legitimate knowledge" (Apple, 1993, p. 222, emphasis in original). What counts as knowledge, how it is organized, who is empowered to teach it, how students demonstrate mastery of it, and even who is allowed to ask questions are all part of the politics of official knowledge and the way dominance and subordination are reproduced in our society (Apple, 1993). Schools legitimize the dominant culture through the arrangement of bodies of knowledge in the "hegemonic curriculum" and by privileging the students whose cultural capital (i.e., linguistic style, body postures, social relations, etc.) match those of the dominant culture that get reinforced in school (Giroux, 2006).

In education today the transmission view of teaching, or what Freire (1970, 1998) calls the *banking* method, predominates in schools. This view holds that knowledge exists outside the knower and curriculum is divided into bits of knowledge that can be transmitted to students by the teacher. Teachers become the "conduits" through which knowledge passes to children. In this view, teaching is a technical activity that is politically neutral and clearly defined by a set of instructional procedures or methods. Freire (1994, 1998) however, argues that to teach is not simply the transference of knowledge but the creation of possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge.

Traditional teacher education, however, emphasizes "the regulation, certification, and standardization of teacher behavior…over the creating of conditions for teachers to undertake the sensitive political and ethical roles they might assume as public intellectuals who selectively produce and legitimate particular forms of knowledge and authority" (Giroux, 2006, p. 90). Focusing on either of these in teacher education

produces very different teacher identities. Because pedagogy is a "deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced" (Giroux and Simon, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 14) preservice teachers must learn to recognize it as such; thus coming to see their work as ethical and political in nature and never neutral (Freire, 1998; Giroux, 2006; hooks, 1994).

Culturally responsive teaching comes out of this critical examination of schools, curriculum, and teaching. It is a pedagogy that seeks to recognize, validate, and incorporate into the school curriculum the cultural knowledge, life experiences, and world views of culturally diverse people to make learning more meaningful, effective, and transformative for all students. Such teaching requires teachers who are caring, culturally competent, and who have sociocultural consciousness. Teacher identities like this are negotiated over time through practice, social interactions, and discourse with others. Most preservice teachers are not able to fully develop culturally responsive teacher identities; but they can be exposed to it in theory and practice through course work and internships, thus developing a vision of such teaching. These settings can offer preservice teachers opportunities to engage in discourse about the importance of culturally responsive teaching, what it looks like, and how to implement it in practice. Such conversations are essential in teacher education because language plays an important role in the process of identity development.

Dialogical Theories of Identity Formation

Identity can be viewed as rooted in our dialogical interactions with others. For "each individual comes to consciousness through dialogue with some other" and

"selfhood becomes a social and dialogical activity immersed in language" (McKnight, 2004, p. 283). If we take Gee's (2001) notion that our identity must be recognized by others to be valid, then identity "crucially depends on dialogical relations with others" (p. 113).

This use of language to suggest and verify identities is influenced by what Bakhtin (1981) called *heteroglossia* or the multiple meanings of voices within an utterance or text. When one speaks there are multiple layers to the words used. The meaning of these words depends on who says them, where and when they are spoken, how they are spoken, and the actual words themselves which are influenced historically, politically, and socially. Not just the word is being spoken but the world view and values of the speaker (Coulter, 1999) as well all others who have previously used the word. Bakhtin posits that an utterance always responds to previous utterances and acts on succeeding ones. Thus language is dialogic, meanings are continually changing, and utterances are contextually situated.

Since all language is dialogic the role of others is important. Meaning is created between speaker and listener and neither can be passive in this process. As we engage in dialogical interaction with others, we continually recreate language and essentially our selves. We borrow the words of others and use them for our own purposes. Bringing the words of others into our own utterances is what Bakhtin (1981) calls assimilation. He describes two ways for this to occur: "reciting by heart" and "retelling in one's own words" (p. 341).

"Reciting by heart" is a rigid kind of assimilation where the words are infused with authority that is transmitted rather than taken in and recreated. This is what Bakhtin calls authoritative discourse. Such discourse demands "unconditional allegiance" and does not allow us to "play with it, integrate it, or merge it with other voices that persuade us. We cannot select what we like from it or accept only a part of it" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 219). The authoritative word does not lose its authority when it is questioned or even when it is rejected. It remains within us like a "possible alternative" (Morson, 2004). Religious dogma, scientific truths, traditions, and professional discourses such as that within education are all examples of authoritative discourse.

"Retelling in one's own words" is a more flexible form of assimilation where the words of others are used but for our own purposes (Morson & Emerson, 1990). Bakhtin (1981) calls this "double-voiced" discourse where our words are "half-ours and half-someone else's" (p. 341). The speaker must "populate [the word] with his own intention" to make it one's own (p. 293). When this is done, Bakhtin calls it internally persuasive discourse.

In teacher education, preservice teachers encounter authoritative discourses in their course work and internships. Preservice teachers struggle with the two forms of assimilation when they encounter these authoritative discourses. Some simply parrot that which has been spoken by professors, cooperating teachers, and supervisors. This repeating of someone else's words to position one's self in certain ways is what Samuelson (2009) refers to as ventriloquation. Others begin to take on specific views of teaching, use certain language, or espouse certain beliefs through borrowing and

19

negotiating the language of professors, cooperating teachers, or supervisors in such ways as to make it internally persuasive to them.

This negotiation of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses is what Bakhtin (1981) calls *ideological becoming* where we are "selectively assimilating the words of others" (p. 341). Rarely is authoritative discourse internally persuasive for us; more often an "individual's becoming, an ideological process, is characterized precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories: in one, the authoritative word…that does not know internal persuasiveness, in the other internally persuasive word that is denied all privilege" (p. 342). This process of ideological becoming then is "an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346).

As one struggles to find one's own voice amid the voices of others, one's identity is being made and remade. This negotiation is what Bakhtin calls "authoring the self." A preservice teacher hears both internally persuasive discourses and authoritative discourses within her head. Often these voices are in conflict. She hears the voices of professors and teachers suggesting specific teaching strategies, she remembers her own experiences in school that may contradict these new voices. These voices must somehow be put together and reconciled. In orchestrating the voices she is authoring her self in specific ways (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain; 1998). "[T]he author works within, or at least against, a set of constraints that are also a set of possibilities for utterances" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 171). Preservice teachers are in the midst of this

authoring of self as they encounter competing authoritative discourses throughout their teacher education program which offer both possibilities and constraints.

Holland et al. (1998) sees this space of authoring as a collective rather than individual experience since words are always filled with the intention of others. Authoring one's self then becomes an orchestration of not only the words but the intentions, beliefs, and values of others as well as a transformation of both the social and personal meanings of those words (Holland et al., 1998). Bakhtin says

> One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse. This process is made more complex by the fact that a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness. (1984, p. 348)

As preservice teachers struggle to orchestrate the voices of others in such ways as to find their own voice they are in the process of constructing their teacher identities. This is a complex process that is constantly being negotiated throughout interactions and dialogue with others.

Identity

What is Identity?

Identity is a very complex concept claimed by several fields of study, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Each field examines the concept with a slightly different focus. As a result the term has taken on several meanings in the literature making it difficult to find a universal definition for identity. There are likewise competing theories about the development of identity.

The older and more dominant psychological approach to identity tends to focus on the individual and the mental functioning involved in identity formation. Identity as a psychological phenomenon focuses on the individual's choices and responses to situations; it is concerned with individual beliefs and knowledge. Identity has since been framed by social psychologist as a more situated and dynamic process. Bruner (1990) bases his notion of the "conceptual Self" on theories of "cultural psychology" (pp. 99-100), believing that this Self is a transaction between "a speaker and an Other…a way of framing one's consciousness, one's position, one's identity, one's commitment with respect to another" (p. 101). This makes the Self "dialogue dependent" according to Bruner, much like Bakhtin's theories of dialogue. Research in the social sciences also takes the emphasis off the individual and looks at how identity forms through transactions within social settings and communication. It is the interaction between personal and social or "a concept that combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 5). Identity forms and is enacted in and through activity and interactions with others.

During the second half of the 20th century social scientists emphasized "'cultural identity' to refer to the ways any person self-identifies with, or is somehow claimed or influenced by, various cultural or racial/ethnic categories" (Olsen, 2008, p. 4). This makes individuals shaped by their cultural markers and positions including such things as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, class, gender, sexual preferences, and religious beliefs. Both the psychological and social sciences understanding of identity make it a

more fixed feature in contrast to a social constructivist or postmodern view of identity as a situated but socially negotiated and fluid process.

The sociolinguist, Gee (2001) sees identity as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (p. 99). Because the contexts in which we live are multiple, our identities too are multiple and subject to change. Identity is not connected to internal states (what Gee calls one's *core identity*) but rather to our performances in society. People author their own identities but without "recognition" by others an identity is not valid. Identity "is constituted through the reflections we see of ourselves in others" (Rankin, 2002, p. 5). So one may think of him- or herself as teacher but it is in the recognition by others that he or she *is* teacher. Gee continually emphasizes the external forces that shape one's identity.

Others believe that culture and individual agency work together to form one's multiple identities. Holland et al. (1998) argue that we tell others who we are and in doing so we tell ourselves and then try to act as though we are what we said. These self-understandings are what they call identity. They examine the ways that individuals' identities are both constrained by the social, cultural, and historical structures and enabled to transform through improvisation and personal agency. People may not be free to become anyone they want to become but they do have agency to act in new and creative ways (Holland et al., 1998).

Although identity has different meanings in the literature there are some aspects that can be found across disciplines. Identity is not a fixed attribute but rather "fluid, constantly being made, unmade, and remade" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 65). Individuals

23

enact their identities within specific contexts that are mediated by historical, cultural, and social influences. Identity is determined by who we have been in the past, who we are now at any given moment in a specific context, and the possibilities of who we might become. Identity "lies in the way we live… it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities," and it exists "in the constant work of negotiating the self" (Wenger, 1998, p. 151).

Identity in Education

Because identity has no agreed upon definition in general, it stands to reason that when one examines professional teacher identity there is no clear definition either. Over the last twenty years identity has become a popular tool for analysis; with research in both teacher identity and student identity and the effects of these constructs on teaching and learning. Some researchers using identity as a lens do not even define the term; while others define it based solely on their particular research focus. Diniz-Pereia (2003) examined research on teacher identity formation and concluded that teaching lacks a *shared* professional identity. He feels that teacher identity is a shifting social construction based on historical and present meanings of teaching.

Gee (2001) likewise sees identity as socially constructed and schools as sites that promote a "certain kind of teacher" through practices that promote that "kind of teacher" and marginalize others. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) refer to this institutional space of identity formation as "professional knowledge landscapes" and believe that teachers are constantly crossing borders and negotiating their identities. Teachers either take-up or reject, resist, or transform the teacher identities that are promoted within schools, creating

a tension between structure and agency (Gee, 2001). Preservice teachers must negotiate the images they have of themselves as teacher with the images of teacher that are presented in the teacher education program and their intern settings. This can be especially difficult when these images conflict (Britzman, 2003; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

Teacher identities are shaped by both the local contexts in which they teach (e.g., their classroom, the school, the community) and the global discourses that mediate what happens at the local level (e.g., historical notions of teaching; district, state, or national policies; educational discourses about teaching and learning, curriculum, and teachers). The local and global contexts in which teachers work are often times in conflict with one another. The negotiation of this tension between the structures that define and shape teaching and the agency within the individual practice of teaching is part of authoring one's teacher identities. Preservice teachers often find themselves negotiating what they learn in teacher education (e.g., theories of teaching and learning, classroom management, best practices) with the local and global contexts they find within the schools in which they intern (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001).

What we Know about Identity Development during Teacher Education

During course work. When preservice teachers enter teacher education they often hold firm beliefs about what teachers do and how they behave, which come out of their previous experiences in school (Britzman, 2003; Lortie, 1975). They first enter the culture of teaching through their course work. The information and knowledge presented in classes is authoritative and can act to reinforce or challenge their prior beliefs or

internally persuasive discourses about teachers, teaching and learning, curriculum, and schooling.

Throughout this time they are engaged in the process of *ideological becoming* (Bakhtin, 1981) and creating their own systems of ideas (Freedman & Ball, 2004) about what it means to teach. The authoritative discourses of teacher education offer preservice teachers many competing voices to orchestrate. This process is aided by opportunities to engage in professional conversations with other preservice teachers and professors.

During fieldwork. Preservice teachers have experiences within schools through observations, internships or student teaching. Fieldwork is often considered by preservice teachers to be the most influential part of their teacher education. Yet many intern placements run counter to the teacher education programs stated goals and in the end perpetuate the status quo within schools (Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001; Ronfeld & Grossman, 2008). These intern experiences introduce preservice teachers to the "realities" of the teacher's world; politics of schools; and building relationships with students, other teachers, and administration. They enter the *figured world* of classrooms and schools during this time. Holland et al. (1998) define a figured world as a "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (p. 52). Schools and classrooms are figured worlds in which preservice teachers "fashion senses of self – that is, develop identities" (p. 60) and learn to position themselves as teacher. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to this time as induction into a *community of practice* where preservice teachers are given opportunities for

legitimate peripheral participation as teacher. Other scholars view this time and their

beginning years as the socialization of teachers.

During internship, preservice teachers appropriate and reject "possible selves" as

part of their teacher identity (Markus & Nurius as discussed in Ronfeldt & Grossman,

2008). They "adapt to new roles through an iterative process of observation,

experimentation, and evaluation" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 42). These possible

selves represent what preservice teachers would like to become as well as the selves they

are afraid of becoming. Danielewicz (2001) points out that "creating identities is not an

individual undertaking, but involves others, especially groups or collectives connected to

social institutions as well as the discourse associated with them" (p. 35). Thus when

preservice teachers enter the schools, they are entering the discourse of teaching. She

argues that to know what it feels like to be a teacher, preservice teachers must try out

actions within the actual discourse community of teachers.

As individuals we are involved in many discourse communities simultaneously

(i.e., member of church, band member, athlete, student, teacher, etc.). Membership in one

discourse can affect membership in another. Preservice teachers belong to multiple

discourse communities themselves and easily see how people have multiple and diverse

identities, but they tend to see the professional identity of teachers as rigid and

unchangeable (Alsup, 2006; Danielewicz, 2001). In negotiating their own multiple

identities, preservice teachers must struggle to cross the boundary between being a

student to being a teacher. In doing this some find they must suppress aspects of

themselves that do not fit the perceived vision of teacher (Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz,

2001). The negotiation of these multiple communities can influence the vision of teacher one holds and subsequently the development of one's teacher identity.

The experienced teachers that preservice teachers observe and interact with offer another authoritative discourse of what it means to teach. This version may fit easily with the discourse students encounter in their course work in the teacher education program or it may totally contradict it, even representing a possible self they fear becoming. Even when there is little conflict between the discourse offered in course work and in the schools, preservice teachers may struggle to find and enact their own internally persuasive discourse of teaching. Many preservice teachers feel pressure to "conform to the practices of their cooperating teacher and institutional norms" when their inner identity as a teacher is different from their cooperating teacher's (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 68).

An important part of identity development involves putting the ideas, beliefs, and feelings one has into action. Field work gives preservice teachers opportunities for "living out, personifying, actualizing, and embodying their pedagogical commitments" (Danielewicz, 2001, p. 176). These actions are taken within a specific figured world of schools and classrooms where preservice teachers are guests operating under constraints placed on them from participants in these figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998). Such actions give preservice teachers chances to both gain knowledge and skills about the practice of teaching, and try on possible teaching selves, and be "recognized" as teacher, thus authoring their teacher identity.

The experiences of preservice teachers within their education course work and field experiences are powerful influences on how they see teaching and teachers and how they begin to develop their own teacher identities. The idea that they simply internalize what it means to be a teacher (i.e. the socialization of teachers) makes the culture of teachers static, something preservice teachers receive as a script for future teaching. Since communities of practice are never static and always emerging, we must instead look to the ways that preservice teachers "refashion, resist, or even take up dominant meanings [of what it means to be a teacher] as if they were their authors" (Britzman, 2003, p. 56). These spaces of authorship offer great insight into the development of teacher identity.

Narrative as a Tool for Studying Identity Development in Preservice Teachers

There are many ways that narrative is defined by psychologists, literary theorists, sociologists, and educational researchers. Narrative is thought to "bring forth the human processes of knowledge, culture, tradition, truth, reality, consciousness, and identity" (Rankin, 2002, p. 1). Researchers from many fields believe that "personal narratives don't simply reflect identities, they *are* people's identities" (Alsup, 2006, p. 53), making narrative inquiry a good way to understand identity. In educational research, narratives have become more common since the 1980s but often receive criticism for employing too much "interpretive freedom" in their representation of data through use of story.

For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), however, story is essential; for "we live in a world of stories, and, though we help shape those stories, we are shaped by them" (p. 316). Morson (2004) argued that "we are all narrators…and we hear narrations all the time" (p. 327). So "if we understand the world narratively…then it makes sense to study

the world narratively" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). Clandinin and Connelly have done just that for the last two decades. They have examined the *personal practical knowledge* of teachers within the context of a *professional knowledge landscape* and written extensively on the subject. For them professional knowledge landscapes are narratively constructed spaces within schools where teachers live their stories and thus enact their identities. Out-of-classroom place and in-classroom place are two sites in these landscapes were teachers both enact and negotiate their teacher identities.

Out-of-class place involves the knowledge that is channeled into schools to alter or reform teacher's and children's classroom lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). There are many "imposed prescriptions" of other people's vision of what is right for children, especially in this era of accountability. Policy makers, researchers, administrators, current reforms all function as sources of this knowledge in the form of authoritative discourses (i.e., *No Child Left Behind*, state or district mandates, and assessment policies). This knowledge often has the quality of what Clandinin and Connelly (1998, 2000) call *sacred stories*, which act as authoritative discourse in teachers' lives.

In-class places are the safe spaces within schools, most often the classroom. Clandinin & Connelly (1998) found this space to be "free from scrutiny, where teachers feel free to live stories of practice" (p. 151). The current climate of schools with its emphasis on accountability through such things as learning walks and pacing guides may challenge their notion of "safe space." Teachers tell *cover stories* about their classroom, where they portray themselves as expert and having qualities that fit well with the out-of-classroom stories of the school (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000).

30

Individual teachers' identity and practice are shaped by living and working in this narrative landscape with its network of stories (i.e., teachers' stories; school stories; stories of schools; stories of administrators, parents, and children). We live multiple storylines that interweave and interconnect to shape who we are or how we come to understand ourselves (Huber & Whelan, 1999). Identity then becomes the stories we live by; and we tell stories to define who we are (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998; Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007; Huber & Whelan, 1999).

Bruner (1994) argues that the stories we tell about ourselves, are not a "record of what happened" but a "continuing interpretation and reinterpretation of our experience" (p. 28). In narratives the place or context becomes crucial as it "shapes and constrains the stories that are told or, indeed, that could be told" (p. 31). The figured worlds in which preservice teachers find themselves then shape and constrain the stories they are able to construct both about themselves and what they do.

Dialogical Narrative

Bakhtin (1981) argued that identities are authored in the context of dialogue. Thus preservice teachers author their teacher identities through dialogue with one another, with teacher educators, with those in the community, and even with the students they teach. Their classroom discussions, conversations, the act of teaching, and the stories they tell are all dialogue that can be examined for evidence of identity formation. Rogers, Marshall, and Tyson (2006) studied ten preservice teachers with the intent of exploring the complex narratives of preservice teachers as they struggled to author their understandings of literacy, schooling, and diversity through use of dialogical narrative.

They define dialogic narratives as the "stories told within the context of related utterances and discourses"; made up of the interaction between authoritative discourses and internally persuasive discourses among individuals as well as communities (p. 205).

Preservice teachers describe events, discuss understandings, and reflect on experiences through "dialogue among the characters as they themselves adopt a position in relation to those characters and events" (Rogers et al., 2006, p. 205). This dialogue is made up of utterances which build on one another in complex ways. Each utterance echoes past utterances of theirs as well as other authoritative voices, and both set the stage for others' utterances and can be assimilated by others. These individual utterances become part of a larger chain of utterances which Rogers et al. call dialogic narratives. As students engage in this process of authoring narratives and assimilating the words of others they are engaged in *ideological becoming*. The students' dialogical narratives can then be a source for examining how preservice teachers assimilate authoritative and internally persuasive discourses into their own dialogues and ultimately study how each student takes a "unique trajectory" (Gee, 2001) through this shared discursive space to create their teacher identities.

Such examination can help us begin to understand how preservice teachers position themselves within and in relation to stories and their process of assimilating both internally persuasive and authoritative discourses. Students' positioning and double voicing to make others' discourses fit their internally persuasive narratives is part of their construction of professional teacher identities. Dialogue offers a space for students to assimilate the discourse of others and broaden their views, express their own internally

persuasive discourses, and influence this process in others. Through such dialogues, they expand the simplified narratives of education with which they enter school. Thus if a goal of teacher education is to develop culturally responsive teachers, preservice teachers must have opportunities to engage in dialogue that will challenge their beliefs and develop more complex ways for understanding issues like culture and diversity (Gay, 2003a; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Rogers et al., 2006).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching requires teachers who are caring, culturally competent, and who have sociocultural consciousness. To acquire sociocultural consciousness one must examine issues, such as race, class, homophobia, and linguistic diversity, through self examination and reflection on society. Such examination first requires an exploration of one's own racial and cultural identities and how these identities shape one's world views and experiences. Seeing how our cultural identities influence our interpretations of experience as well as our interactions with others is important in understanding how culture influences education. Without such an understanding one may neither see the need for culturally responsive teaching nor participate in discourse or practice that embodies culturally responsive teaching. Thus examination of cultural identities is a vital step in developing culturally responsive teaching identities and practice.

Origin

As far back as the early 1900s work was being done to examine the affects of race, prejudice, and discrimination on schooling. This work was led predominantly by

33

African American scholars and resulted in the later multicultural education movement.

Multicultural education pushed for the "integration of ethnic content into the curriculum

during the 1960s and 1970s" (Banks, 2004, p. 7). The movement's goals changed from

incorporating content to working for structural change and increased educational equity

(Banks, 2004). An important goal in multicultural education today, is to "improve race

relations and to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to

participate in cross-cultural interactions and in personal, social, and civic action that will

help make our nation more democratic and just" (Banks, 2000, p. viii).

Definition of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Over the past three decades a group of scholars and researchers - including Sonia

Nieto, Lisa Delpit, Geneva Gay, Jacqueline Irvine, and Gloria Ladson-Billings - have

worked to guide educators who are working to improve the academic achievement of

low-income ethnically and racially diverse students. Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva

Gay are the major developers of the theory of culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy.

This theory considers the discontinuity between schools and low-income ethnically and

racially diverse students a main contributor to their low academic achievement. The

theory also works to change schools and teaching by drawing on and incorporating the

students' cultural and linguistic strengths. Culturally responsive teaching according to

Gay (2000) continues the search to make education more successful for ethnically,

racially, and linguistically diverse students and to "stop the vicious cycle of academic

failure" in our schools (p. xviii).

Various educational researchers are working on these same issues but use different terminology. Culturally sensitive, centered, congruent, reflective, mediated, contextualized, synchronized, and responsive all mean generally the same thing. Gay (2000) and Villegas and Lucas (2002) are all theorists of culturally responsive pedagogy, while Ladson-Billings (1994, 2001) refers to it as culturally relevant pedagogy. While there is a slight distinction between the two terms, they are often used interchangeably. Cochran-Smith (1991, 2004) talks about this concept as social justice pedagogy but draws heavily on the work of these scholars in offering six principles for teaching for social justice. Howard (2006) works within multicultural education and refers to transformationist pedagogy in his writing. Nieto (2004) also works from a multicultural education lens and makes use of culturally responsive theory. Irvine (2003), having helped form the theory of culturally responsive pedagogy, emphasizes multiculturalism and the importance of "seeing with a cultural eye."

Four major publications on the culturally responsive (relevant) pedagogy are prevalent in the literature. They are written by Gay (2000), Ladson-Billings (1994, 2001), and Villegas and Lucas (2002). Based on a synthesis of these scholars' work, I define culturally responsive teaching as the recognition, validation, and incorporation into school curriculum of the cultural knowledge, life experience, and world views of culturally diverse people to make learning more meaningful, effective, and transformative for *all* students. It is not enough to simply recognize cultural diversity, it is vital that educators legitimize the knowledge, experiences, and understandings of culturally diverse people. There are many ways to do this.

The incorporation of multicultural resources and materials into all areas of curriculum is a starting point. Culturally responsive teachers often take this responsibility on themselves since traditional materials, textbooks, and trade books are generally Eurocentric and marginalize, distort, or omit all together the histories and views of culturally diverse groups (Gay, 2000; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Loewen, 2007). Teachers must help students interrogate the information in textbooks and curriculum looking for such inaccuracies, omissions, and distortions. When this process is not explicit, children come to view written information as *truth* and do not even consider questioning its validity. Teachers must also help students examine issues, concepts, and events from multiple perspectives. Through this type of learning, teachers demonstrate a respect for cultural diversity and help students gain critical thinking skills needed to develop sociocultural consciousness.

Validation of students' cultural diversity also comes through teachers' understanding of how culture influences the ways students participate in school. Teachers must incorporate the different learning and communication styles of culturally diverse students into their teaching. Learning styles research suggests that "students of the same culture and ethnicity often use similar strategies for learning" (Talbert-Johnson, 2006, p. 150). Preservice teachers must gain knowledge of the learning styles specific to various cultural groups and strategies to address these differences in ways that do not stereotype the individual children in their classrooms.

Understanding the communication styles of students is also important; it allows a teacher to design activities that draw on them as strengths rather than cause students to

shut down or disengage from learning. It can also prevent normal student behavior for a culturally diverse student from being construed as rude, disruptive, or inconsiderate. For example, many African Americans "gain the floor" in a conversation through personal assertiveness and their ability to persuade others to listen rather than waiting for permission from an authority (Gay, 2000; Heath, 1983). Some ethnic groups have participatory-interactive communication styles where listeners are expected to respond in some way while the speaker is talking. African American, Latino, and Native Hawaiians often exhibit this style (Gay, 2000). Native Hawaiian students participate in "talk-story" or "co-narration" where students work collaboratively, talking together to tell a story, create and idea, or complete some learning task (Au as discussed in Gay, 2000, p. 92). Tannen (1990) found that European American females participate in "rapport-talk" where they talk along with speakers to show participation and support. This type of talk is usually done in casual settings among friends (as discussed in Gay, 2000). Without an understanding of these culturally based communication styles, a teacher may dismiss a student as obnoxious or disruptive. While understanding these communication styles may help the teacher, it is also the teachers' role to make explicit to culturally diverse students the rules of traditional school discourse so they can "better negotiate mainstream educational structures" (Gay, 2000, p. 95).

Teachers also validate the cultural diversity of their students by utilizing multiple instructional strategies and multiple forms of assessment in their practice. Students differ in the way they approach problem solving. Students of color often engage in "preparation before performance" behaviors, such as arranging papers, sharpening a pencil, stretching,

and getting things just right, before they start an activity (Gay, 2000). While classrooms often employ deductive approaches to problem solving with convergent (single answer) questions, many students are more inductive problem solvers preferring interaction with others and negotiation of an answer. Asian Americans, for example, may negotiate and seek consensus among all group members, allowing for more options to be entertained (Gay, 2000). These different styles need to be considered when designing activities for students.

Likewise, assessment of student learning must reflect the multiple ways students learn and communicate. Authentic assessment like portfolios, products, projects, oral presentations, research, and debates give culturally diverse students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge. These strategies not only legitimize the knowledge, experiences, and understandings of culturally diverse people, they make learning more meaningful and effective.

The last part of my definition is to make learning transformative for *all* students. By this I mean two things. Improving educational opportunities and academic achievement for ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse students is imperative. There are a disproportionate number of students of color who exhibit poor academic performance. As "health care treating symptoms does not cure diseases, simply pointing out achievement problems does not lead to their resolution (Gay, 2000, p. xiii). Culturally responsive teaching offers a transformation from existing patterns of school failure for culturally diverse students.

The other aspect of this idea of transformation is the development of sociocultural consciousness in students. A commitment to social justice must be modeled for students (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Whether one teaches in an ethnically diverse setting or not the development of sociocultural consciousness in students is important. Many of the strategies for culturally responsive teaching are equally useful in schools where students are predominantly White and have life experiences that keep them from even considering other world views. For transformation to happen in the lives of individual students as well as society, the cultural hegemony within curriculum content and classroom instruction, that goes largely uncontested, must be confronted and transcended by teachers and students alike (Gay, 2000).

Synthesis of the Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching

In examining the characteristics other scholars attribute to culturally responsive teaching I have found five to be salient across the lists. They are also five dispositions that I believe must be cultivated in teacher education if we hope to prepare teachers who are able to author culturally responsive teacher identities.

Sociocultural consciousness. Drawing on the definition used by several scholars (Banks, 2004; Bennett, 1995; Howard, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a), preservice teachers must come to understand that one's position in the world is mediated by their cultural identities (i.e., their race, ethnicity, gender, social class, etc.) and their particular way of seeing the world is shaped by this position rather than universal. This awareness is crucial for working with culturally diverse students. Without it a teacher may operate out of a deficit paradigm where they view the lack of academic achievement for diverse

students as the students' fault or the result of some family or cultural deficiency. They may also work to change or *fix* the student, seeing themselves as caring benefactors responsible for the rescue of such students (Marx & Pennington, 2003; Pennington, 2007). Such teachers do not respect the culture students bring with them to the classroom, nor do they work to draw on it to engage students and facilitate learning.

Villegas and Lucas (2002a) think about sociocultural consciousness on a continuum with dysconsciousness at one end and consciousness at the other. Those at the dysconsciousness end think of their own world view as universal and are unaware of the way power is differentially distributed in society. They lack an understanding of institutional discrimination, are insensitive to the way routine practices within schools can disadvantage students from oppressed groups, and remain rooted in the myth of meritocracy to explain existing inequalities in society. Those at the consciousness end of the continuum are fully aware of multiple perspectives of the world and that these perspectives are shaped by one's social position in life. They are more conscious of their own identity in terms of class, race, ethnicity, and gender and see how power is differentially distributed in society based on these social and cultural positions. They have an understanding of institutional discrimination, especially in schools, and see how these social institutions are organized to advantage the more powerful groups.

One way to develop sociocultural consciousness in preservice teachers is to present "authentic knowledge" about different racial and ethnic groups (Gay, 2000). Through this students are able to examine the social stratification in the United States. It is important for them to see the intersectionality of cultural identities that influence

40

access to power and privilege. Preservice teachers must be led to interrogate the ways in which schools legitimate the dominance of some cultures over others through structural policies and practices that limit the advancement of those on the bottom (Giroux, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Part of this interrogation means interrupting their beliefs in meritocracy. Having been successful in school themselves, most preservice teachers believe schools are neutral institutions where if one works hard enough one can achieve. Questioning this can be unsettling for many students.

To create sociocultural consciousness takes the right experiences as well as time. Helping preservice teachers to identify their beliefs about society and diversity is a good place to start. Completing surveys, autobiographical journaling, community or student case studies, readings (i.e., autobiographies of culturally diverse individuals, counter stories to dominant ideologies, and research or scholarly work addressing race, power, and privilege), and documentaries or movies are all ways to begin this process. It is important to remember that simply presenting factual information about social inequity and cultural diversity "does not necessarily enable pre-service teachers to examine beliefs and assumptions that may influence the way they interpret facts" (King, 1991, p. 142). We know from the beliefs literature, change takes time and beliefs that are embedded in a person's world view resist change (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1992).

In addition to helping preservice teachers to develop their own sociocultural consciousness we must provide them with practical ways they can foster that same critical consciousness in their own students. This kind of critical thinking will help students develop into "social critics" and "change agents" (Gay, 2000) and is what is

needed for transformation in schools and society (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Ladson-

Billings (1995) argues that academic excellence goes beyond achieving academically; it

is the ability of students to "develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows

them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and

maintain social inequities" (p. 162). Culturally responsive teachers help students engage

the world critically.

Cultural competence. Understanding culture and its role in education is the

second characteristic of culturally responsive teaching. Preservice teachers must learn to

see the complexity of culture rather than "use *culture* as a generic term to mean *different*

from them" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 98, emphasis in original). To see culture as more

than diversity, preservice teachers must have opportunities to examine cultures that are

different from their own in meaningful and personal ways. They "must have authentic

experiences in culturally diverse schools and communities over an extended period of

time" (Bennett, 1995, p. 260). These experiences cannot be done in isolation; students

must have opportunities to question what they have experienced, discuss their concerns

or insights, and reflect on what they have learned. Such support for interpreting their

experiences can prevent reinforcing old beliefs and stereotypes or producing new

stereotypical attitudes (Cooper, 2007; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Sleeter, 2001).

Cultural competence also involves teachers' learning about the specific children

in their classroom, rather than simply making assumptions about cultural affiliations

based on appearance or language spoken (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Villegas &

Lucas, 2002a). Teachers with cultural competence take responsibility to learn about their

students' culture and community. They see it as their role to build bridges between home, community, and school. Cochran-Smith (2004) calls this "working with (not against) individuals, families, and communities" (p. 72). It means acknowledging and validating all cultures in words, actions, and teaching (Howard, 2006).

Culture must come to be seen as a strength rather than a weakness or an obstacle in the way of learning (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Nieto, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Using the cultural and linguistic resources that students bring with them to school not only validates their cultural identity, it also engages students in their learning (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). To do this, teachers must get to know their students' culture.

Culturally competent teachers also understand how curriculum and educational materials work to validate the dominant groups' history, values, and world views. The cultural knowledge and experiences of members of oppressed groups are underrepresented in the curriculum (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Often the knowledge and experiences of individual students from these groups gets ignored in schools (Nieto, 1999). Culturally responsive teachers make sure they help students interrogate textbooks and curriculum for such omissions and make use of multicultural material that validates the histories, views, and experiences of these groups.

Gay (2000) argues that "culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education" (p. 8). She emphasizes the role of language and communication in education because teaching and learning cannot occur without communication. Gay argues that,

[L]anguages and communication styles are systems of cultural notations and the means through which thoughts and ideas are expressively embodied. Embedded within them are cultural values and ways of knowing that strongly influence how students engage with learning tasks and demonstrate mastery of them. (p. 81)

Culturally competent teachers recognize how the absence of shared communicative frames of reference and communication styles becomes an obstacle for culturally diverse students and teachers, preventing them from really understanding one another and students from demonstrating their true abilities.

Bennett (1995) described cultural competence as the ability to "interpret intentional communications (language, signs, gestures), some unconscious cues (such as body language), and customs and cultural styles different from one's own" (p. 263). Teachers who are culturally competent are comfortable with their students' cultural styles. They know their students' preferred learning style, ways of participating in class, and the knowledge and strengths they bring to school. They recognize the differences in their students and do not expect students to accommodate their learning to a standard or prescribed teaching style. As Ladson-Billings (1994) said "the notion of equity as sameness only makes sense when all students *are* exactly the same" (p. 33). Good teaching and learning is culturally determined and not the same for all ethnic groups (Gay, 2000).

Constructivist teaching. Traditional education and curriculum is entrenched in the transmission view of education. This Western empirical tradition suggests that knowledge is outside the knower and curriculum is neutral and objective. It can be taught to all students regardless of their background (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). This view of

44

knowledge sets students up as receivers of bits and pieces of separate, decontextualized knowledge that make up school curriculum. Teachers and textbooks become the sources of this knowledge and are often seen as infallible.

Such a decontextualized view of knowledge and learning make it removed from students' lives which affect all students negatively. Villegas and Lucas (2002a) argue that students from mainstream cultural groups have less difficulty with the decontextualized nature of knowledge while students from poor and culturally diverse groups have greater difficulty. When students see the benefit of school (i.e., in the adults around them who are successful and used school as an avenue for upward mobility), they may be more able to put up with curriculum that is meaningless to their daily lives. Students who have few, if any, adults for whom school brought social or economical success do not have a reason to trust schools. They often disengage from learning because of the meaningless information (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

Culturally responsive teaching supports a constructivist approach to teaching and learning (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Based in Piaget and Vygotsky's ideas that students use prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of new input, constructivist views of learning suggest that "learning is a process by which students generate meaning in response to new ideas and experiences they encounter at school" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b, p. 25). Personal and cultural knowledge that students bring with them to school are used to make meaning out of new information, thus making such knowledge central to their learning. Because students bring different knowledge and cultural frames of reference to their learning they do not construct the same understandings about the same

topic. This must not only be understood and accepted by the teacher but students must come to see the value in this as well. Such work allows them to recognize multiple perspectives, use critical thinking and problem solving, learn to make collective decisions, and appreciate collaborative work; all skills that will better prepare them for their role in a democratic society.

High expectations, challenging tasks, and scaffolded learning. This fourth characteristic makes academic success a "non-negotiable mandate" (Gay, 2000). To take such a stance, a preservice teacher must develop a belief that all students have the ability to learn. That belief then translates into high expectations of all students. Irvine (2003) argues that demanding the best is a must in raising the achievement of students of color. Because academic achievement and success is complex, teachers must make explicit the rules of school and what constitutes success (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2001). Culturally responsive teachers make goals for learning high but also provide the scaffolding for students to develop the skills necessary to meet those goals (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Building skills does not necessarily come through a constant diet of drill and rote learning. It comes through what Cochran-Smith (2004) calls "significant work." This type of work allows students to learn academically challenging knowledge and skills and avoids lower-order skills, memorization, and drill. Irvine (2003) suggests that "highly efficacious teachers use more challenging and creative instructional techniques [and] are more persistent with failing students" (p. 11). Culturally responsive teachers then, make learning tasks relevant, meaningful, and challenging to their students (Cochran-Smith,

46

2004; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). They also create a learning community where risks can be taken without fear of failure or ridicule. This type of teaching also demands that students have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate their knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

An ethic of caring. The last characteristic of culturally responsive teaching centers on the relationship between teachers and students. Culturally responsive teachers have an affirming attitude toward all students (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Irvine (2003) believes "teaching is about caring relationships" (p. 10). Caring in the classroom is evident in patience with students, persistence in teaching, validation of cultural frames of reference, and empowerment of students. Culturally relevant teachers listen to students, encouraging and validating their feelings, opinions, and life experiences because they are concerned with the development of the whole child (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001).

Teachers must develop relationships with students that extend beyond classroom teaching to the community (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). To draw on the strengths and cultural knowledge of students' a teacher must *know* his or her students; this means having a relationship with them. This is vital to the academic achievement of culturally diverse students because students who feel connected to their teacher and school are more motivated and less likely to disengage (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Irvine (2003) describes how one teacher became the "other mother" to her

47

students making her take ownership of her students and responsibility for their success or failure.

Developing caring relationships with students is something most preservice teachers do not worry about. Many enter teaching because they love children and want to be with them. A love of children, however, will not ensure that preservice teachers develop affirming relationships with all students. They need opportunities in teacher education to identify their own beliefs about diversity and examine how these beliefs might influence the way they see and interact with students. Teacher educators must also provide examples of ways they can learn about their students and opportunities for preservice teachers to develop relationships with students who are culturally different from them.

The Importance of Identity in Culturally Responsive Teaching

Developing culturally responsive teachers is an important step in transforming schools and ultimately society. Schools must become places of equitable opportunity for all students not just those from the dominant culture. It is unrealistic, however, to expect all of our preservice teachers to "develop the extensive and sophisticated pedagogical knowledge and skills of culturally responsive teachers during their preservice preparation" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b). Such skills and knowledge come with time and experience in the classroom as well as meaningful reflection on self and society. What we must expect and work toward in teacher education is for preservice teachers to leave with a deeper understanding of their own cultural identities, an understanding of what culturally responsive teachers do and a vision for culturally responsive teaching. A rich

understanding of culturally responsive teaching cannot happen without an examination of diversity, an understanding of race and racism in the United States, and self-reflection on these issues and one's cultural identities.

Such examination and self-reflection is not easily done and often causes cognitive dissonance in preservice teachers (Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). New information or theories presented might challenge previously held beliefs about cultural issues; classism, heterosexism, and racism; or the myth of meritocracy that is so engrained in American society, creating an inconsistency with one's beliefs, assumptions, and understandings. Such dissonance can lead to a rejection or modification of the introduced material (Goodman, 1988; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Pajares, 1992) making it hard to get preservice teachers to even recognize the need for teaching in culturally responsive ways.

While all topics present a possibility for cognitive dissonance, race is often difficult to examine because it has long been seen as a "taboo topic" (Tatum, 1992) and the notion of hyper-politeness, which makes "simply seeing or noticing race border on impoliteness" for some White women (Pennington, 2007, p. 46). The appearance of race as being a natural or biological phenomenon rather than a socially constructed reality gives it much of its power. Whites have always been situated at the top of the racial hierarchy in the United States and whiteness is constructed as the norm by which all others are judged; especially true within schools. "Whiteness is [thus] a highly privileged social construction, rather than a neutral racial category" (Marx & Pennington, 2003, 91).

Bergerson (2003) argues that whiteness "is the ability to *not* be aware of one's race" (p. 53). This ability leads many White preservice teachers to enter teacher education with little understanding of their own racial identity and to think of themselves as colorblind. Not recognizing whiteness means that between Whites, race is not present. Only when in the presence of people of color, does race become an issue and race then gets defined as "other" or even as Black. Because of this, Whites are able to see themselves as individuals rather than belonging to a specific group or culture (Mahoney, 1997).

This view of self allows Whites to subscribe to the idea of meritocracy, perpetuate deficit thinking toward the cultural "other," normalize whiteness, and maintain White dominance. Often preservice teachers come into teacher education so entrenched in the dominance of whiteness that any privileges that come with being White are invisible. McIntosh (1988) argues that these invisible privileges are meant to go unnoticed by White Americans. The version of history that is taught in schools, skims the surface of racial issues, sugar-coats historical injustices, and teaches our White students to see their lives as normal and neutral. In essence, it gives White students permission to disregard the voices of people of color. Solomon et al. (2005) call this "historical amnesia;" where historical events are examined with "blinders of liberalism and meritocracy" that conveniently leave out the poor treatment of people of color.

Preservice teachers, especially those who are White, often enter teacher education with beliefs and assumptions about American society that perpetuate racism, White privilege, classism, and heterosexism. For example, they might see racism as only

individual acts of hate rather than the way society distributes privilege, status, and material advantages (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Bell, 1992; Vargus, 2003). They might view the difficulties faced by low-income students and their families as a result of their lack of middle class values or behaviors, their unwillingness to work hard, or some perceived culturally disadvantage (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009; Tatum, 1992; Webster Brandon, 2003).

One difficulty in examining these issues with preservice teachers is the subtle way racism and classism operate in society and have become nearly unrecognizable. Critical race theorists argue that racism is an ordinary part of daily life in American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Lynn & Parker, 2006) and racist assumptions are ingrained in political, legal, social, and educational structures in the United States to the point where they become "culturally sanctioned beliefs" (Lynn & Parker, 2006, Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Likewise, classism operates in ways to privilege those who have money, wealth, education, and power and disadvantage those without such resources.

The understandings of race, racism, and classism discussed above are important issues to examine in teacher education because preservice teachers are racialized beings whose cultural identities shape their world views, beliefs, assumptions, ways of interacting with others, and ultimately their teaching. Such examination can set the stage for developing sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence, as well as seeing the importance of culturally responsive teaching. To fully examine these issues, however, preservice teachers must first become aware of their own cultural identities and

51

understand how race and class influence decisions they make in their classrooms. Milner (2003) argues for "race reflection" to be part of teacher education because it allows preservice teachers to "understand hidden values, biases, and beliefs about race that were not to the fore in a teacher's thinking prior to conscious attempts to think about race (p. 196). Solomon et al. (2005) agree that preservice teachers must examine their own racial identity because "a person's identity becomes the lens through which they see themselves and which informs their understanding of others (p. 163).

Preservice teachers' cultural identities greatly influence how they see themselves, the possibilities and constraints that shape the teacher identities they author, and the ways they will understand and interact with future students. Examining their cultural identities is an integral first step in helping them examine race, racism, classism, and diversity in America. This process aids in developing sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence, which are two very important characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher.

Summary

In this chapter I have framed my study in critical perspectives of education and dialogical theories of identity development. I have reviewed the literature on identity, narrative, and culturally responsive teaching to provide background for the study. Because culturally responsive teaching remains more theoretical at this point, we still do not know much about how teachers become culturally responsive. This study examined preservice teachers understanding of culturally responsive teaching and its influence on

their developing teacher identities. In the following chapter I outline the method used in

this study.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Introduction

Drawing on the theoretical frameworks discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter describes the methodological choices I used in this study to explore preservice teachers' experience learning to teach and authoring their teacher identities and examine their understandings of culturally responsive teaching. I begin by justifying the research design for this study. Next, I describe the context of the study including information on the teacher education program, internship setting, the team participating in the study, the focal participants, and my role within this context. Then I describe the data collection and analysis procedures and conclude by addressing trustworthiness of the study and limitations.

Case Study Research Design

I chose qualitative methodology to examine the ways in which a group of elementary preservice teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching and began authoring their professional teacher identities. Qualitative research offers the best means of understanding their situation in its "uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there" (Patton, 1985 as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Specifically, this was a collective case study. Collective case studies examine a number of cases "jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (Stake,

2000, p. 445) and to provide better insight into the process or issue being studied (Creswell, 2005).

Use of case study is appropriate when one is interested in process, when asking "how" questions, and when the researcher has little control over events (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do elementary preservice teachers understand culturally responsive teaching?

   1a. What factors, beliefs, and experiences influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

   1b. How does an intern placement in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

2. How do elementary preservice teachers begin to author culturally responsive teacher identities in response to their teacher education program and their experiences in a culturally and linguistically diverse intern setting?

   2a. How do elementary preservice teachers describe their process of becoming a teacher?

   2b. How do preservice teachers negotiate the tensions between multiple authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of others presented to them in their courses, seminar, and intern setting?

Case study, which is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000), was the best method for examining the preservice teachers' authoring of teacher identities and their understandings of culturally responsive teaching.

Therefore, I selected collective case study to explore in-depth the experiences of four elementary preservice teachers. I collected multiple forms of data using ethnographic methods, and then employed content and discourse analysis within each case followed by cross-case analysis.

Sampling Procedures

I used purposeful sampling in the design of this study. Patton (1990) contends "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 169, emphasis in original). Stake (2000) argues that case studies (even collective case studies) tend to have a sample size too small for random selection; rather it is important to build in variety and select the "case from which we feel we can learn the most" (p. 451).

I selected preservice teachers who were members of the same elementary team in a Professional Development School (PDS) teacher education program at a mid-size university in the Southeast. They took all of their methods courses together and completed their internship at the same elementary school. Dr. Sara Fire, the university professor who supervised this team, was knowledgeable about and promoted culturally responsive teaching in both theory and practice ensuring students' exposure to the topic. During my pilot study conducted in the fall of 2007, the team's first year in the program, I made contact with all members of the team to conduct a survey on preservice teachers' beliefs about diversity. The focus participants in this study were selected based on the results of this survey, demographic information provided, and an expressed willingness to

participate in further discussions about diversity issues and learning to teach. Six participants were interviewed during the pilot study and four were identified for participation in the current study. Each participant volunteered to be part of the pilot study interview and during the interview each consented to participate in the current research.

Context

Because a person's behavior and identities cannot be fully understood in isolation but rather must be situated within a specific context, it is important to examine the bounded context of this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that context is the "immediately relevant aspects of the situation…as well as relevant aspects of the social system in which the person appears" (p. 102). The relevant context of this study was the teacher education program in which the focal participants were members and the culturally and linguistically diverse school in which they interned for two years.

Overview of the Teacher Education Program

The preservice teachers in this study were all students in a two-year PDS teacher education program at a mid-size public university in the southeast region of the United States. The university has approximately 17,000 students with nearly 70 percent being female. The minority enrollment is about 26 percent on campus and nearly 15 percent in the School of Education. The university is one of 14 campuses in the state offering the Teaching Fellows Program to students. The education program is known throughout the state for its excellent preparation of teachers and graduates are sought by local school districts. As a PDS teacher education program, the university partners with some local

public schools to give students teaching experience in culturally diverse Title I schools and provide professional development for staff at the schools. Students gaining entrance to the program are placed on inquiry teams where they take all of their elementary methods courses and seminars together, as well as participate in three semesters of internship (10 hours per week, typically at the same school) and a final semester of student teaching.

Students on the team in this study were placed as a result of expressed interest in working with diverse students. They all completed their internship experience at Clayburn Elementary School about 35 miles from the university. More information about the school will be provided in a later section. The team enrolled in their education courses together and participated in weekly seminar with their team leader, Dr. Fire. The sequence of courses, goals for each class, and topics for seminar are described next.

Fall 2007. During their first semester in the program, preservice teachers were enrolled in reading and mathematics methods courses focusing on instruction for kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as weekly seminar with Dr. Fire. Reading methods, taught also by Dr. Fire, focused on how to engage, motivate, and teach *all* students to learn how to read. It promoted a balanced literacy approach within a thoughtfully adaptive framework, which in the words of Duffy (2002) means the preservice teachers are able to

> …evaluate directives from methods course instructors, in-service speakers, teachers' guides and other authoritative sources; override such directives when, in their judgment something else will work better; and revise and invent yet again on the basis of instructional results. In short, they adjust, modify, adapt and invent; they do not emulate. (p. 333)

Mathematics methods centered attention on preparing preservice teachers to teach mathematics for conceptual understanding. There was a focus on promoting critical thinking, student autonomy, collaboration, and mathematical understanding.

The focus of their seminar during this semester was educational psychology, classroom management, and lesson planning. They were introduced to the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model for teaching English language learners (ELLs). The SIOP model is an observation protocol as well as a lesson planning and delivery system that weave language and content objectives into the curriculum in ways to ensure success for ELLs (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008). The team also examined what it means to be a professional educator at Clayburn Elementary and in general. Members of the team completed 140 hours of internship at Clayburn Elementary, a Title I school with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

At the start of this semester members of the team participated in a pilot study examining preservice teachers' personal and professional beliefs about diversity, which I conducted. The four participants were among a group who participated in follow-up interviews as part of the pilot study in November, sharing life histories and elaborating on their beliefs about diversity issues.

Spring 2008. During the spring semester of 2008, the preservice teachers were enrolled in language arts and elementary science methods courses and weekly seminar. The language arts methods course, taught by Dr. Fire, focused on teaching writing using the Writing Workshop framework integrating word study and oral language development. Elementary science methods focused on providing preservice teachers with curriculum

and teaching techniques in elementary science with an emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking abilities. Development of basic knowledge, skills, and competencies required to teach and assess science concepts and inquiry skills was stressed.

The seminar focus for this semester was differentiated instruction with an emphasis on working with students with special needs. Dr. Fire paid close attention to moving the team past the traditional paradigm of what it means to teach students with special needs. They continued to explore how to use SIOP to teach all learners. The importance of inclusion and collaboration was emphasized as well. Again students completed 140 hours of internship at Clayburn Elementary during this semester.

Fall 2008. During the fall semester of 2008, the preservice teachers were enrolled in elementary social studies methods, a children's literature course, and weekly seminar. As instructor for the social studies methods course, I focused on introducing preservice teachers to state and national standards for teaching social studies; different instructional strategies for effectively motivating elementary aged students to acquire information and skills in the social sciences; and the development of appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes for teaching social studies. There was a strong emphasis on integrating children's literature and technology into the social studies curriculum and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all diverse learners. Children's literature focused on understanding multicultural children's literature, effective teaching strategies for incorporating literature, and learning to use children's literature to integrate across the curriculum.

The seminar during this semester focused on diversity issues in education and culturally responsive teaching. Students participated in grade-level planning of a culturally responsive thematic unit which was later implemented during their student teaching experience. They completed a cultural exploration project that allowed them to investigate a cultural topic in depth and present their project to the team. In addition, they completed 140 hours of internship at Clayburn Elementary.

Spring 2009. During the final semester, preservice teachers completed their full-time student teaching, which consisted of 15 weeks of classroom teaching experience. Preservice teachers solo taught during a minimum of six of these weeks. A monthly three-hour seminar, led by Dr. Fire, focused on supporting them as student teachers and preparing them for their first year of teaching. The seminar experience during this semester was very constructivist in nature with the preservice teachers bringing topics and issues for discussion, as well as Dr. Fire bringing material and information to assist them in seeking employment and feeling prepared to enter the profession of teaching.

Internship Setting

The town. The team traveled together two times a week to their intern site 35 miles from the university. Clayburn Elementary was located on the outskirts of a small, rural town in central North Carolina. Clayburn currently has approximately 8,000 citizens. Historically, Clayburn was home to several textile and furniture plants, such as Acme McCrarry and Bowling Chair. Agriculture was another major source of income in the county. It was predominantly White with a fairly large African American population. Starting in the early 1990s several plants began to close and employment opportunities

changed dramatically. At the time of the study, the largest employer in Clayburn was the school system. The local Wal-Mart store and poultry plants were also major employers in the town. Farming, especially poultry farms, and construction were other sources of income within the county.

As the textile and furniture plants began closing, the poultry plants increased production and began employing large numbers of Hispanic workers. Clayburn has always been a very segregated town and this separation had become more pronounced with the large number of Hispanic immigrants moving into the town since the 1990s. One life-long resident explained that Clayburn is "truly segregated, not just schools, but life…churches, restaurants, everything; and it's not even talked about" (Carol, personal communication, 3/5/08). She talked of a local restaurant where she ate at least twice a week where Blacks worked in the back, Whites ate out front, and Hispanics were never seen. This resident worked at Clayburn Elementary, witnessing the transformation of the school as the Hispanic population grew. White flight to neighboring towns left so few White students that Clayburn Elementary no longer had a White subgroup for No Child Left Behind's AYP (annual yearly progress).

The school. Clayburn Elementary was built in the mid 1970s and began serving 720 elementary students in August of 1977. Students came from two other elementary schools in town. When opened, Clayburn Elementary housed kindergarten through fifth grades. The building originally consisted of three pods surrounding a support building which housed a cafeteria, media center, multipurpose area, and administrative offices. As enrollment grew to over 800 students in the 1990s the fifth-grade students were moved to

62

a newly constructed county middle school in the fall of 1997. Fifth grade returned to Clayburn Elementary in the fall of 2007 with the opening of an additional elementary school in Clayburn.

As the number of Spanish speaking immigrants increased during the 1990s the school worked to address the growing needs of students, specifically English Language Learners (ELLs). During this time larger numbers of White and Black students left Clayburn Elementary for other schooling options in the county. A privately funded elementary charter school was opened as an alternative to Clayburn Elementary. Predominantly White, the school has since become a public charter school and now has a small population of Black students as well. Enrollment at this charter school went from 126 in 1997 to 274 in 2007.

In the fall of 2000, an English as a Second Language (ESL) program was created at Clayburn Elementary for the kindergarten level to address the increasing numbers of students whose first language was not English. While this program offered great support for students, it was not meeting their academic needs. The administration explained that research shows two-way immersion programs are better at helping students who do not have a strong command of their first language and English than the traditional ESL pull-out program (Principal, personal communication, Fall 2008). Thus, in the fall of 2004 the school began a Spanish dual-immersion program for kindergarten. At the time of the study, the program had classes in K-3 with plans to add fourth grade the next year and fifth the year after. Students included both Spanish-speaking Hispanic students as well as native English speakers. Students spent a portion of their day being instructed in English

63

and Spanish. The amount of instructional time in each language varied based on grade-level and curriculum needs.

Struggling to meet the growing language needs within the county, the superintendent met with leaders of the School of Education from the university in the spring of 2005. The county wanted to seek a partnership with the university, specifically in Clayburn. Dr. Fire was selected to begin a PDS program at Clayburn Elementary. She began work in the fall of 2005 with the first team of preservice teachers. Since that time the university had provided interns each year and extensive professional development on working with English Language Learners (ELLs) and how to teach reading and writing optimally to all students, including ELLs.

The university received a U.S. Department of Education grant in the fall of 2007 to provide training in working with ESL students to university faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and teachers in two neighboring counties. The project, called TESOL for ALL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages = Academic Achievement for Language Learners), aimed to address the achievement gap between ESL students and traditional students in North Carolina's schools. The teachers at Clayburn Elementary were participating in this comprehensive professional development to enhance their work with ELLs at the time of the study.

The faculty. There were 53 faculty members at Clayburn Elementary; 46 of whom are White, 1 Asian, 1 African American, and 5 Latino. Nearly 50 percent of the faculty had taught 10 or more years with 15 percent having over 20 years experience. Over 33 percent had five or less years teaching experience. Interestingly, over 67 percent of the

faculty had taught at Clayburn Elementary for the majority of their teaching career. Nine teachers had National Board Certification and 22 had advanced degrees with eight more earning their masters through a county cohort program during the study.

The students. Clayburn Elementary was a K-5 school serving 559 students during the 2007-2008 school year and 575 students during the 2008-2009 school year. During the 2007-2008 school year, 65 percent of students were Hispanic, nearly 11 percent Black, 17 percent White, and 6 percent multi-racial. This was drastically different from the county totals with 57 percent of elementary students being White and 23 percent Latino. Statistics for the following school year changed slightly, with 62 percent of the student population being Hispanic, 11 percent Black, 18 percent White, and 8 percent multi-racial. This compared to county totals showing 55 percent of students being White and 26 percent Hispanic.

Students attending Clayburn Elementary were linguistically diverse but many also came from extreme poverty. Teachers at the school often sited the affects of poverty as being a larger barrier to academic success than language. Some students came to school hungry and the breakfast and lunch they received at school was their only food for the day. Many came from homes where adults came and went throughout the night because of work schedules, leaving the child tired during the school day. Some did not have coats or socks during winter months. Basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter were not to be assumed, as many students worried daily about these essentials. In addition to basic needs, the limited background knowledge and experience they came to school with often made teaching new concepts difficult, with little prior knowledge to build on. Despite

such huge economic disadvantage for many students, the children came to school eager to learn. In general, students were respectful of teachers and staff and engaged in the process of learning, as noted by teachers at the school, members of the team, and the researcher.

Participants

This study was designed to explore how preservice teachers' understood culturally responsive teaching and how this understanding influenced the authoring of their teacher identities. The focal participants were all members of the same team, lead by Dr. Sara Fire, who worked hard to incorporate knowledge about culturally responsive teaching into her work with the team as well as to foster dispositions that would assist team members in developing culturally responsive teaching identities. Dr. Fire not only supervised the university team at Clayburn Elementary but worked closely with the staff on professional development.

The Team Leader

Sara Fire had taught in public Title 1 schools her entire career. She earned her Masters in reading and learning disabilities at UNC at Chapel Hill and worked as a reading specialist for the public schools. Becoming increasingly frustrated with her work within the system, she decided to earn a doctorate and work "at the teacher education level…to impact and change the system" (Interview, 7/31/08, 22). As a teacher educator, Dr. Fire's goals were to not only impact the system but:

> To develop the strongest preservice teachers that I can and by strongest I mean that they're sensitive to the needs of all children, that they understand what best practices are in literacy and beyond, and that they have a real *passion* for kids and

for what they do, and that they are open minded and flexible and they understand that teaching is a continuous growth kind of model. It's not a profession where you know it all and then that's it. I mean I hate that trite kind of "life-long learning" but that's really what it is. It's what it is to me in teaching. (Interview, 7/31/08, 31-37)

Dr. Fire was committed to helping her students learn the importance of community in the classroom and become culturally responsive in their teaching. She said of her role as a teacher educator,

First, I try to practice what I preach. I try to get to know each one of my students on an individual level. That I try to build the kind of community in my classes that I expect or I want future teachers to build in their own classrooms. That I treat *all* of my students with the kind of respect that I expect for them to show to their own students. That I not only model, model, model, model like crazy in methods courses on campus but [pause] at least with my team, I go in and I teach lessons in their K through five classrooms and we talk about it. And so I'm not only observing *them* and giving them feedback but they're seeing *me* and you know the lessons *aren't* perfect but like what the attempts are; what I tried to do; and what worked, what didn't work and *why* and those kinds of conversations. (Interview, 7/31/08, 214-222)

Dr. Fire identified such conversations with preservice teachers to process things observed or experienced as "crucial" for their growth as culturally responsive teachers.

Dr. Fire defined culturally responsive teaching as "teaching that reflects the individual strengths, needs, and experiences of each child. [pause] So *all* children can connect to the instruction in some way, can see how the instruction is meaningful to them, can be engaged by that instruction" (Interview, 7/31/08, 129-132). She saw being a culturally responsive teacher on a continuum and recognized the difficulty for teacher education to develop cultural responsiveness in two years. Dr. Fire identified three important aspects of her work with preservice teachers. The first principle being that

"they need to have *direct* experiences working with children and students who are different than they are. Second, they need to be explicitly given examples of how we teach in responsive and differentiated ways" (Interview, 7/31/08, 196-198). Dr. Fire's third principle was dialogue that was honest and open, where preservice teachers are able to process what they are learning, observing, and experiencing. She felt these three principles were needed to move students along the continuum and become more culturally responsive.

The Team

The team first came together on campus during a kick-off for all students and faculty of the teacher education program in the fall of 2007. Following this event, Dr. Fire met with the team for in-depth introductions focusing on who they were, where they came from, and why they wanted to go into teaching. They were also given opportunities to ask questions. Throughout the first week, the team met several times at an off-campus site for community building activities and an introduction to the program. According to the team leader, the team bonded quickly and forged a spirit of unity and commitment to one another during this short time. They named their team, created a mascot, and began to get to know one another. This sense of team community was maintained throughout the two years the participants were in the teacher education program despite the cliquishness that naturally occurs within groups over time.

Information obtained through the demographic portion of the survey given to all junior teams in fall 2007 as part of my pilot study, suggested that the members of this team were typical preservice teacher candidates. There were 23 female students on the

team, of whom 21 self-identified as White and 2 as mixed race. Four members of the team came from working class or lower class backgrounds, while 19 came from middle class or higher. Over 90 percent of the team was monolingual, speaking only English, while only two students considered themselves fluent in a second language (one Japanese, one Spanish). Nearly half of the team took two or fewer courses dealing with multicultural themes or topics. Ten students took between three and six such courses and two took more than six courses. Six team members had "no" or "very little" cross-cultural involvement, while over half reported having "some" involvement with those from other cultures. Only one person reported having "extensive" cross-cultural relationships. These data follow national demographic trends for American elementary teachers (Cross, 2003; Haberman, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

Focal Participants

I selected four focal participants to make the data more manageable. Each focal participant agreed to participate in an on-going conversation about learning to teach and diversity issues following the administration of the survey given to all juniors entering the elementary education program. This survey was designed by Pohan & Aguilar (2001) to measure preservice teachers' personal and professional beliefs about diversity and given as part of the researcher's pilot study in the fall of 2007. The preservice teachers received a score for each category that measured their openness to issues of diversity. Low scores were seen to reflect general intolerance for diversity, whereas high scores were seen to reflect an openness or acceptance of most or all of the diversity issues. Midrange scores represented a general acceptance of issues of diversity with some degree

of uncertainty or indifference toward some of the issues measured. Midrange scores also may have indicated high acceptance of some issues and low acceptance or tolerance for other topics, resulting in a seemingly balanced score. Two participants were below the mean score and two were well above the mean score.

Demographic information collected during the pilot study was also considered when selecting the focal participants. Because of the small sample size of case studies, Stake (2000) argues the importance of building in variety and selecting rich cases from which we can learn. Therefore, the focal participants were selected because they represented different aspects of the demographic information compiled from the team as a whole. Table 1.0 shows demographic data obtained from the focal participants' surveys. Participants were asked to self-report on these attributes. For some categories they reported a number (e.g., how many courses have you taken which discussed multicultural themes or topics?) and for others I provided a range of choices (e.g., in the social class category participants could self-identify as "poor," "working class," "middle class," etc.).

Table 1.0 Relevant Focal Participant Background Information

Name	Age	Race and Ethnicity	Social Class	Diversity Course Work (credit hours)	Language Fluency
Karissa	18-22	White/European	working	9	English/Japanese
Maria	18-22	White/European	upper middle	9	English
Natasha	18-22	White/European	upper middle	27	English/Spanish
Victoria	23-27	Biracial/American Indian and Scot-Irish	poor	6	English

Following is a brief introduction to each of the participants in the study presented in alphabetical order.

Karissa. Karissa was a female from a working class background. She self-identified as White from European descent. She had a strong interest in different cultures and languages. Karissa grew up with seven siblings on a farm in a very small town in central North Carolina, near Clayburn. She explained that she grew up very fast because of the work she did on the farm and the expectations placed on her. Her experiences on the farm taught her lessons about hard work and responsibility.

Karissa was home schooled by her mother until entering public school in third grade. She said of the experience, "we didn't do anything…maybe by the end of [home schooling] two kids, she was tired…I didn't know how to read *at all*. I had to go to special classes…and it was kinda patronizing to be there 'cause I know I'm not stupid…I just didn't learn [to read]" (Interview 4/15/09, 565-568, 572-575). This experience perhaps accounted for Karissa not having a lot of friends in school and isolating herself from most of her peers.

Growing up Baptist, Karissa was raised in an extremely conservative setting, with her mother taking the kids to church twice a week but her father choosing not to attend. She felt this experience had affected her morals in significant ways. She chose to live by her Christian principles but did not criticize others for their choices and used the adage "dislike the sin, not the sinner" to explain her response. Karissa had a gay older brother who she was accepting of despite her parents' difficulty in understanding. She had gay friends at school and did not feel that homosexuality was an issue for her. Karissa also

had friends of different races and ethnicities despite being raised by parents whom she identified as racist. Some of this resistance she attributed to her desire to do the opposite of her parents.

Karissa studied French, spoke and wrote Japanese, began learning Korean during the study, and was interested in studying other languages. She felt that being bilingual is beneficial but should not be a requirement for all students. This fascination with languages and diversity led Karissa to choose this particular inquiry team since the internship was in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting. She envisioned herself teaching in a diverse school when she graduated. Karissa was a Teaching Fellow at the university, requiring an additional seminar each semester. During this seminar, Fellows engaged in community-based learning activities in which they explored themselves first and then the communities of their learners. This strengths-based approach helps challenge the stereotypes they hold about certain communities and also allows them to explore ways to develop as culturally diverse teachers. The Teaching Fellows requires graduates to teach a minimum of four years in a North Carolina public school. Despite this, Karissa stayed an extra year to obtain a second degree in Global Studies and worked toward traveling to Korea or Japan upon graduation.

Maria. Maria was a female from an upper-middle class background. She self-identified as White from European descent. Maria had dark hair and facial features that caused people to ask "what are you?" to which she replied, "I'm White" (a label she resisted) or "Italian." Because she had the physical appearance of being something other than White, people often challenged her, some actually telling her she was not White. She

explained, "Because of the way I look, I feel like I need to know about different cultures. Because when they look at me they, who knows what they think, it's like I've gotten anything in the book, Hawaiian, Eskimo, Indian, Native American, and it's random…it's everything" (Maria, 11/29/07, 364-370). Maria had been asked if she was adopted several times because she looked so different from her siblings and parents. These experiences shaped her desire to learn about different cultures and diversity as well as her openness to diversity issues. Maria came to the program with a very broad definition of diversity including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual preference, and physical differences. She also recognized differences *within* cultural groups as well. She liked learning about different cultures, was very accepting of diversity, and entered teacher education displaying initial stages of sociocultural consciousness which deepened throughout her teacher education.

Maria grew up in a predominantly White suburb of a large city in North Carolina. She was raised in a Catholic family, with her father being slightly more liberal than her mother. Her faith shaped many of her early beliefs but she questioned issues like homosexuality. She did not see sexual orientation as a choice but rather something one was born with. More than once she said "my preference is not that," but she remained accepting of those who were gay. Her best friend was gay as were several good friends. Maria stated that she did not believe all the tenets of the Catholic Church, but she loved the culture and traditions of the church. Throughout the course of her time in college, Maria began to rethink her position on many of the Church's teachings causing internal

conflict. At the end of the study she felt she still wanted to believe but could not practice the religion of the Catholic Church entirely so it was easier to just not attend.

Maria unknowingly joined the Neo-Black Society at the university when she signed up for Gospel Choir (which is part of the Neo-Black Society on campus). Gospel Choir opened Maria to diverse religions and "helped [her] grow a lot as a person" (Interview, 11/29/07, 94-95). Maria was one of two White students and a handful of Hispanic students participating in this organization. Her position as a "minority" within a minority organization was a very positive experience for her, opening her mind to new knowledge and beliefs, exposing realities that she had not seen before, making new friends, and developing leadership skills. She eventually joined the leadership of the Neo-Black Society, even being asked to run to be president of the organization, which she declined because of her Whiteness.

Natasha. Natasha was a female from an upper-middle class background. She self-identified as White from European descent but during the course of the study she embraced the Native American ancestry in her family. Natasha had dark features and was often assumed to be of Hispanic descent. She spoke Spanish fluently because she had attended a Spanish dual-immersion elementary magnet school and studied it later in high school and college. She grew up in the city where the university was located, moved to a nearby rural town in middle school, then back to the city during high school. Natasha was very aware of diversity throughout her schooling experience and spoke, during her first interview, of instances of racial and socioeconomic segregation, especially in her high

school. She displayed initial stages of sociocultural consciousness upon entry to the program as well.

Natasha grew up with very liberal parents who both came from extremely conservative families from central North Carolina. Natasha did not practice a specific religion but was greatly influenced by her spirituality. When the topic of religion was covered during seminar, Natasha was very frustrated by the closed-mindedness of some team members who believed strongly that Christianity is the *true* religion. She viewed herself as very open and non-judgmental toward others. She had many cross-cultural experiences, especially through her work at her father's business.

Natasha saw bilingual education as important but not something to be forced on people. In her initial interview, she talked of how "arrogant" it is for Americans to go to another country and assume others will speak English. She viewed immigrants coming to America in a very positive manner, especially those not speaking English. Natasha's fluency in Spanish allowed her to intern in the dual-immersion Spanish program at Clayburn Elementary. She was very enthusiastic throughout her teacher education and developed deep relationships with her students.

Travel had been something that Natasha felt very lucky to have experienced. She traveled extensively within and outside the United States growing up. Incorporating other cultures and perspectives into the curriculum was important to her. She desired her students to be "culturally aware" which she defined as her students not being "egocentric, that they realize there are other things out there other than their own" (Interview 11/27/07, 580-581). She planned to teach in Costa Rica after graduation but by the end of

the study had settled on moving to Spain. On return to the United States she hoped to teach at the elementary level or become an ESL teacher. Early on, Natasha talked about teaching in a Montessori school but as time went by she began talking about teaching in a school like Clayburn or some type of Spanish immersion program. Natasha chose to stay an additional year after completing the teacher education program to earn a Spanish degree and gain certification in K-12 as well. She saw the additional degree and certification as "making [herself] that much more marketable" (Interview, 4/20/09, 421).

Victoria. Victoria was a female from a poor or lower-class background. She self-identified as mixed-race, specifically Lumbee Indian and Scot-Irish. Like Maria, she was often asked "what are you mixed with" in regards to her ethnicity. Early in life she was very proud of her heritage but then an experience in fourth grade made her "tone down [her] appreciation and passion about that part of [her] life" (Interview, 8/13/08, 43). When speaking of the event she remembered vividly the boy's name, the class they were in, and how others laughed when he said she was going to scalp them. Victoria saw this event as moving her to repress that part of her identity for many years. It was her younger sister, who actively participated in powwows and Lumbee events, who helped Victoria begin to study the history of her heritage and regain lost pride. She was adamant during the study that her students would be proud of their culture and ethnic heritage.

Victoria had a very strong work ethic that she credited to her working class parents who struggled to make ends meet. Her father eventually left and her mother raised four children on her own. Victoria and her two older brothers and younger sister grew up in a very rural town in North Carolina. As a young child Victoria and her

siblings were sent to church on the church bus; her parents did not attend. When she was six, they moved to the country and no longer attended. As she got older, Victoria found that organized religion left too many questions for her. She identified herself as a more spiritual person and was very rational about her faith saying that one does not have anything to lose for believing in God but one can potentially lose out on much by not believing. Victoria believed there are multiple routes to a higher power and struggled with team members who rigidly said that Christianity is *the* way to God.

Victoria was a non-traditional student in many ways. First, she was older than most of her teammates. She did not graduate from high school but earned her General Equivalency Diploma (GED) after dropping out to give birth to her daughter, Kinsley. She was a single-mother who supported her family by bartending at a local restaurant chain. This job had given Victoria many opportunities to meet diverse people and learn about ethnicities and cultures other than her own. Victoria was a very open-minded individual who was genuinely interested in learning about others and hearing their stories. She entered the program with a fairly high degree of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence, much higher than others team members.

Role of Researcher

Having been an elementary teacher for ten years and an administrator in a K-8 school for three years, I have been through the process of developing my professional teacher identities. I experienced the struggle between the authoritative discourses of education and the internally persuasive discourses of teaching and learning, diversity, and caring about students. This struggle shaped my teaching as well as my relationships with

77

students. I have very strong beliefs about what good teaching looks like that influence my current teaching of elementary preservice teachers as well as my research.

Researcher Bias

Critical theory plays an important role in my own approach to education. I see most schools as working to legitimize the dominant culture through the arrangement of bodies of knowledge in the "hegemonic curriculum" and by privileging the students whose cultural capital (i.e., linguistic style, body postures, social relations, etc.) match those of the dominant culture that get reinforced in school (Giroux, 2006). I see pedagogy as a "deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced" (Giroux & Simon, 1989, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 14). Culturally responsive pedagogy works to help students recognize and examine the way knowledge is produced in schools, the curriculum, textbooks, and classroom materials. Therefore, culturally responsive teaching in theory and practice is an integral part of my teaching at the university.

Seeing education from this lens influences how I approach my teaching and research. It specifically focused this study on how preservice teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching and how this understanding influenced the ways they authored their teacher identities. I believe strongly that preservice teachers must have opportunities to examine their own beliefs about diversity, explore multiple internally persuasive discourses of education rather than simply the dominant discourses, engage in practice within culturally diverse settings with veteran teachers who teach in culturally responsive ways, and have opportunities to dialogue about these experiences.

78

I believe preservice teachers can develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions that allow them to author their teacher identities in culturally responsive ways. The first step in developing such knowledge, skills, and dispositions is to develop sociocultural consciousness. Such awareness helps one see the influence of culture on one's world view and the ways in which culture works to position us in places of power and privilege or weakness and marginalization. Without this understanding, one does not see the need for culturally responsive teaching; therefore, there is little incentive to develop such dispositions.

Since sociocultural consciousness includes understanding our own position in society and how it influences our world view, I find that my approach to teaching and research is further influenced by my position as a lesbian. Having spent the majority of my K-8 teaching and administrative experience deep "in the closet" in fear, I have since come out to my colleagues and students as a way to personalize the issues of heterosexism and homophobia as well as to challenge the beliefs and assumptions many of them hold about homosexuals. I have a personal interest in helping preservice teachers develop sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence themselves based on my position as a member of a community that experiences personal and systemic discrimination and a parent of two young children. Coming from this position, I bring a different perspective to my research than a White, female, heterosexual researcher would and have a vested interest in preservice teachers gaining sociocultural consciousness and culturally responsive teaching dispositions.

Because of my interest and desire for preservice teachers to develop cultural responsiveness, during data analysis it was important to identify ways in which my own subjectivity influenced the interpretations and conclusions I was making. Peshkin (1988) explains, "One's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed. It is insistently present in both the research and nonresearch aspects of our life" (p. 17). It took effort to be critical in the discourse analysis of the participants' talk of teaching, students, and parents; as well as prompting from colleagues to examine the ways in which they engaged in the hegemonic discourse of privilege that is so pervasive in our society.

Instructor within the Teacher Education Program

I was a graduate teaching assistant at the university for five years, teaching an elementary social studies methods course and a course on diversity issues. The biases discussed above greatly influenced the instructional decisions I made as well as the assignments and projects I gave students. Further, they influenced the lens through which I encouraged my students to understand teaching and learning. I tried to help preservice teachers use a cultural lens to understand the classroom, relationships with students, curriculum and material choices, and instructional strategies.

As the focal team's social studies methods instructor and assistant in seminar during the fall of their senior year, I recognized my position of authority over the participating preservice teachers. This positionality afforded the words I spoke and material I presented an "authoritative" status along side that of other professors they encountered in the program. Part of the study involved examining the ways in which the preservice teachers negotiated the tensions between authoritative discourses and their

own internally persuasive discourses. Since they encountered authoritative discourses in all of their methods courses as well as their internship, my presence offered an additional authoritative discourse for them to orchestrate. In addition, multiple sources of data ensured the analysis and development of themes not limited to my own interests nor influenced by my own biases.

As instructor for the team and assistant in their seminar, I recognized there were ethical issues I had to address. The possibility of the focal participants feeling pressure to participate was addressed by having Dr. Fire act as a critical insider who got consent from participants and checked in with them over the course of the study. Participants were given the option of quitting at any point. The possibility of other team members viewing the focal participants as "special" or having privileges they did not have was addressed in the fall of 2008 when I discussed my research with the entire team and informed students that I was accessible to all of them in the same ways. When any of them wished to talk about their experiences while learning to teach I made myself available to them, resulting in many conversations with other team members in addition to the focal participants. These discussions allowed me to better understand the experience of the team as a whole and the context within which the focal participants operated.

Relationship between Researcher and Participants

As an assistant in the team's weekly seminar during the fall of 2008, my role was what Merriam (1998) calls "observer as participant" where the goals of my study were known to the group and my participation in the group was secondary to the role of

observer. Adler and Adler (1994) describe this role as one where the researchers "observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership" (p. 380). At times, maintaining the role of observer and recording of their stories became difficult as I found myself falling into the trap Peshkin (1988) so accurately described; "the trap of perceiving just that which my own untamed sentiments sought out and served up as data. If trapped, I run the risk of presenting a study that has become blatantly autobiographical" (p. 20). Through member checking and peer review, I worked to remain true to telling the stories of my participants rather than what I hoped to find.

My positionality as instructor and assistant to seminar suggested the possibility that students would feel coerced to participate in this study. Each focal participant in the study, however, expressed an interest in participating in an on-going conversation about learning to teach and issues of cultural diversity during my pilot study in the fall of 2007, prior to encountering me in a position of authority. They participated in an initial interview in November of 2007 and offered to participate in further conversations throughout their teacher education program.

Data Collection Procedures

I collected data at various points throughout the preservice teachers' two-year program but the majority of data collection occurred during the teams' senior year. Patton (1990) suggested that

> Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of
> information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective…By using a

combination of observation, interviewing, and document analysis, the fieldworker is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings. (p. 244)

Therefore, multiple sources of data in this study included formal interviews, focus groups, dialogue from seminar meetings, personal documents and artifacts, and observations during intern site visits.

Individual Interviews

"Interviewing is the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals" (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). Patton (1990) says "The purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 196). The focus of this study was to examine preservice teachers' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and how these understandings influenced their developing teacher identities. These are personal beliefs and processes that can be accessed through interview.

I conducted individual interviews with each of the four focal participants throughout the teacher education program. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format where "specific information is desired from all respondents" but neither exact wording nor the order of questions was necessarily maintained (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). The first interview was part of my pilot study in November 2007. This interview consisted of gaining initial life histories and exploring personal beliefs about diversity. A second interview was conducted in the summer of 2008 following their second semester in the teacher education program. This interview explored their reasons for becoming teachers, their goals, a description of themselves as teachers, and their understanding of

culturally responsive teaching at that time. The third interview was conducted in December 2008, at the end of their course work and prior to student teaching. This interview focused on their understanding of culturally responsive teaching, development as an elementary teacher to this point, experiences in internship, and feelings about student teaching the following semester. The final interview was conducted after their full-time student teaching experience in the spring of 2009. This interview focused on their understanding of culturally responsive teaching, the student teaching experience, and any other experiences throughout their teacher education that helped prepare them for the classroom. The interview protocols can be found in Appendix A.

Focus Groups

In the fall of 2008 the participants took part in a focus group. I asked the preservice teachers to view a video of a lesson in which the teacher was practicing culturally responsive teaching (Center for the Study of Reading, 1991). They were asked to talk about the video in terms of whether or not they saw culturally responsive teaching during the lesson. They talked about their understandings of culturally responsive teaching at that time. I audio taped and transcribed this session to ensure accuracy. After their student teaching, during the spring of 2009, there was a second focus group during which participants viewed a video, responded to the same questions, and talked about their understanding of culturally responsive teaching at that point. The aim of the focus groups was to gain deeper insight into their understanding of culturally responsive teaching and what it looks like in practice as well as determine whether their understandings changed with time and experience.

Dialogue from Seminar

During seminar in the fall of 2008, the team focused on issues of diversity and culturally responsive teaching. I audio taped these seminar sessions and later analyzed them for instances of stories told by the focal participants that dealt with understanding culturally responsive teaching or negotiating the tensions between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of teaching. Specifically, dialogical narratives told by participants about cultural diversity issues, interactions with students and cooperating teachers, teaching and learning, and ways they negotiated what was learned in course work with what they experienced in the intern setting were identified and selected for transcription.

Personal Documents and Artifacts

Throughout their teacher education program preservice teachers were asked to participate in numerous projects and assignments for their methods courses and seminar. Certain projects and assignments offered insight into how they understood culturally responsive and how they authored their teacher identities. Preservice teachers at the university were required to reflect on and write about their teaching dispositions. Their team leader and cooperating teachers also had opportunities to rate their dispositions throughout their teacher education experience. Since "personal documents are a reliable source of data concerning a persons' attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world" and "reflect the participants perspective" (Merriam, 1998, p. 116), they were included in the data and examined as part of this study.

Observations

Continued observation can "provide specific incidents, behaviors…that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews" (Merriam, 1998, p. 96). I used observations in this study to triangulate the emerging findings. Informal observations were done in both the teacher education program as well as the intern setting. These observations allowed me to become more familiar with the context, get to know members of the team, build rapport with focal participants, and gain a better understanding of the process the preservice teachers went through. Patton (1990) explains that the "challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program as an insider while describing the program for outsiders" (p. 207). When observation is combined with interviewing and document analysis "a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated" is possible (Merriam, 1998, p. 111).

Informal observations occurred during seminar and social studies methods class and field notes were made of these observations. Since the study was designed to examine the stories preservice teachers told, observation during class allowed me to collect the stories that come about in the natural course of classroom settings. Each participant was observed teaching and interacting with students in their intern setting as well. During student teaching, observations were done at three different times. The first one was done in the second week while participants were phasing in and teaching one or two subjects. A second observation was done during the first week of full time teaching, when the participants had complete control of the classroom. The final observation was done during their final week of full time teaching. The observations were a minimum of

three hours long with some over the course of multiple days and included whole class instruction, group work, and less structured interactions with students. These observations focused on the ways in which the preservice teachers positioned themselves as teacher, their interactions with students, the ways participants approached teaching, and any culturally responsive teaching strategies they employed.

Team Leader Interview

The team leader was interviewed to gain understanding of the philosophy of education from which she approached the team and her teaching. Her understanding of cultural diversity and culturally responsive teaching as well as her beliefs about teaching and learning were explored. A deeper understanding of her work with the team and the way she positioned them as teachers was sought during this interview. See appendix B for team leader interview protocol.

Data Analysis Procedures

"Data collection and analysis is a *simultaneous* activity in qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). Therefore analysis began following the initial interviews of focal participants at the end of their first semester. As transcripts were typed and reread several times, I identified tentative themes or categories and later compared them to new transcripts following constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). My analysis involved transcription of interviews, selective transcription of dialogical narratives (as discussed below), and discourse analysis of these transcripts. I drew on Gee (2005) and Ochs (1979) in transcribing data. Both stress the importance of transcribing selectively to avoid too much detail which makes it difficult to follow.

87

Because I was more concerned with the content of the narratives and how it reflected an understanding of culturally responsive teaching or an authoring of one's teacher identities, I was less interested in a deep discourse analysis. My transcription conventions can be found in Appendix C.

Being a collective case study the analysis of data occurred in two stages (Merriam, 1998). First, during the within case analysis I sought to fully understand the individual experiences and understandings of each focal participant. Second, cross-case analysis allowed me "to build abstractions across cases" (p. 195) or as Yin (1994) explains, "to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details" (p. 112). Miles and Huberman (1994) warn that such analysis is difficult because simply summarizing across some of the themes or main variables in itself will tell us very little but rather careful analysis of each case and deep understanding of local dynamics will allow us to find patterns that "transcend particular cases" (p. 206).

Within Case Analysis

The initial analysis within the individual cases involved content analysis of interview, focus group, and seminar transcripts; field notes; and collected course work. I identified relevant data, coded data for themes, and organized the data electronically in a matrix to make searches, sorting, and retrieval easier. Throughout the collection and analysis of data, I paid particular attention to the stories preservice teachers told because of my desire to examine the ways in which they authored their teacher identities and my

understanding of the dialogical nature of identity development (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2005; Rogers et al., 2006).

There were five characteristic of culturally responsive teaching identified *a priori* based on a synthesis of the current literature: (a) sociocultural consciousness, (b) cultural competence, (c) constructivist teaching, (d) high expectations for students, and (e) an ethic of care. Narratives containing examples of these five characteristics were identified and included in a matrix. Additional readings of interview transcripts brought about the coding of more categories, leading to the identification of three additional characteristics of culturally responsive teachers present among all four of the participants: (f) experiences with assumptions and discrimination, (g) experiences knowing the other, and (h) self-reflection. These were also included in the data matrix.

Following the transcription and beginning analysis of the second round of interviews I developed a second matrix to help organize the data and examine the changes in beliefs and understandings over the course of the study. A separate matrix for each participant was created with categories that emerged throughout the study (e.g., understanding of diversity and culturally responsive teaching; view of teaching/learning, parents, students; teacher identity, internship, teacher education program, etc.). Entries to the matrices included quotes, data source, date, and transcription lines to make accessibility to the raw data easier and allow for easier analysis of the individual participants as well as cross case analysis.

I also identified narratives that expressed the participants' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and those demonstrating a negotiation of authoritative and

internally persuasive discourses in relation to teaching. Such instances in the transcripts were coded for what Rogers et al. (2006) call distinct *dialogic narrative chains*, which included a student's story and all utterances related to the story. I selected several of these for deeper discourse analysis. The study by Rogers et al. (2006) analyzed preservice teachers' stories using Bakhtin's theories on dialogue. They argue that as students *author* their narratives they "adopt social positions by juxtaposing their own and other's voices" (p. 205). This positioning is part of the process of identity formation. Rogers et al. (2006) define dialogic narratives as the "stories told within the context of related utterances and discourses" (p. 205). As the preservice teachers talked through new concepts, described events, discussed understandings, and reflected on experiences they engaged in this story telling and positioning, ultimately authoring their teacher identities.

In the analysis, I looked for two main types of dialogical narratives. First, I identified moments of assimilation where the preservice teachers engaged in *internally persuasive narratives*, which are "discourses or stories that have already become assimilated and that orchestrate a person's own and other people's voices with a complex and highly specific character" (Rogers et al., 2006, p. 213). These narratives demonstrated what Gee (2005) calls "intertextuality" where one may incorporate or borrow "words from another text spoken or written in the same or a different variety of language" (p. 46). Second, I identified and examined moments of tension with and negotiation of the authoritative discourses they encountered in the teacher education program. Both of these types of narratives are instances of preservice teachers identifying possible teaching selves, positioning themselves as certain types of teachers, and

90

privileging or rejecting certain ways of teaching, thus authoring their teacher identities in specific ways.

My analysis of the dialogical narratives made use of Bakhtin's notion of *authoring,* which is the process of assimilating the voices of others to adopt a social position in the context of dialogue; and *double voicing*, which is "how narrators articulate their own voices (and thus interactionally position themselves) by juxtaposing themselves with respect to other voices" (Rogers et al., 2006, p. 213). I also drew on Gee's (2005) Discourse models, which are theories or storylines that "people hold, often unconsciously, and use to make sense of the world and their experiences in it" (p. 61). These theories are "connected to specific Discourses, that is, specific socially and culturally distinctive identities people can take on in society" (p. 61).

Preservice teachers are in the process of entering the Discourse of teaching. They are learning "the ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity" (Gee, 2005, p. 21), that of teacher. One cannot simply *be* a teacher; rather one must become or enact a teacher identity. It is in the performance of teacher, which involves the use of language as well as other tools, that one gets recognized as teacher.

Language and the other tools are used to construct not only our identities but our worlds. Thus language is a tool for building. Gee (2005) offers seven "building tasks" of language that I drew on in my discourse analysis of selected transcripts. They are (a) significance, (b) activities, (c) identities, (d) relationships, (e) politics, (f) connections,

91

and (g) sign systems and knowledge. Not all building tasks were evident in one discourse sample but each offered important questions to ask of the data. For example, when exploring *significance* I attended to what things or events the preservice teachers talked about as significant to teaching and learning and what they felt was significant about teaching in culturally responsive ways. Language is used "to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role" (Gee, 2005, p. 99), thus how the preservice teachers authored their identities as teacher and how they used language to recognize each other as teacher became important aspects of their narratives. When examining the *politics* task, I looked at how they positioned themselves through their stories as a certain kind of teacher or embraced/rejected certain ways of teaching. Gee's *connections* building task allowed me to examine how they connected their personal examples or stories to the authoritative discourse encountered in the teacher education program. Regarding Gee's last building task, *sign systems and knowledge*, I looked at what forms of knowledge they privileged or discredited and how they demonstrated privilege of certain knowledge.

Cross Case Analysis

Through out the analysis of individual focal participants, I continually worked to identify patterns that might emerge as common to all four. In this way, I was able to identify three additional characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and identify new categories for the data matrices on changes over time. As new categories emerged, I reread old transcripts and examined them for instances of the new categories. After analysis of the individual cases was complete, I did a cross-case analysis to offer generalizations and patterns that were present across the experiences of the preservice

92

teachers. In this analysis, I sought to understand how the teacher education program and internship at a culturally and linguistically diverse school influenced their understandings of culturally responsive teaching and developing teacher identities.

I typed, sorted, and coded the narratives from each of the participants that had been identified for deeper analysis. When looking at the stories told about student teaching for example, categories such as negotiation of one's place during student teaching, negotiation of space and time, and negotiation of one's self in relation to others were identified. When categories contained stories from only one or two participants I combined them with other appropriate categories or set them aside. I examined the categories containing stories from at least three participants, but more commonly all four. Certain aspects of the program and experiences at internship were identified as significant for all the participants in this way.

While I recognized that one's own cultural and social positions and backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs would influence their teacher education; I did not anticipate the degree to which it factored into the four participants' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and their developing teacher identities. Examining the beliefs and dispositions with which the participants entered the teacher education program led to important patterns in the data across the cases.

Trustworthiness of the Study

When talking about the trustworthiness of a study Merriam (1998) discusses internal validity, reliability, and external validity. I will address each in terms of qualitative research in general and this study in particular.

Internal Validity

Internal validity deals with the question of how the findings match reality. Reality is "holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). What I observed and analyzed were "people's constructions of reality – how they understand the world;" (Merriam, 1998, p. 203), more precisely the focal participants' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and how that influenced their developing teacher identities.

Merriam (1998) suggests six strategies to enhance internal validity. They are (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (f) researcher's biases. I employed five of the six strategies in this study. She defines triangulation as "using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings" (p. 204). Data collected in this study came from multiple sources including interviews, focus group, seminar transcripts, course work, and observations. I used various methods for collecting the data as well, including audio taped interviews, focus group, and seminar meetings; transcriptions of these; collection of relevant course work, reflections, and evaluations; and detailed field notes from informal observations and class meetings. As I began interpreting data, I asked focal participants to confirm or help reshape my interpretations of their experience as a preservice teacher so they were portrayed accurately. Merriam (1998) explains that gathering data over a period of time increases the validity of the findings. I built relationships with focal participants over the

course of their two years in the teacher education program; interviewing them, attending

seminar, teaching their social studies methods course, observing them informally at their

intern setting, and participating in social events. Dr. Fire, the team leader and Mary

Vincent, a fellow doctoral student and assistant to the team, acted as peer examiners for

the emerging findings in the study since they had an insider understanding of the team

and the context. I also clarified my biases (Creswell, 2003), and stated my own

"assumptions, world view, and theoretical orientation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 205) at the

outset of this study.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated.

Replication is less important in my study, as I sought to describe and explain preservice

teachers' understanding of culturally responsive teaching and the process they go through

in developing teacher identities, which is something that cannot be replicated in the

traditional sense. More important to me is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call

"dependability" or "consistency" of the results; which means "given the data collected,

the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable" (as cited in Merriam, 1998,

p. 206). So the question becomes not whether the results of my study can be found again

but whether the results are consistent with the data collected. In depth description of the

context of this study and triangulation of data, offer ways to ensure the dependability of

this study. The clear data collection and analysis presented in this chapter further

enhances the reliability of this study.

External Validity

External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings can be applied to other situations. In qualitative research, a nonrandom sample is often "selected precisely *because* the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (Merriam, 1998, p. 208, emphasis in original). Patton (1990) explains that qualitative research should "provide perspective rather than truth…and context-bound extrapolations rather than generalizations" (p. 491). What Stake (1994) calls *naturalistic generalization*, was important to me in this study. He explains that full or thorough knowledge of the particular allows a reader to see similarities in new contexts, leaving the "extent to which a study's findings apply to other situations up to the people in those situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 221) or the reader. My responsibility was to provide enough detailed description of the context of my study so that readers can compare it to their own situations. Merriam offers three ways to enhance this type of generalizing of the study; (a) rich, thick description; (b) typicality of participants and the program, and (c) multi-case design.

Limitations of the Study

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998). The purpose is to tell a unique story rather than present findings for universal generalization. As such, this study and I were situated historically, socially, culturally, and politically in a specific context which influenced my interpretations of the data. The data collected were representations of the preservice teachers' lived experiences and my interpretations of their underlying beliefs,

understandings, and assumptions are just that, an interpretation. Stake (2000) argues that "case researchers…pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and relationships – and fail to pass along others" and the reader likewise interprets and reconstructs the information (p. 442). As researcher, I brought a "construction of reality" to the context that interacted with the preservice teachers' constructions and interpretations of their developing teacher identities, and the final product became "yet another interpretation by the researcher of others' views filtered through his or her own" (Merriam, 1998, p. 23).

Analysis of preservice teachers' developing identities was difficult because identities are fluid and shifting as well as open to different interpretations. I recognize that my own biases, world views, and assumptions as well as my desires for the preservice teachers influenced the ways in which data may have been interpreted. I worked to safeguard this process by conducting member checks with focal participants and peer debriefing with the team leader and other colleagues.

The research questions guiding this study sought to examine personal understandings of culturally responsive teaching and the process of developing teacher identities, which is something that cannot be studied directly but rather through self-reported beliefs, understandings, and thoughts about teaching. By relying on self-reported beliefs and understandings, I ran the risk that a participant would give information that I wanted to hear. The quality of interview data then was dependent on the honesty of the participants. I believe this risk was minimal given that part of the focus was on how preservice teachers author their teacher identities and negotiate the tension between

authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. The ways in which they talked about this process was in fact a way they positioned themselves in relation to the program, me, and the process of becoming a teacher.

I followed preservice teachers' through their teacher education program offering insight into their teacher identities only through their student teaching experience. This limited the study to their understandings and developing identities in the context of course work, seminar, and internship rather than any actual long-term practice in the classroom. This time was filled with tension as the preservice teachers worked to reconcile the authoritative discourses of their professors, cooperating teachers, and supervisors with their own internally persuasive discourses about teaching and learning. The study could be strengthened and more could be learned about the process of developing teacher identities if it were extended to include their beginning years of teaching.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented my methodological choices for this study. The use of collective case study allowed for in-depth insight into the understandings of culturally responsive teaching the participants came to and how these understandings influenced the authoring of their teacher identities. The bounded context of this study was discussed by a rich description of the teacher education program, the intern setting, and the focal participants. I discussed my role in this study and presented my biases as they influenced the data. The data collection and analysis procedures were explained, and I concluded by addressing trustworthiness of the study and limitations. In chapter 4 I will explore the

factors influencing the understandings of culturally responsive teaching that the

participants came to during their two years in the teacher education program. Chapter 5

will examine the influence of these understandings on their developing teacher identities.

CHAPTER IV

UNDERSTANDINGS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING

As a teacher, I cannot help my students to overcome their ignorance if I am not engaged permanently in trying to overcome my own. I cannot teach what I do not know.

Paulo Freire

This study examined the understandings of culturally responsive teaching that four preservice teachers came to during their teacher education program and how these understandings influenced their developing teacher identities. The purpose of this chapter is to address the first research question which asked:

1. How do elementary preservice teachers understand culturally responsive teaching?

    1a. What factors, beliefs, and experiences influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

    1b. How does an intern placement in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

This chapter offers patterns that emerged across the experiences of the preservice teachers and presents the understandings that the participants came to by the end of the study. The data will be presented inductively, starting with characteristics of culturally responsive teaching, moving to the factors that influenced the participants' developing understandings, and closing with their personal journeys in identifying as culturally responsive teachers.

The first section presents data that emerged during an initial analysis to identify characteristics of culturally responsive teaching as discussed, identified, or demonstrated by the participants. Five characteristics were identified *a priori* based on a synthesis of the current literature and three additional characteristics emerged from the data. The second section presents data from an analysis of the participant's life histories and stories about their experiences in teacher education and at Clayburn Elementary. Factors influencing how they came to understand culturally responsive teaching were identified as part of this analysis and are discussed in this section. The final section presents the individual understandings of culturally responsive teaching that the participants expressed throughout the study. It shows changes in their understanding over time and documents their journey toward identifying as culturally responsive teachers.

Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is a popular topic in teacher education these days. Because of the rapidly changing demographics on a national scale and the relatively stable teaching demographics (i.e., White, middle class, monolingual), there is a cultural mismatch between students and teachers. Although teacher education programs recognize this challenge and are working to include multicultural courses or focus on culturally responsive teaching in methods courses, there is no single definition of culturally responsive teaching being used. Rather, culturally responsive teaching tends to be a term that is drawn on during course work in such a way that assumes that everyone is operating from the same understandings and ability to take on such identities. Because of such ambiguity, this study sought to examine the understandings of culturally responsive

teaching that the four participating preservice teachers came to over the course of their two years in the teacher education program.

As discussed in chapter two, five salient characteristics of culturally responsive teaching were identified from the current research prior to the study: (a) sociocultural consciousness, (b) cultural competence, (c) constructivist teaching, (d) high expectations for students, and (e) an ethic of care. The findings of this study supported these five characteristics as well as three additional characteristics that emerged from the data: (f) experiences with assumptions and discrimination, (g) experiences knowing the other, and (h) self-reflection. Each of these characteristics will be discussed below.

Sociocultural Consciousness

Sociocultural consciousness is an understanding that one's position in the world is mediated by one's cultural identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion) and one's particular way of seeing the world is shaped by this position rather than universal (Banks, 2004; Bennett, 1995; Howard, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Villegas and Lucas (2002a) see sociocultural consciousness as a continuum from dyconsciousness (i.e., one's own world view is universal, no recognition of institutional discrimination or power differentials) to consciousness (i.e., consciousness of one's own social and cultural position, understanding of power differentials and institutional discrimination).

On such a continuum, Victoria fell toward the high end of sociocultural consciousness with Natasha and Maria slightly lower. The three were able to express an understanding of power differentials in society and the importance of seeing that all world views are equally valid. This position was evident in the stories they told of

friends, family, and students. Karissa fell somewhere in the middle of the continuum with certain understandings of the ways in which culture operated to shape one's world view but unable to see institutional discrimination, relying instead on her belief in meritocracy to explain inequities.

Karissa's understanding of social class, for example, reflected this belief in meritocracy. Karissa grew up in an isolated rural area of North Carolina sharing a three bedroom house with seven siblings. She took on tremendous responsibilities on her parents' chicken farm at an early age. It was not until high school that Karissa recognized these experiences were different from her peers. It was then that she began to see how social class impacts one's world view, experiences, and opportunities. At this point, Karissa was very aware of material possessions such as the kind of car one drove or the style and brand-name clothing one wore. In high school, Karissa began to see school as a means to move out of her current economic situation and, therefore, worked hard to enter college. She held various jobs throughout high school to earn money for her schooling. Karissa received a Teaching Fellow's Scholarship upon entry to the university, which allowed her to remain in college all four years. Growing up with such a strong work ethic led Karissa to attribute her success and ability to attend college to her own hard work and determination.

Like Karissa, Natasha saw differences in material possessions (i.e., cars and clothing) among those from different social classes but for her class went deeper to include what students ate for lunch and where and with whom they sat. Unlike Karissa's belief in meritocracy, Natasha had a keen understanding of how social class and race

operated at her high school to separate students in terms of educational opportunities. She explained how, "…there's a *definite* divide for class lines…you've got the IB (International Baccalaureate) students and the AP (advanced placement) students…who are basically upper class White students" (Interview, 11/27/07, 113-116). For Natasha, class and race were entangled and greatly affected friendships, social positions, and educational opportunities.

Victoria was also familiar with the role of social class in one's opportunities. She recognized the unequal starting line for students saying, "You know, everyone's not gonna start out at the same place" (Interview, 1/5/09, 19). She understood that students did not have the same opportunities and experiences at home in terms of resources (e.g., housing, school supplies, clothes, computer, internet service, etc.) and opportunities (e.g., travel, museums, etc.). This understanding of socioeconomic disparities among students came out of her experiences growing up as well as her observations during internship at Clayburn Elementary.

Maria, unlike the other participants, rarely talked about social class, unless prompted. It took direct questioning to determine her social class and personal experiences with work. Having grown up in an upper-middle class family, Maria did not work during high school or college, except for an occasional babysitting job to earn extra spending money. She did not talk directly about the social class of her students but referred to the parent's inability to provide certain experiences for their children or the possibility of their lack of involvement in their child's education because of job responsibilities. Such a position seemed to reflect a reliance on stereotypes to understand

the experiences of her students living in poverty rather than actual knowledge gained through conversation or experience.

While social class was not a major part of Maria's talk, race and ethnicity were very central to her sociocultural consciousness. Maria developed extensive relationships with people of various races or ethnicities when she entered college. Her dialogue stressed the importance of being willing to see things from other's perspective. Maria's friendships with racially diverse people helped her see how race was socially constructed in the United States and the ways in which racism operated on both individual and institutional levels. For example, she recognized that her Hispanic students represented a number of countries and cultures, and it bothered her greatly when others assumed they were all Mexican. During seminar she told teammates, "If you want to be culturally responsive, start with yourself" (Seminar, 9/8/08). This attitude was true of Maria throughout the study as she herself worked to learn more about different cultures and validate the world views of those who were culturally different.

Teachers with sociocultural consciousness not only recognize multiple world views, they are accepting and affirming of the cultural background of their students. They do not operate from a deficit paradigm trying to fix or change students. They also work to help their students recognize multiple perspectives and existing inequalities in society. Karissa was especially sensitive to a deficit view of the students at Clayburn Elementary held by some of her peers. As discussed in a later section, Karissa viewed the students' living situations in a positive light and did not hold this deficit view of her students.

Victoria was also aware of how some peers viewed the students at Clayburn Elementary in terms of social class. Her life history gave her insight into some of her students' experiences of living in poverty. Victoria's life experiences also led her to recognize there are many world views and that each is equally valid. She saw the importance of exposing children to such multiple perspectives and spoke of expanding the given curriculum to include contributions of diverse cultures and pointing out inequalities in society to students.

Natasha was affirming of the world views and cultural background of others. Having traveled outside of the United States, Natasha had come to see that not everyone has the same world view. For example, she was able to critically examine American's attitudes toward language.

> The fact that so many Americans travel to other countries and the first thing they do is ask, "Do you speak English?" That's kind of being contradictory, you are telling people that are coming to your country, learn English but yet you go to another country and you're asking if *they* know English. (Interview, 11/27/07, 408-411)

Natasha had great respect for immigrants willing to move here not knowing any English. She refused to see them as ignorant or lazy but rather emphasized the strength it took. This attitude carried into her work with her students at Clayburn where students came from different racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. Natasha said, "If you expect your-- all of your kids to come in on the complete even slate, it's *not* going to happen" (Interview, 1/9/09, 361-362). This is also an example of cultural competence which is the second characteristic of being a culturally responsive teacher.

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence involves an understanding of the complexity of culture and seeing its role in education. Participants displaying cultural competence came to see culture as much more than simply diversity. They took initiative to learn about the culture of their students, their learning styles, and build bridges between home and school. Culture was understood as a strength rather than a weakness or obstacle to learning. It was used as a way to connect new material to existing knowledge.

Talking with Maria, one day at Clayburn Elementary, she commented, "these kids didn't even know what the beach was. They'd never been to one." (Maria, Personal Communication, 4/12/08). She realized that her experiences growing up with a summer house at Cape Cod were very different from her students who had never seen the ocean in person or, for most, not even on video or television. Later, during a story about holidays, she said, "I don't make any assumptions anymore" (Interview, 12/29/08, 227). She realized that she could not assume that everyone celebrates the same holidays as she did and that even if they did, they might not celebrate them in the same way. This realization was a moment of growth in cultural competence for Maria, helping her see the need to be knowledgeable about her students' experiences and cultural traditions related to holidays rather than make assumptions that everyone celebrated like her.

Karissa was attracted to Asian culture and learning languages. She consciously chose Clayburn Elementary for internship because of the diversity and her knowledge of the area, having grown up nearby. During the study, she decided to learn Korean in hopes of attending a summer program which included a visit to Korea. She spent her Saturdays

learning Korean at a local church. Karissa's interests remained in gaining cultural competence in Asian cultures more so than Hispanic culture which was the predominant population at Clayburn Elementary and the majority of her students during internship. She did, however, have a strong desire to learn Spanish which was linked to her love of languages.

Natasha's cultural competence began early during her elementary years attending a Spanish dual-immersion magnet school. There she developed a love of language and Hispanic culture and a desire to learn more. She studied Spanish throughout school and traveled to Latin American countries and Spain. This competence translated into a deep understanding of her students and an ability to see strength in the cultural capital they brought to school rather than an obstacle to learning. For example, she shared her frustration with others who spoke louder to ESL students just because they did not understand English. She saw them as "even smarter…because they are learning two languages" (Interview, 8/11/08, 289-290). For Natasha being a teacher of culturally and linguistically diverse students meant "that you *never* stop learning, and you also can never stop asking questions; you have to be comfortable with asking questions because you're never going to know everything" (Interview, 1/9/09, 162-164).

Victoria understood the importance of knowing her students *and* their parents early in the study. She explained,

> I just feel like the teachers have to work so closely with the parents. That you have to know what they're going through and what their struggles are to be able to fully understand how you can help them or what you can do. Like if you know that they're working two jobs there's certain times that you can't call them or that you know that you're not going to be able to get in touch, or they're not going to

be able to come to school and so then you have to devise a different plan or you know do something differently. I just think the more prepared you are and the more like background knowledge you have the better you'll be when stuff comes up. (Interview, 8/13/08, 761-768)

Victoria spoke several times about the importance of involving parents and working with them. She saw it as the teacher's role to reach out to parents, assist them, and get to know them.

Cultural competence also involves understanding how curriculum and educational materials work to validate dominant world views and the cultural knowledge of oppressed groups is underrepresented in the curriculum. This type of knowledge was not easily seen in all of the participants teaching but very evident in Victoria's. She also had the highest level of sociocultural competence, perhaps suggesting a connection between sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence.

Victoria told the most stories involving the need to make curriculum culturally relevant to students. She said:

I think especially here in America, we're so focused on like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, the Declaration of Independence, you know stuff like that, like how America began. But what about heroes for the Hispanic children? ...they might not be able to identify with George Washington. I can't identify with George Washington. (Interview, 8/28/08, 461-465)

I think everybody has to have someone to look up to and especially someone from their own culture, someone that they feel like they can relate to I guess. And not just the old dead White men that people you know push as your hero or who you should look up to. Yeah these are important people in history but can *you* relate to [them]? ...There's someone for everybody to understand and to be like oh well if-- I guess kind of like the light bulb, if *they* can do that then so can I kind of thing where it's…someone to look up to besides whoever the curriculum tells you to teach about. (Interview, 1/5/09, 471-480)

Victoria was committed to exposing her students to diverse perspectives, not limited to just the cultural backgrounds represented in the classroom. She felt her students needed to examine events and issues from all perspectives to help them see the similarities rather than just the differences, "if you strip away everything else, we're all human beings and we all have feelings" (Interview, 4/6/09, 298-299).

Constructivist Teaching

Based in Piaget and Vygotsky's understandings of learning that students use prior knowledge and beliefs to make sense of new experiences, constructivist views of learning suggest that "learning is a process by which students generate meaning in response to new ideas and experiences they encounter at school" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b, p. 25). This means that the personal and cultural knowledge that students come to school with is used to make meaning out of the new information presented. The participants in the study came to see that their students did not come to school with the same experiences because of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Constructivist teaching was a central component of the elementary education methods courses that the participants took during their teacher education program. The use of collaborative work and activities to promote critical thinking and problem solving skills was stressed and often demonstrated in these courses. Preservice teachers participated in activities and learning that was student centered and had them generating the knowledge.

None of the participants directly called their style of teaching constructivist but all illustrated components of constructivism through their lessons and beliefs about teaching and learning. Karissa rarely talked about teaching or lesson planning but did implement

110

small group work and the use of hands on manipulatives with students. In all

observations, however, she tended to have teacher directed lessons where she controlled

the actions of the students rather than let them construct knowledge through experience

or activities. Unlike Karissa, Maria talked more often about teaching and lesson planning

during interviews and conversations. She felt her lessons were "student directed. Like I

want them to try to figure out things for themselves" (Interview, 12/29/08, 365-366). She

was "ok with [her] class looking crazy if that means that they're going to learn better"

(Interview, 12/29/08, 384-385). For her, constructivist teaching involved hands on

activities which engaged students in action, movement, and critical thinking but she did

not seem to understand the importance of students constructing knowledge for

themselves as evident in her explanation of an activity the fifth-grade class had done.

> M: They were doing a layout of the school...they were trying to figure out how the school looks and stuff, like placing the buildings and all in [their drawing]…I mean the kids were [pause] not, well they were figuring it out but it was more like an exploratory part of figuring it out and then later they (the teachers) were going to give them scales and stuff...like I think we did, putting it to scale.

> C: Like the mapping activity we did in social studies methods?

> M: Yeah, 'cause I mean all of them were completely different. I was like *this* is a trailer? [chuckles] That trailer is as big as you know the entire red pod. They just weren't making the connection but then--

> C: That's part of the learning.

> M: Yeah, that's part of it but it all takes time. They took how ever long to do that, to do it without a scale and then [pause] you know it wasn't even *right*!

Maria did not see the value in having the children construct maps of the school on their own and then a second time with direction on how to make their drawings to scale, despite having done nearly the same activity in social studies methods class the previous semester. Although constructivism was part of Maria's discourse about teaching and planning, it was not as explicit in her teaching.

Natasha identified Dr. Fire's method of teaching, which is very constructivist in nature, as a very positive influence on the way she wanted to teach.

> She doesn't force her ideas on us…she gives you the ideas and the topics and the things that need to happen then lets us build off of them. And not just tossing us all the information but it's also helping us grow as a person and a teacher. (Interview, 8/11/08, 437-440)

It was evident during observations that Natasha tried to incorporate this strategy into her teaching as well as her discourse. She often had students working in partners or groups, involved in hands on activities, and using manipulatives. During science lessons, Natasha used identity building language (e.g., that's what scientists do, in your scientific drawings, what do scientists do) that encouraged the students to take on the role of scientists in their work. Students were never passive recipients of Natasha's knowledge but rather co-constructors of knowledge through hands on activities and group discussions.

Likewise, Victoria did not see herself as the keeper of knowledge but rather a co-learner with her students. "I think teaching *is* learning. You can't always be the teacher; you *have* to be the learner because if not then you're not doing your job right" (Interview, 1/5/09, 399-400). Because Victoria did not feel like the holder of knowledge, she was not

bothered when students corrected her or asked her something she did not know. She actually felt it empowered her students and was never threatened by such occurrences. Victoria spent many hours learning things herself and finding the right video or website to use in lessons. She said, "just because I was taught one way doesn't mean that's the best way to reach [students] so I guess I'm constantly trying to revamp, you know, what I learned" (Interview, 4/6/09, 136-139). There were many examples from interviews and observations of Victoria making lessons hands-on and student-centered, from her math fraction lesson using candy bars and 3-D geometric lesson using marshmallows and toothpicks, to her writing lesson involving the making of Rice Crispy treats.

The data suggested that participants took from methods courses an understanding of the need for hands on experiences and student centered learning but to different degrees. The existence of constructivist teaching methods alone does not imply culturally responsive teaching; however, when coupled with the other characteristics it is evidence of a teacher who is responsive to the needs of students. For example, during a math lesson on estimating measurements, Natasha used both her cultural competence involving her knowledge of Spanish and constructivist strategies. She first demonstrated parts of the body that represented different measurements (e.g., knuckle=inch, hand to elbow=foot, and arms extended to each side=yard). The students then moved around the room using parts of their body to estimate the measurement of assigned items. Later, when students were taking wild guesses as to how many centimeters are in a meter; Natasha asked them to consider the Spanish word *ciento* (one hundred). The students instantly connected centi with ciento and came to an understanding that there are 100

centimeters in a meter that was concretely connected to their first language. Even though this instance might seem like a simple example, it is indicative of an attitude and natural occurrence in both Natasha and Victoria's teaching.

High Expectations for Students

Having high expectations for students comes from a belief that all students can learn and that academic success is "non-negotiable" (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teachers make learning tasks relevant, meaningful, and challenging to students. They create a learning community where risks can be taken without fear of failure or ridicule. This type of teaching also demands that students have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate their knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Culturally responsive teachers make goals for learning high but also provide the scaffolding for students to develop the skills necessary to meet those goals (Ladson-Billings, 1994). This scaffolding of lessons can be both within planned activities as well as what Duffy (2002) calls thoughtfully adaptive teaching.

Maria and Victoria both talked about instances where they needed to adapt their lesson to what the students needed at the time. Victoria, in particular, talked about the importance of "being very explicit and clear [with diverse students] so there is no grey area where they don't understand or they don't know what you're trying to get them to do" (Interview, 1/5/09, 165-167). Neither Karissa nor Natasha directly addressed the topic of scaffolding learning in interviews or observations.

Natasha did hold high expectations for her students, however, and talked about the importance of setting high expectations early in the year and building community to

114

support them. She also shared a story of a teammate whose expectations were lower for the ESL students because of the language barrier. Natasha insisted that "you're selling them short" when you let them get by without learning something or doing the correct thing because of a perceived language barrier. Interestingly, in observations Natasha *did* lower expectations for certain students (e.g., drawings in science journal not reflecting what was seen in the activity, a misuse of multiplication manipulatives left uncorrected, and telling a student to skip certain problems on a math quiz). The cooperating teacher was observed lowering her expectations for the work of the same children making it difficult to determine whether Natasha held lower expectations for these children or was following the lead of her cooperating teacher.

Karissa never talked about having high expectations for her students. She felt most comfortable with the lower grade levels, perhaps because she knew the content she was assigned to teach better or because she herself enjoyed "playing with the kids and being on their level" (Interview, 8/22/08, 112-113). She struggled to move past her notions of young students engaged in "fun" and easy activities. She explained,

> I really like first graders for their energy and like you can do [pause] simple, fun stuff with them. Like they could spend all day painting a pumpkin and be completely content. But then at the same time, I think if I were teaching fourth grade or fifth grade, I could do like [pause] deeper stuff I guess. So I'm kind of torn between do I want to stay here and have fun and get the hugs or do I want to go to the upper grades and be able to do these deeper projects because I have like deeper ideas in my head… [but] I'm like wait I can't do that with first graders… the content's not at their level. (Interview, 1/14/09, 233-240)

Karissa never elaborated on what "deeper stuff" she would do with older students. She seemed to lower expectations for her first graders in her planning, selection of activities,

and teaching methods as evident in her more teacher-directed approach and the lack of student-centered conversations about their learning. It was difficult to determine, however, if this was a result of the teaching modeled by her cooperating teacher or Karissa's own expectations for first graders.

Part of Maria, Natasha, and Victoria's expectations for their students also went beyond academics to include the importance of students developing as individuals; becoming good citizens who are respectful and caring. All three shared stories, throughout the study, about students being more than simply a grade or score on the state standardized tests. While her expectations were high, Victoria expressed a sense of reality the longer she worked with students. "You can expect some things out of some children and some just will need more practice and more guidance to get to that same point, but it's possible" (Interview, 1/5/09, 289-291). She came to see that some students needed more scaffolded learning but remained committed to her belief that they could succeed.

An Ethic of Care

Culturally responsive teachers have an affirming attitude toward all students (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). They validate students' cultural frames of reference thus empowering the students, they are patient with students and persistent in their teaching, and they genuinely care about the whole child. Having a relationship with students that extends past the walls of the classroom further expresses an ethic of care.

All of the participants in the study demonstrated an ethic of care throughout the study evidenced in their teaching and interviews. Early in the study Karissa talked about

116

her students in descriptive and detached ways (e.g., I like the kids, there are 15 kids 4

Black students and the rest Hispanic, and we keep losing students). By the end of the

study she had her "favorites" who all spoke Spanish and developed a relationship

centered on trying to help her learn Spanish. Karissa said, "I think it's kind of impossible

to have like the same level of relationship with all of the kids" (Interview, 4/15/09, 70-

71). During observations the care Karissa had for her students was much more evident

than in her talk. She never hesitated to touch a shoulder, get a hug, or offer a smile.

Maria was committed to providing the best opportunities for her students to learn

and grow. "I take everything back to doing what's best for your kids" (Interview,

12/29/08, 156-157). This was echoed throughout the study in her stories and actions

during internship. In her final interview, Maria explained,

> I don't think you can be a teacher without being compassionate, because then I
> don't think you're doing it for the right reasons. If it's not for you're kids then what
> is it for? For getting to know them on an individual basis, like individually and
> wanting to know about them and their lives. (Interview, 4/1/09, 496-499)

Maria was very conscious of how her students were feeling and remembered the first

time she made somebody cry by enforcing a rule during a test, "I was like, 'Oh my god.'

It was terrible, ripped my heart out" (Interview, 4/1/09, 613). Early in the study, Maria

was extremely frustrated by the way a student was treated. According to Maria, he came

to school on two separate occasions with small burn marks on his body. She felt the

teachers, who were often frustrated with this boy's behavior in class, brushed off the

incident and made the excuse that the child often lied. Maria and a teammate insisted that

it be dealt with. Maria was concerned about the welfare of the student and maintained

that "him lying or being a difficult student has nothing to do with him having physical burns on his hand and forehead multiple times" (Interview, 7/12/08, 625-627). This was a difficult situation as she was a first semester intern with no experience in schools; there was a power issue but Maria's care for the child convinced her to speak up. Although Maria was never fully satisfied with how the administration and cooperating teacher handled the situation the incident was reported through proper channels and investigated.

Natasha struggled with the line between friend and teacher. Her genuine care for students made this common struggle among preservice and beginning teachers all the more difficult. Speaking about her relationship with her students she said:

> I ride that line between friendship and teacher, which can be dangerous…but I really want my students to know that *they're* respected…I'm here to teach you things but I'm also here *for* you and I would hope that I would be a big support for my students. (Interview, 1/9/09, 396-376)
>
> I truly and fully care for each one of my students and their well-being. (Interview 4/20/09, 160-161)
>
> If students know that you're fully there for them, no matter what, they're going to succeed…I just want to be a very comfortable, open, respectful [teacher]. You *have* to be respectful of your students. (Interview, 4/20/09, 174-179)

Natasha enacted this philosophy during student teaching. Her strong relationships with students was evident in the cards she received on her last day, the many invitations to come visit, and requests for her address and phone number to maintain relationships.

Victoria told nearly double the number of stories reflecting an ethic of care than the other participants. She saw teaching as much more than simply academics and wanted to:

118

> …try to find ways to connect with [her students]…I want them to see that I'm still interested in them as a person not just as a student or a grade or you know. I want them to see that I care about what they do outside of school as well as in school. (Interview, 8/28/08, 326-329)

This meant that Victoria sat with her students at lunch rather than at the teacher table, played with them during recess, talked to them during down time, and got involved. "They want me to be involved in some way instead of being passive and I'm all about that" (Interview, 1/5/09, 445).

As seen in the data, an ethic of care is evidenced in different ways and to different degrees. Although Karissa struggled to put her ethic of care into words it was evident in her interactions and relationships with students. While Maria was able to clearly articulate her ethic of care, it was not as evident in her daily interactions with students. She was more reserved and struggled to enact a teacher presence within the classroom that reflected her deep care. For Natasha and Victoria this strong sense of commitment to students and genuine care for them as persons and not just grades or scores on a test drove their efforts in both their teaching and their relationships with students. It could be heard in their stories as well as seen in their actions in the classroom.

These first five characteristics were identified *a priori* and data was analyzed with them in mind. The remaining three characteristics, however, emerged from the data during analysis. Being common to all four participants they suggest possible characteristics in preservice teachers that can be identified and used to develop some of the above characteristics and a vision for culturally responsive teaching.

Experiences with Assumptions and Discrimination

Data analysis revealed that all four of the participants experienced either assumptions made by others about them or some type of discrimination against them. (These experiences will be discussed in depth in a later section.) Three of the four (Maria, Natasha, and Victoria) experienced questions about their race or ethnicity because of assumptions people made about their appearance. These experiences were frequent occurrences for Maria and Natasha, creating in them a desire to learn even more about different cultures. Maria grew tired of having to defend or explain her Whiteness to others and spoke a few times by the end of the study of rejecting the notion of race altogether. Natasha embraced her appearance and the assumptions others made as a way to challenge others' thinking.

All participants shared stories at some point of experience with discrimination toward themselves or someone close to them. Maria experienced discrimination based on her religion as well as her physical appearance. In high school she was told, "Catholics go to hell" and she was wrong for being Catholic. Such comments were common early in college as well when Maria sang in Gospel Choir with mostly Baptists and non-denominational Christians. Over the years, Maria defended her race or ethnicity to those who would argue with her and assume she must be adopted because she did not *look* White.

Karissa's experiences with discrimination were tied to her family. She saw her father reject her gay older brother and her mother struggle with guilt that she somehow *caused* him to be gay. She also lived part of her childhood with a sister who was severely

handicapped. Having grown up in a poor, farming family she also saw stark differences related to social class through out school. These were not experiences Karissa elaborated on without much prompting, especially the story of her older sister.

Natasha's job brought her into contact with drug addicts, the homeless, and those in poverty on a regular basis. She told stories about the discrimination and prejudice these patrons experienced as well as the assumptions her friends made about her job and the people she worked with. Natasha's travels to foreign countries exposed her to assumptions that foreigners make of Americans as well as developed in her a more critical view of America.

Victoria experienced discrimination during the fourth grade that greatly affected her racial identity for years. (This story will be shared in a later section.) She shared stories about her younger sister, a lesbian, and Mario, a gay, Hispanic co-worker, who experienced both assumptions and discrimination because of their appearance, mannerisms, and willingness to be openly homosexual. For Victoria, Natasha, and Maria the assumptions people made, especially those based on physical characteristics, and the discrimination they experienced or witnessed were sources of frustration, disbelief, and even anger. They often shared with one another or me their feelings and desires for people to be more accepting and less judgmental.

Having such experiences appears to create both a greater awareness and sensitivity to assumptions and beliefs based on stereotypes. This awareness was directly related to the level of sociocultural consciousness each participant displayed. Their experiences with assumptions and discrimination were also tied closely to their

relationships with people from oppressed or marginalized groups which emerged as a second characteristic.

Experiences Knowing the Other

Karissa summed this characteristic up best when she said, "when you don't have personal experience with it, it's kind of an abstract" (Interview, 4/15/09, 610-611). We had been talking about her older brother being gay and what life was like growing up with a severely handicapped sister. Simply learning about culturally or linguistically diverse people does not translate into an understanding or acceptance of them nor does it develop culturally responsive teacher identities. Often in multicultural courses students are exposed to various diversities (race, ethnicity, class, language, gender, religion) and issues of equity but they remain rooted in their assumptions and beliefs for various reasons (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Cross, 2003; Solomon et al., 2005; Tatum, 1992). When one develops a relationship with someone who is culturally different from them, there is more opportunity to challenge their assumptions and beliefs, create cognitive dissonance, and move to a deeper understanding or even acceptance of others' world views.

Each of the participants in the study had relationships with people from oppressed or marginalized groups. These relationships helped them be open to different perspectives and world views. Karissa, for example, said of her gay brother, "…it feels so weird if he was [gay] and I was completely shut to it. That would be super awkward" (Interview, 4/15/09, 607). She also had friends who are gay, and her best friend was bisexual. Despite these relationships, Karissa still struggled to reconcile her acceptance of friends and moral beliefs explaining that one should love the sinner but not the sin. Karissa's

attraction to Asian cultures and interest in languages led her to develop relationships with racially and ethnically diverse. During seminar Karissa told stories of her friendships with racially and ethnically diverse people. Although she was slow to elaborate on such instances, her stories generally followed comments by others about the importance of being open to people who are racially diverse demonstrating Karissa's desire to be seen as open to diversity.

Maria had an older sister who came out during the study. She struggled to know what to do or say but wanted to support her. Maria also developed close relationships with Black and biracial college students from her participation in the Neo-Black Society. She attributed much of her sociocultural consciousness and great interest in diversity to her participation in this group. Maria was very open to diverse people and despite a very laid back personality seemed to get energized from interacting with others and talking about issues of culture and diversity.

While her sister was out long before the study, Victoria shared stories of seeing Christy experience discrimination because of her homosexuality. Victoria also shared a story of going to a flea market with her mother as a child where an Hispanic man approached her from behind and began brushing her hair. "It really freaked me out 'cause he just stood there staring at me" (Interview, 8/13/08, 542-543). Victoria found herself avoiding Hispanics until she started work at the restaurant with several Hispanic co-workers. Her personal relationships with them moved her past the "phobia of Hispanic people" she had had since seventh grade. Victoria's relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse friends also helped her see the need to incorporate their knowledge

into her future classroom. She saw value in bringing people in to share their stories rather than her trying to teach from an understanding that was limited to reading about something.

Natasha worked at her father's warehouse which was frequented by drug addicts and homeless. She developed close relationships to several people there and tried to see things from their perspective rather than her own. She also babysat for a lesbian couple with two small children during college making her more conscious of the need to embrace all families and not make assumptions about family makeup. The participants' experiences with others led them to be more open and accepting of students who did not look like them, speak like them, or have the same experiences as them.

Self-Reflection

The teacher education program worked to develop reflection skills among preservice teachers, requiring written reflections for major projects and teaching experiences throughout internship and student teaching. Students were also required to reflect on their developing teacher dispositions at the end of each semester in written form. Given this requirement, the participants were guided toward being self-reflective. However, all of the participants demonstrated a self-reflective nature that went beyond the requirements for course work and included an ability to examine their own prejudices and assumptions as well as their own cultural histories.

Maria, in particular, thought very deeply about the issues discussed in seminar and course work. She spoke often with the researcher about culture, religion, race, teaching, and her students aside from formal interviews, seminar, and observations. As

she gained experience in the classroom, she still struggled to embrace a teacher identity and during the break before student teaching actually considered not teaching saying, "It's not fair to my kids if they're gonna *not* be successful because of me...And just because *I* want to be a teacher, it's not fair to *them* if [pause] you know they can't learn because I'm their teacher" (Interview, 4/1/09, 749-751). This demonstrated both her ability to reflect on herself as a teacher as well as her ethic of care for her students. Her deepening sociocultural consciousness was a result of her ability to reflect on her experiences in college, from the relationships she formed through Neo-Black Society to her internship at Clayburn Elementary.

Of all the participants, Victoria most clearly articulated her self-reflection through the stories she told in interviews and seminar and written reflections on her teaching dispositions at the end of each semester. She shared that during a workshop on culture at Clayburn Elementary, her initial response to the statement, "I don't see color, I see children" was to agree. Later after talking with colleagues at Clayburn, reading for seminar, and reflecting on it she said, "We're actually doing our kids a disservice by ignoring their cultures and individual identities" (Seminar, 9/29/08). Throughout the study Victoria shared different assumptions that she had made about students and how she used these experiences to reflect on how she would think and act differently in the future. One involved a new student from Mexico who did not speak English. She said, "He *wants* to learn…he *really* wants to be involved and he really wants to do this" (Interview, 8/28/08, 383-384). She realized that her assumption had been that all ESL

students would be shy and reserved, not wanting to be involved. Victoria was committed to self-reflection in her teaching saying,

> Each and every day, I take time to think about what I did, how I did it, and who it affected…The idea of reflecting on your own behavior may intimidate some, but I feel as though without it you can not grow as a professional educator. (Written Reflection on Dispositions, Fall, 2007)

Victoria recognized the importance of thoughtfully thinking about her role as teacher, her diverse students, and the work they did together.

Natasha's reflections tended to center on her teacher identities and growth as both a person and professional over the two years. During seminar she said, "The way we learn to be more culturally responsive is to do things and then reflect on them" (Seminar, 9/15/08). Natasha exhibited a strong sense of confidence in her ability to be a culturally responsive teacher. When sharing stories from the classroom, Natasha reflected on her cooperating teachers' actions with respect but also a slight sense of conceit in that she might have handled certain situations differently. During such stories, Natasha's strong opinions about what culturally responsive teaching should look like came across clearly.

While it was slightly harder to see evidence of Karissa's ability to be self-reflective, it was present in her stories about growing up poor and learning to see her place on the socioeconomic ladder in school. "I'm down here; we get free lunch and these people up here get Mini-Coopers [for their birthday]" (Interview, 11/30/07, 140-141). Karissa was also quite honest in her written reflections concerning her teacher dispositions. While reflecting on her disposition of "affirming diversity" after student teaching, Karissa wrote,

126

There were times this school year when somewhat sensitive subjects about diversity came up between two or three children and I found myself lacking the skills to deal with the situation myself and instead had to take the children to Mrs. Sampson (the cooperating teacher) to let her talk to them and sort things out. I want to develop my own ways of working through these situations but also for working with the whole class to cover topics that deal with diversity so that they all can be open and culturally accepting in the future. (Written Reflection on Dispositions, Spring, 2009)

Karissa was able to express ways of being culturally responsive through her written and oral reflections much more concretely than in her actions within the classroom. This inconsistency between words and actions demonstrates the difficult process it is to become a culturally responsive teacher as well as the importance of creating a vision for being culturally responsive during student teaching in hopes that it will become part of practice later.

These eight characteristics were manifested at different levels for each participant but they were none the less present in each. The degree to which each characteristic factored into the participants' understanding of culturally responsive teaching cannot be determined but each characteristic did play into the ways in which culturally responsive teaching became part of their discourse, included in their planning and teaching, and ultimately part of who they saw themselves to be as teachers.

Factors Influencing Understandings of Culturally Responsive Teaching

The first research question had two sub-questions which guided data collection and analysis. The first looking for factors, beliefs, and experiences that influenced their understandings and the second examining the influence of their experience at Clayburn Elementary, a culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school. To identify these

127

factors, data was coded during an initial viewing of interview transcripts, observation

notes, and seminar notes. They were later recorded in an analysis matrix identifying

categories and issue such as family, religion, schooling, race/ethnicity, social class, and

foreign language/travel. A matrix for each participant was also developed tracing how

their understandings and beliefs changed over time. Through analysis of the matrices,

patterns emerged showing similarities in the experiences of the participants. The factors

that appeared to influence the understandings of culturally responsive teaching among the

participants in this study fell into two categories. First, the beliefs, experiences, and

knowledge they came to teacher education with including their constructions of race and

ethnicity, understandings of social class, experiences with assumptions and

discrimination, and experiences with people from marginalized groups. Second, the

experiences within teacher education and during their internship at Clayburn Elementary

that introduced them to the language of culturally responsive teaching; offered instances

to observe it in classrooms; and gave them opportunities to discuss, plan for, and evaluate

its use.

What They Came to Teacher Education With

This section addresses the first sub-question which examines the factors, beliefs,

and experiences that influenced the preservice teachers' understanding of culturally

responsive teaching. In examining the initial interviews, which focused on life histories

and their beliefs about diversity, I found the participants shared certain beliefs and

experiences as they entered the teacher education program that greatly influenced their

openness to issues of diversity as well as their understandings of culturally responsive

teaching. The following three categories were identified from initial interviews and triangulated in future conversations and interviews. They are constructions of race and ethnicity; understandings of social class; and experiences with assumptions, discrimination and knowing the other.

Constructions of race and ethnicity: "They tell me I'm not White." During the pilot study in the fall of 2007, all of the participants self-identified as White except Victoria who considers herself mixed or biracial. By the end of the study it was determined that three of the participants could be classified as biracial having White and American Indian ethnic backgrounds. Because of the social construction of race in America and a desire to categorize people into neat, tidy groups, people often assume to know one's race simply by looking at them. Using this type of visual method of racial identification, one might assume that Karissa was White based on her physical appearance. Of all the participants, she was the only one who might easily be classified, since the other three have physical appearances that make it difficult to categorize them. Race and ethnicity became frequent topics of conversation for all but Karissa, who spoke of race only when prompted or in response to questions or comments by teammates in seminar.

Karissa self-identified as White of European descent. By the end of the study Karissa shared that she is actually part Native American, having great grandparents on both sides who are full-blooded, "but it's not technically on [her] birth certificate" (Interview, 4/15/09, 587) making race more of a static category than a socially

constructed and changing identity for her. Thus, in talking about her students, their race or ethnicity was just another descriptor like cute, wonderful, or self-sufficient.

Karissa admitted to having a fascination with Asian cultures and languages which was evident in her second major in Asian Studies, being fairly proficient in reading and speaking Japanese, and a desire to learn Korean on her own. She spent her Saturday mornings during the spring of 2009 at a local Korean Church in Korean class with children from the community whose parents insisted they attend and learn the language. Her fascination seemed rooted in an attraction to the exotic other and she spoke about the "Oriental wonders," ninjas, and samurais versus the "traditional" Western countries which seemed boring to her. She had several Asian boyfriends over the years and had several Asian friends at the time of the study.

Karissa insisted she looked beyond a person's race and was more interested in who they were and if they were cool to hang out with. Perhaps this accounted for her confession, "Some people say it's a bad way to put it, like I don't see color" (Interview, 11/30/07, 254-255). Pennington (2007) explains that "simply seeing or noticing race border[s] on impoliteness" for some White women (p. 46). This notion of colorblindness was demonstrated in the way Karissa spoke about her students, only identifying their race or ethnicity when specifically asked.

Karissa's construction of race was complicated. She saw race as a neutral racial category (Marx & Pennington, 2003) rather than socially constructed cultural identities that can shape one's world views, beliefs, assumptions, and ways of interacting with others. In some ways she followed Bergerson's (2003) argument that whiteness "is the

130

ability to *not* be aware of one's race" (p. 53). As McIntosh (1988) argues, the dominance of whiteness and any privileges associated with it are meant to go unnoticed by White Americans. Karissa did see color when pushed but for her, race did not carry the dominance and privileges discussed in the literature. For Karissa, these things were tied to social class more than race because of her background which is discussed in the next section. Despite access to information to the contrary, Karissa did not seem to move past a static view of race as a neutral racial category during her preservice education.

The construction of race for the other participants was a more central theme in their understanding of diversity and culturally responsive teaching and a topic of conversation throughout the study. The other three participants all experienced questions about their race or ethnicity on a regular basis because of their appearance. People often assumed Victoria was part African American, and it was often assumed that Natasha was Hispanic, which was compounded by the fact that she is fluent in Spanish.

Maria had the most experiences with such assumptions, telling several stories of being questioned about her race. "They tell me I'm not White, and I'm like I think I would know if I was White or not" (Interview, 11/20/07, 349-350). People have assumed that Maria was part African American, Asian, Hawaiian, Eskimo, Native American, or Hispanic. She has had to "prove it to people" by showing family pictures, and she actually had one person ask if her mother cheated on her father! Maria's theory about why people of color often challenge her Whiteness comes out of her experiences within the Neo-Black Society (NBS) and friendships that have developed from participation in this group. Maria tells of a conversation during a fall NBS retreat, where her Black

friends were talking about "those White people," and she wanted to say "What about me? I'm White." She explained that their "challenge [of] me being White has to do with being comfortable with me. If they don't think I'm White, they don't classify me as White, then they are allowed to be more comfortable" (Interview, 11/29/07, 442-444).

Maria's involvement with NBS and close relationships with her Black friends gave her a unique position to examine and understand race. She believes:

> Color is part of your personal identity but not necessarily your cultural identity… Victoria and I have similar skin tone but it has nothing to do with our culture…me and my sisters are all the same culture but I'm clearly a lot *darker* than them…your culture is part of who you are but that's not everything…color is not culture. (Seminar, 9/29/08)

> People are missing out on getting to know some great people because of this…race barrier…There is a major racial barrier, whether we want to recognize it or not (Interview, 11/27/07, 453, 457-458)

> There still is a lot of racism in this world and I feel like it is harder to be Black than it is to be White in the world today even though we've come so far. (Interview, 11/27/07, 489-491)

> Even as closely connected to them (her Black friends) as I *am*, still I'm not them, I'm not in their situation (Interview, 12/29/08)

When asked by the faculty advisor of NBS to run for President, Maria was very uncomfortable because she felt it was not her place. "We are the Neo-*Black* Society and you have a White person in charge of the Neo-Black Society… it's not my place like because I'm not Black…I don't deal with being Black on a daily basis" (Interview, 11/27/07, 484-488).

Even though Maria felt "very naïve to how much racism goes on" (Interview, 11/29/07, 496), her experiences prior to teacher education created an awareness of race

being much more than a neutral racial category. By the second year in the program while talking about race during seminar, Maria even said, "I hate the word race! I'm not going to use it anymore. I don't like categories" (Seminar, 9/3/08). She displayed a fairly high level of sociocultural consciousness on entry to the program that continued to deepen throughout. She actively sought information about other cultures (e.g. cultural project for seminar on religions, conversations with students, reading non-required books) and was open to hearing other points of view. This was something she tried to encourage in others as well,

> I like to think I influence people sometimes with the way I think and just trying to open their mind. You don't need to take my views completely 'cause I wouldn't want you to…but I *do* want you to be a little more open minded about things, at least take what I have to say into consideration. (Interview, 12/29/08, 150-154)

By the end of the study, Maria had strong opinions about race and the privileges that come with being White and was often frustrated that others could not see things like her.

While Maria challenged friends often on issues of race, she was less likely to challenge her peers in teacher education. She told of an instance where several team members were waiting for a professional development session to begin at Clayburn Elementary. A team member, Sandy, was telling them about her day. Since the school was testing ESL students for English proficiency that week she said it was just her and *her three little Black boys* in the classroom all day. Maria explained that while she *might* refer to her closest Black friends as *Black* if they were hanging out, she would never say that in reference to one of her students. Sandy then shared that in the afternoon one of the boys asked, "Why is it just us Black kids in here?" and Sandy said, "'cause you're not

133

Mexican, it's just those Mexican kids who are testing." This caused Natasha, who was also at the table, to whisper, "Did she just say that? They're Hispanic!" Maria explained that she just sat there in shock. This was a very disappointing moment for Maria. It made her extremely angry and she wondered how someone who had been at Clayburn Elementary for two years and in Dr. Fire's seminar could still make a comment like that and actually think they are *all* from Mexico. Neither, Maria nor Natasha confronted Sandy about her comment but later called Dr. Fire to share the experience and their frustration.

Marie continued to tell about a situation where some of her close friends were hanging out talking about school and teaching. Maria said something about her students and a close friend, a Black male, made a comment about not realizing she taught Mexican children. She told him they were not all from Mexico but he argued with her that it didn't really matter where they came from: "If they speak Spanish, they're Mexican." She tried to show him the flaw in his thinking, making the case that not all Blacks look alike but people often say, "You all look alike" as well as telling him about her students and the teachers from other countries who speak Spanish. In the end, she asked him to leave and did not talk to him for several weeks. So, in a similar situation, Maria was able to confront a close friend but not a colleague on her team. While having high sociocultural consciousness and an anti-racist attitude, Maria struggled with anti-racist actions among her colleagues. Rather she observed things, analyzed them, felt angry about them, and shared her frustration with those she believed to have similar beliefs (e.g., Dr. Fire, Natasha, Victoria, myself).

Natasha and Maria both talked about a self-imposed responsibility to know more about different cultures and be open to diversity (both indicators of cultural competence) because of the assumptions that people made about their race or ethnicity. "Because of the way I look, I feel like I need to know about different cultures because when they look at me…who knows what they think" (Maria Interview, 11/29/07, 364-365). Maria also felt she needed to learn Spanish because "I feel bad sometimes when people think I'm Hispanic…I don't feel bad that I'm *not* Hispanic…they expect me to know how to speak Spanish and make that connection with me, and then I'm like no, like no connection" (Interview, 11/29/07, 408-411). Natasha's desire to learn about different cultures comes not only from people's questions about her race or ethnicity but from her experiences in a Spanish dual-immersion program during elementary school. Since that time she has always been interested and open to learning about different cultures. Natasha also felt obligated to share this cultural diversity knowledge with her students, "I *want my* classroom to be culturally aware, that's the last thing I want is ignorance" (Interview, 11/27/07, 578-579).

For Natasha, race and ethnicity intersected with language as well. The Spanish dual-immersion program she attended from kindergarten through fifth grade greatly impacted her identity. First, the program opened her to diversity and created an interest in cultural issues (Interview, 11/27/07). She had teachers from Columbia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Mexico who served as role models for her. "[T]he teachers there really molded me into the person I am" (Interview, 11/27/07, 13-14). Second, it brought Spanish into her life. Natasha has studied Spanish throughout her education; was fluent in

speaking, reading, and writing the language; and was committed to incorporating her love of Spanish into her teaching. And finally, Natasha has spent time in Costa Rica and Spain through school programs, learning both the language and the culture first hand. She believed that her role was to broaden her students' perspectives and expose them to diversity to "expand them so they're not so egocentric and stuck in their own" (Interview, 8/11/08, 476).

Natasha saw race as something fluid and more than a neutral category one checks on a survey. At the beginning of the study, she self-identified as White of European descent. She embraced her Native American heritage during the fall of 2008 and actively sought information about it, "I want to learn as much as I can" (Seminar, 11/4/08). By the end of the study when asked to identify her race and ethnicity Natasha said,

> My race and ethnicity is [lengthy pause] I am [pause] huh [smiles and chuckles lightly] see I'm already struggling with it. Ahh, I am Caucasian, Native American. That is my blood line, but [pause] that's not completely who I am so [pause] because of everything. But that is technically my-- I have Dutch-German, Native American blood. That's my race [pause] but I've caught myself-- actually I've always done it but I'm doing it a lot more lately, like checking Caucasian, Native American, sometimes I'll even be like Other 'cause *you* don't know. (Interview, 4/20/09, 532-537)

Natasha's hesitancy in answering demonstrates the reluctance she had in categorizing someone based on race. By the end of the study Natasha began to resist categories of race, much like Maria, choosing instead to look beyond to see the multiple identities that we hold and how they make up who we are. Natasha also shared instances of challenging people on racial assumptions. "I can make people feel uncomfortable about some of the slurs that they say, just by looking at them" (Interview, 4/20/09, 567).

Victoria also had powerful experiences surrounding race and ethnicity. She told of an experience in fourth grade that had a lasting impact on her racial identity.

> V: I'll never forget it. When I was in the fourth grade, we were learning about Indians and things like that and we were in gym class. And I'm not even sure why the guy said anything but he was like "Oh Victoria's gonna scalp us with her tomahawk." You know because I was proud.
>
> C: A kid from your class?
>
> V: Yeah [pause] 'cause I was proud of it and we were talking about it. So I got excited and I brought like um a headdress in and stuff like that, because that was part of me too. And I was excited about it, but then when I went to gym class that day [pause] he was picking on me and it *really,* really hurt my feelings. So then because of that experience it kind of made me tone down my appreciation and passion about that part of my life… As I got older I realized that I tried to [pause] not disassociate myself with it but I wasn't as apt to talk about it. And if someone asked me, because I get that question often I guess because they're *not sure* what race I am… you know, I kind of repressed it because [pause] I knew that people were gonna-- or that I would get picked on. (Interview, 8/13/08, 33-46, 108-109)

Victoria vividly remembered the incident, the boy's full name, and how he looked when they were in class. Victoria's experience was what Helms (1990) describes as the *encounter experience* and Gay (1978) explains as an *ethnic awakening*. Both scholars explain that such experiences create strong reactions and greatly influence developing racial identities. For Victoria, this single event caused years of dissonance between who she knew herself to be and the person she portrayed to others. This dissonance is further illustrated when Victoria said,

> I'm part of the majority because of him (her dad) and I attach myself to some of those things but then I feel like a minority when like the discussion of how America started and how the Indians were killed and enslaved and things like that. And that half of me feels that…pain. (Interview, 8/13/08, 28-30)

137

Victoria's younger sister became involved in their Lumbee heritage as a teenager, even attending powwows, which allowed Victoria to take interest once again and accept this aspect of her identity.

Victoria is very sensitive to stereotyping and discriminatory comments about race and ethnicity. She attended a comedy show on campus with some friends. The audience was predominantly White and the comedian was a White, middle-aged man. His routine started out being stereotypical towards African Americans, and then Middle Easterners, and then American Indians and Victoria just sat there and cried. She said, "I'm so *aware,* so much more aware now of other people and where they're coming from and their cultural differences…before I'd probably been the person that would have laughed" (Interview, 8/13/08, 117-121). She recognized that "he didn't say *anything* derogatory towards White people but he picked on *everybody* else…he just attacked my *entire* race [laughs]…to make people laugh" (Interview, 8/13/08, 129-137).

Victoria worked as a bartender at a local chain restaurant which she credited for her being so open,

> I just meet *so* many people and get in so many in depth conversations about stuff that you just would never think about and then you're like wow, I never thought about that… I'm just open minded, I'm not very close-minded at all like 'cause everybody's different [laughs] so you *can't* be close-minded 'cause then you'll be alone [laughs again]. (Interview, 8/13/08, 372-374, 382-383)

Through her work, she developed close relationships with Hispanics and African Americans. She talked often of her friend, Mario, who waited tables at the restaurant and

sent money home to Guadalajara to support his mother and sister. He was both Hispanic

and openly gay, often making him the target of discrimination at work. Victoria was

troubled by the response patrons had to Mario,

> people just verbally bash him…they don't know him, they've never met him, they
> just see his outward exterior and they base everything off of that…people aren't
> as understanding as they should be and…they don't look beyond that top layer of
> skin. They don't want to know him because he's Hispanic or they don't want to
> know him because he's homosexual…for some… they don't even want him to
> touch their food or their glasses and it really hurts my feelings. (Interview,
> 8/13/08, 623-625, 634-640)

Her experience with Mario led Victoria to have strong feelings about immigration with

respect to ethnicity. She viewed Hispanics coming to the United States as desiring to

make a better life for themselves and their families. She saw them working for below

minimum wage in jobs that "a lot of American people…don't *want*…because they think

they deserve more" (Interview, 8/13/08, 581-582). She explained, "I guess because I'm

personally invested in it…I'm totally sympathetic" to immigrants and their experience

(Interview, 8/13/08, 586-587). This sympathy extended to her students at Clayburn

Elementary as well, many of whom were immigrants or first generation Americans. She

saw first hand some of the discrimination her students faced when a patron at the

restaurant called Clayburn the capital of Mexico and then later a couple told her about

pulling their daughter out of Clayburn Elementary, explaining "I pulled my daughter out

of there and put her in the charter school…[because of the] Mexicans. *She* doesn't

deserve to be in a class like that" (Interview, 8/28/08, 667-670). Such instances left

Victoria frustrated and wondering how people could be so ignorant and unkind.

Victoria did not see race and ethnicity as static categories. Her "idea is [that] nobody is full blooded anything, really we're all mixed" (Interview, 8/13/08, 628-629). This attitude made Victoria not focus on racial or ethnic diversity as a negative thing to be overcome in the classroom but rather as something to celebrate. "We're all so similar but people want to pick out our differences and almost pit you against each other. When in reality we probably worry and think about the same things or enjoy the same things" (Interview, 8/28/08, 592-594). Victoria entered the program with a high degree of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence. Her ethic of care was rooted in her own experiences growing up and friendships through work and deepened through her internship at Clayburn Elementary.

Understandings of social class: "It ultimately affects their learning." Natasha and Maria grew up in upper middle class families while Karissa and Victoria grew up in working class and poor families respectively. For three participants in particular (Karissa, Natasha, and Victoria) their experiences with social class became important factors in how they came to see and interact with their students and their understandings of culturally responsive teaching; for the fourth participant it was less explicit but class definitely factored into her understandings of cultural responsiveness.

Karissa grew up in what she calls "the middle of nowhere" (Interview, 11/30/07, 78), an isolated rural area of North Carolina, just down the road from Clayburn Elementary, the intern site. Her parents were chicken farmers with eight children living in a three bedroom house. Tremendous responsibility was placed on all of the children at an early age. Karissa started working on the farm at age seven, by age thirteen she was in

charge of her own chicken house, and in high school she became the "mini-van driving soccer mom" responsible for driving her siblings to practices and school events. Their farm was near the county line with one side being predominantly White, rural, and agricultural based and the other predominantly White, manufacturing based and with a steadily growing Hispanic population.

Karissa explained her growing awareness of class in the following story:

You don't really notice that stuff when you're younger but [you do] when you start getting older. Having such a big family and living on a farm we fell on the really low end of the economic status so it's not so much that you like-- I guess you just notice that everybody else seems higher so I don't know if it was necessarily because of *where* I lived, but because of *how* I lived. (Interview, 11/30/07, 130-134)

Karissa specifically chose to intern at Clayburn Elementary, a Title 1 school, because she felt she understood the children from that area as well as being attracted to the linguistic diversity.

It was Karissa's experiences with class growing up that led to much frustration with fellow teammates early in the first semester together. The principal of Clayburn Elementary arranged for the team to visit some of the neighborhoods in the community so they could see where the students lived. This visit was done on a school bus with the team, team leader, and principal of the school prior to starting their internship at Clayburn Elementary. During the tour, the bus drove through an apartment complex where some team members near Karissa made comments about the "shanty apartments" and the "terrible neighborhood." Later when they drove through one of two main trailer parks housing Hispanics, some made comments about things looking "run down" and how

141

unsafe the neighborhood must be. Karissa did not understand their comments and felt

adamant that it was *not* an unsafe neighborhood, getting upset with even the memory of

this experience. Karissa realized:

> I get the impression from a lot of [the team] that you know they grew up
> in…upper middle class families so when they see a trailer, like their association,
> based on their experiences growing up, is "Oh they are from a lower economic
> status"…[but] to me to live in that trailer park that we saw, like that would have
> been a great thing. Like I would have loved to live there and they were just like "I
> would never want to live here." (Interview, 11/30/07, 566-568, 577-579)

The dialogue of fellow team members demonstrates a deficit thinking that is deeply

embedded in our society (Webster-Brandon, 2003). Such thinking keeps the blame for

living situations and academic performance on the students, their families, or some

perceived cultural disadvantage. Karissa never exhibited such deficit thinking; instead

she saw her students' living situation as a positive thing. Her position, coming from a

working class farming family isolated in a rural area, kept her from seeing her students'

home life or social class as something to be overcome in the classroom.

Victoria grew up in a rural area of North Carolina as well. Her mother was a high

school graduate and her father went to two years of technical school. Both worked very

hard to provide for the family: "My parents always made sure that there was plenty of

food for everybody" (Interview, 8/13/08, 219). Her father eventually left her mother to

raise four children on her own. Victoria watched her mom come home exhausted and

unable to help her or her siblings with homework. Victoria told of a fieldtrip her class

was taking in sixth grade where students had to pay for half of their entrance ticket to

Busch Gardens. Because her mother had to come up with this cost there was no extra

spending money for the trip. Victoria was allowed to take spending money from a huge

jar of pennies at the house. "I sat there for days it seems and I rolled pennies. I rolled

forty dollars worth of pennies…and I was *so* excited because any other time I'd been on a

fieldtrip, I didn't have spending money" (Interview, 8/13/08, 439-442).

During her reflection on class, Victoria noted that she felt like the poor kid in her

circle of friends. She remembered lunch room conversations about the popular television

shows of the time and having no idea what they were talking about since her family did

not have cable. "What is *that*, MTV? I was so excited when I finally got to see a music

video. I was like *wow* [laughs] I get to watch TV *and* listen to music. How does this

work?" (Interview, 8/13/08, 205-206). Victoria was very purposeful in hanging out or

studying at her friends' houses because she felt ashamed of her house. She also avoided

having her mother pick her up from school because they had an old car. Victoria explains

that "I somehow snuck my way into more of a middle class group" (Interview, 8/13/08,

419).

Despite these experiences, Victoria said:

> I had a really good childhood even though we didn't have everything that I wanted
> and all that *stuff*…I'm *so* glad I grew up like that because I appreciate everything
> so much more. It makes me willing to work harder…the fact that my parents were
> hard workers I know that has framed my work ethic…if I want more I just have to
> work a little harder to get it and it's not going to kill me. (Interview, 8/13/08, 217-
> 233)

Victoria had worked hard to accomplish her goals in life. She dropped out of high school

at 16 to work to support her daughter Kinsley. While working she earned her GED and

made a promise to herself to go back to college once Kinsley started school. Victoria

worked throughout her time at the university and was very proud to graduate with a degree in elementary education. Her accomplishments at times got tied to the notion of meritocracy with Victoria wanting to show students how hard she had worked to accomplish her dreams and serve as a role model for her low SES students. This desire suggested that Victoria got caught up in what Solomon et al. (2005) called the "liberalist notion of individualism and meritocracy" where the argument remains at the individual level rather than structural and systemic.

Victoria felt being in the school system really opened her eyes, and she came to see how social class ultimately affects student learning, citing examples such as lack of or dirty clothes, hygiene issues, lack of school supplies and materials, being tired or hungry. Victoria explained that,

> It is a huge deal that people just kind of refuse to give their attention to. I guess because they're the ones that are on the upper echelon and they refuse to believe that a child and their family's economic status does affect their education. I guess because they're like, "Well, I'm fine and my kids are doing ok and…we're all you know happy and everybody's passing or whatever and graduating." But some of these kids don't even look *towards* graduation because they feel like "what's the point, I'm not going to college"…those are the ones where we gotta get them and give them the hope that just because they live on the other side of town doesn't mean that they can't go to whatever school that their classmates go to. (Interview, 4/19/09, 154-162)

With experience in the school, Victoria was able to see factors affecting students' attitudes toward education and hope for their future. She recognized the need for supporting these students but continued to see their future dependent on individual factors rather than any institutional racism/classism or language biases that might create obstacles for their success.

Natasha grew up in an upper middle class family in the city where the university was located. She attended a Spanish dual-immersion program as part of the city's elementary magnet school program, exemplifying her family's social and cultural capital to negotiate the school system. Her experience was that of attending a school within a school as the immersion program was for select students and housed in an elementary school with a predominantly Black, low SES population. Natasha described it as "its own bubble inside of another bubble" (Interview, 11/2707, 86). Most students attending the immersion program came from higher socioeconomic neighborhoods around the city.

Later in middle school, Natasha's family moved to a more rural area nearby where she saw both racial and class divides in very pronounced ways. She talked about the "Rebel-Pride" t-shirt wearing rednecks and Black factions at school and the tensions between them. When the family returned to the city, Natasha attended one of the premiere high schools in town, known nationally for its International Baccalaureate (IB) program and locally as *the* high school to attend. Natasha recognized the institutional discrimination present within her high school, noting that the Black students were in classes like child development while the upper class White students were in honors classes. She went on to explain the seating arrangements for lunch, with White upper class students bringing their lunch and sitting outside in the "grove area" while the Black lower class students bought lunch inside at the cafeteria. Even in the winter when it was cold outside, upper class students would "sit in the hallway of the main building and they *did not* go into the cafeteria and would blame it on the amount of seats in the cafeteria [pause], but there were plenty of seats in the cafeteria" (Interview, 11/27/07, 171-175).

For Natasha social class intersected with race. She recognized the ways class and race worked to advantage Whites and disadvantage people of color in the United States. This high level of sociocultural consciousness was present on her entry to the program and deepened throughout.

This consciousness also led to Natasha's belief that people live in a "bubble" and have a difficult time seeing into other people's bubble. Because of her experiences she said, "I realize that I have been lucky enough to kind of be able to see things and have that other perspective" (Interview, 1/9/09, 410-411). This awareness led Natasha to work hard at popping other peoples' bubbles, from her family to her students.

> My family is very southern, conservative, Republican…at every family gathering they're always expecting [me] to push buttons…and that's what I do…just being able to open minds or at least kind of expand them so they're not egocentric and stuck in their own [bubble]. (Interview, 8/11/08, 469-476)

> The last thing I want is ignorance [in my students]. I want them to see that there are other things out there other than their own. And they don't have to embrace it but at least accept the fact and know about it. (Interview, 11/27/07, 578-581)

This commitment to moving people beyond their own perspectives continued to deepen throughout her two years in the program.

Another experience that greatly affected Natasha's understanding of class was working at her father's business. Her father owned a battery warehouse and recycling center near campus in a neighborhood with a reputation for being rough. It was an area that was frequented by the homeless and poor because of its proximity to the Salvation Army headquarters for the city and a large non-denominational church housing a food bank and shelter. Natasha grew up helping there and had come to love the employees and

those who came in. She told the story of Bill, an ex-crack head who had missing teeth and dreadlocks and dated a prostitute. He worked with her at the recycling center and took great interest in her progress in school much like a family member might. She attributed her ability to see things from the perspective of her co-workers and the patrons and caring about them like family to "just being able to be around them on a daily basis and just talk[ing] to them, and jok[ing] around with them, and getting to know them" (Interview, 11/27/07, 240-241). She had experienced a sense of condemnation from friends who dropped her off at work and wondered how she dealt with all the alcoholics, crack heads, and homeless people coming in off the streets.

Being from a higher social class can shelter one from interacting with the homeless or the poor. This separation leads to misunderstandings, assumptions, and even fear. Teachers, who typically come from middle class or higher backgrounds, often make assumptions about students coming from lower SES families, as exemplified by the team's comments while visiting neighborhoods in Clayburn. Natasha's experiences at her father's business gave her opportunities to examine her own assumptions and move past any fear she might have had. She did not enter the program seeing the homeless or the poor through a deficit lens but rather in her words, looked for the good in the person beneath the exterior. It was not determined whether Natasha saw this "exterior" as something deeper, like a manifestation of social values that allow people to be homeless; nor whether she connected the exterior of the homeless to the experience of having black or brown skin. Natasha did strive to look beyond the exterior with regard to social class, race and ethnicity, and other cultural markings. Seeing beyond one's exterior carried into

her work with students at Clayburn Elementary, many who came from poor family situations.

Maria grew up in a predominantly White, upper middle class suburb of the second largest city in North Carolina. Her parents paid for Maria and her older sister's education, housing, and living expenses throughout college. Maria had occasional babysitting jobs throughout high school and college to make extra spending money but did not have to earn money to help with her educational expenses. Maria's discourse on class was limited early in the program and usually came as a result of direct questions.

She did, however, speak often about "culture" and race throughout the two years. For Maria culture was almost synonymous with race or ethnicity. When asked to describe what she meant by "diversity" Maria said, "diversity means [pause] different socioeconomic backgrounds, race, [pause] sexual preference, ethnicities. Just differences, [slight laugh] like physical differences within races" (Interview, 11/29/07, 5-6). Despite this broad definition of diversity and the inclusion of socioeconomic background, her cultural diversity discourse almost always came back to race and ethnicity.

Another time class did enter Maria's discourse was when she spoke of parents or the role of parents in their child's education. She entered the program saying, "My expectations [for parental involvement] aren't that high" rather she just wanted them involved in their children's "lives first and foremost" and school second (Interview, 11/29/07, 555-557). She talked about having a realistic view of working parents not being able to be involved in school or homework and not being able to provide certain experiences for their children (i.e., sports, music, and the arts). This view turned into a

desire to start an after school program offering tutoring, an arts programs, and sports because "if their parents aren't able to provide them with those experiences, we have to do it" (Interview, 7/12/08, 39-40).

During the initial interview Maria spoke of working in a Title 1 school after graduation. She said,

> I envision myself, growing up giving…to the less fortunate…[in a] Title 1 [school] they're probably gonna be much less fortunate than I have been in my life…I feel like that's really where I want to be. I want to make sure I can give myself completely to them…I just want to be everything for them. (Interview, 11/29/07, 525-529)

This type of discourse is common among White preservice teachers and demonstrates what Pennington (2007) calls the "custodial positioning of teachers" and others described as the savior role (Marx & Pennington, 2003) or a form of deficit thinking (Webster-Brandon, 2003). This custodial positioning comes from a desire to help students but can result in positioning oneself as rescuer trying to save students from their own families, their own culture, and make them more like "us" (i.e., White, middle class, English speaking). Maria had this desire to go into the school and help the "other" as a caring teacher. However such actions and attitude can be seen as false empathy that is unwelcome and even condescending by students and families. This false empathy was never observed in Maria but interactions with students were limited to lessons and no interaction with parents was observed.

Of all the participants, Maria rarely talked about social class directly, especially her own experiences with it. Her discourse on class was limited to answering direct

questions and almost always centered on the parents' inability to provide certain experiences for their children. Maria expressed an understanding of the limitations of working class parents to participate in their child's education but her discourse suggests a deficit lens and a positioning of herself as "rescuer."

Experiences with assumptions, discrimination and knowing the other. All participants experienced situations where others made assumptions about them. Karissa had a keen awareness of her place compared to her peers from higher socioeconomic levels, evidenced in her narratives and personal conversations throughout the study. In high school, she did not have many friends and in college she appeared to have few close friends. While socioeconomic status most likely played into this during high school, Karissa positioned herself as detached and indifferent:

> I kind of took it in stride, 'cause I mean once you realize that's how it is, you're just like, "Ok that's how it is, whatever." But I mean as far as people commenting on clothes or anything like that, I don't really-- I don't know. I didn't talk to that many people to begin with so I don't know that there were that many people to comment on my clothes. I was really [pause] not out going. (Interview, 11/30/07, 145-149)

> Because I grew up [with] hand-me-downs and thrift stores; which for me, that's fine. I don't care. Like I'm a thrifty shopper, so if I can get jeans that fit for two bucks I'll go for it. But like in high school name brands are big things, everybody'll be like, "I'm wearing Abercrombie, I'm wearing this" and I'm like, "I'm wearing, I don't know, [laughs] my brother's shirt." (Interview, 11/30/07, 155-159)

She worked hard to maintain an appearance of being comfortable with who she was and a nonchalant attitude toward teammates.

150

Victoria had the most stories about assumptions, perhaps because of her work as a bartender. She shared stories about her friend, Mario, who experienced double-discrimination being Hispanic and homosexual. Her younger sister, Christy, was a lesbian and for a while worked at the same restaurant as Victoria. There was an incident where a Black cook made the assumption that Victoria was dating the "girl that looks like a dude." He said Victoria did not look like a lesbian but he just assumed she must be since Christy definitely was and they were always together. Victoria challenged the cook asking what a lesbian looks like. Part of her argument included the idea that someone might look at him and think he had been in prison simply because he had tattoos, huge muscles, and was Black. She said of that experience, "Why does a lesbian have to fit this mold or a gay person, or a Black person?" (Interview, 8/13/08, 862). Victoria's experiences created in her a strong desire to look beyond the surface layer and try to get others to do the same. She often challenged people who made comments and was frustrated when others jumped to an assumption based on looks.

> It's so silly the way people think, you know about sexual orientation or race. In the whole grand scheme of things, it has nothing to do with anything…it doesn't *make* them all that they are…like they have thoughts and opinions about stuff that shouldn't be judged before they even have a chance to speak. (Interview, 8/13/08, 651-656)

Victoria expressed frustration when others uttered stereotypes or assumptions based on physical appearances. Unlike Maria, Victoria was more likely to act in anti-racist ways to challenge these instances.

Natasha was often frustrated with assumptions people made as well. Because of

her level of sociocultural consciousness, Natasha worked hard to see things from the

perspective of others. She was easily riled when those around her did not try to do

likewise. Religion was a topic that infuriated Natasha because of teammates' attitudes

and beliefs. She shared early on that she did not consider herself a religious person but

rather a spiritual person. "I think of myself as very open, you know I don't prejudge, I

don't *push* anything on other people. [My spirituality is] more just a thing I keep inside. I

don't know if I show that to many people or not" (Interview, 11/27/07, 281-284). When

the topic of religion came up in seminar, there was an assumption among several

teammates that Natasha would have a hard time with religion in schools since she was

not Christian. Many of them were strong Christians accustomed to evangelism and

committed to the belief that Jesus is the only route to salvation. During that seminar

meeting, a couple team members shared that they would not feel comfortable talking

about religion in school at all, because of their faith. One said,

> I think that it might be better for me *not* to teach religion. I am a strong Christian
> I'm afraid it will influence how I teach it. I don't want to teach it at all right now
> because I struggle with the balance. I can't say things and teach things that I don't
> believe in. (Seminar, 11/1/08)

While Natasha understood that "millions of people live their life through their faith

and…it's very hard to see other things other than your beliefs" she felt "you may be doing

a *big* disservice to a bunch of students by just completely sheltering them… just because

you don't feel comfortable teaching it" (Interview, 1/9/09, 105-106, 110-111). For

Natasha it was a matter of getting over one's comfort level, being open to something

new, and presenting information on more than one or two main religions. The assumptions teammates made in regard to what should be allowed in school and what their students needed to know about religions made Natasha quite angry.

Natasha had another experience with teammates' assumptions when she got to know a guy covered with tattoos. He became known among some teammates as "tattoo guy" for the few weeks that Natasha was hanging out with him. She decided to look "past meeting somebody that was completely covered with tattoos from head to toe and …look deeper... because there's so much good in people and they get looked over very easily, no matter who they are" (Interview, 1/9/09, 438-442). It was frustrating for Natasha that her parents and some teammates thought she was "insane" for spending time with him.

As discussed earlier, Maria, Natasha, and Victoria all experienced questions about their race or ethnicity because of assumptions people made about their appearance. These experiences were featured in several narratives throughout the study and became the impetus for Maria and Natasha's self-imposed responsibility to learn more about different cultures. These experiences also made each of them much more conscious of assumptions their teammates made or they themselves made about others. Karissa never participated in such discourse throughout the study. The following three examples represent this consciousness of making assumptions.

Maria worked with several students early in her internship who were learning English and struggling with different aspects of the curriculum. She said of this experience, "What I've learned is to be sensitive to everybody…if a kid isn't getting something… you can't just automatically think that they have a learning disability or

153

something. I mean there's more to everything than what's on the surface and that's with *every* student" (Maria, Interview, 7/12/08, 426-430). This awareness of her making assumptions about her students was deepened in a later semester when she had the opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with a student after reading group. The student shared about her home situation and the struggles she was having. Maria said, "It just made me realize about what these kids are dealing with outside of school" (Interview, 12/29/08, 281-282).

Natasha and Maria were sitting at a table waiting for a professional development session to begin. A fellow teammate was talking about her students not getting the states or capitals during social studies. She gave the excuse that they are English Language Learners which Natasha vehemently disagreed with. She felt that "It's *not* a language barrier…[and] you're selling them short that's what you're doing" (Interview, 4/20/09, 337, 342). Natasha was angered by such assumptions made by teammates and made comments like, "I don't get it. *What* did you just say? *Who* are you? *You* have *not* learned anything!" (327-328), to me or those she knew understood the situation as she did but never directly to those teammates making the assumptions. Because Natasha's own experiences made her extra sensitive to people making assumptions, she often felt others should be equally conscious of assumptions in their teaching and interactions with students.

Victoria was in the hallway monitoring students and two boys from another class walked by. One was pulling on the shirt of the other and Victoria said, "I'll bet his mom will be really upset if he comes home with his shirt all stretched out" (Interview, 4/6/09,

274-275). The boy stopped immediately and struggled with what to say. He finally turned to his friend and said, "Let him tell you," to which his friend said, "I don't have a mom; my mom isn't around." Victoria recovered quickly with a comment about his dad working hard to pay for his clothes and the boys went on their way. She thought much about this small incident, especially since she herself lives in a diverse family unit, raising her daughter Kinsley with her own mother. "I can't assume that everybody lives with their mom and dad. I made that mistake!" (271-272). "I didn't even think about it but I was like that's something you have to be conscious about especially now a days when there's so many diverse family units" (280-281). By the end of the study, all three of these participants identified not making assumptions about students or families as being an aspect of culturally responsive teaching.

Another way the participants' own assumptions and beliefs had been challenged was through relationships with others who were from marginalized or oppressed groups. All four participants had extensive or several relationships with people of another race or ethnicity, as reported on the demographic sheet during the pilot study. Karissa's openness and attraction to Asian cultures drew her to befriend Asian people as well as those from other races or ethnicities. Maria's involvement in the Neo-Black Society brought many Black friends into her life. Natasha's interest in Hispanic culture and knowledge of Spanish allowed her to have cross-cultural experiences and develop friendships with those in the Hispanic community. Her work at her father's warehouse likewise put her in contact with diverse populations. Victoria's work at the restaurant gave her daily contact

with Blacks and Hispanics, with whom she formed friendships as well as gave her opportunities to meet and talk to diverse populations.

Maria and Victoria in particular talked about the impact of these relationships on their thinking and understanding of what it means to be culturally aware or sensitive. "My views have changed a lot since high school. I've become more-- I was open before but even more open now" (Maria, Interview, 12/29/08, 88-89). Maria's involvement with NBS also deepened her sociocultural consciousness. The Jena Six event occurred the year before the study began. It involved six Black teenagers convicted of beating a White student in Jena, Louisiana. Maria reflected on the difficulty of getting people to talk about the issue on campus. She said that virtually no one on campus knew about it and no one was talking about it. Maria was also disappointed in the university's lack of response saying, "It's kind of like it was swept under the carpet, like it didn't really matter...We held a forum, the Jena Six forum…but we had to go to [a local Historically Black University] to actually participate in their protest" (Interview, 11/29/07, 143-144, 138-139).

Victoria was very open to diversity sharing many stories of talking to individuals or groups at work just to hear about their experiences or culture. She saw these moments as opportunities to learn and grow. Victoria shared the story of talking with a woman from Afghanistan and how it challenged her assumptions.

> I met someone [who wore a headdress] and she-- my perception was that they were oppressed and that their men-- some of it *is* that way but she-- the way she explained it to me was that she did not want to be objectified by people or especially *men* so that's why she dressed that way and I was like wow I *never* thought of it like that but that's so *profound* and like that's your choice. You

choose not to be looked at. And I've really gained so much more respect for women that come here to America and continue to do that even though she says people whisper and look at her and you know because she's dressed differently. And her reasoning for it is so not what people think they're like. You're in America now, you can do whatever you want to do, but she was like but this is what I *want to* do. And I never thought of it like that and I was just like *wow* this is her choice. (Interview, 8/13/08, 885-897)

Victoria had many other stories, like this, demonstrating her willingness to know and understand the life experiences of others who are culturally diverse. She likewise wanted her students to have an openness to diversity saying, "Everybody's scared of what they don't understand or what they don't know so…as a teacher I would want to just try to show them (my students) as much as possible" (Interview, 8/13/08, 719-721).

Interestingly, all four of the participants had relationships with people from the gay or lesbian community. Three of the four participants had siblings who were gay and Natasha babysat for a lesbian couple. Maria, who grew up Catholic and struggled with the issue of homosexuality said,

I came to school with a different mindset than I have now. I mean that was two and a half years ago so I hope I've changed…I think I was less open with the whole gay/lesbian stuff when I got here but now I mean I have so many friends that are gay. (Maria, Interview, 11/29/07, 204-209)

Maria's best friend, who is also Black, waited for two years to tell her that he was gay because he feared rejection. For Maria, friendships helped challenge her earlier held beliefs and led her to see homosexuality as simply a part of one's identity.

Karissa's idea that without personal experience with diverse populations they remain abstract, offers an explanation for the participants' higher levels of openness to

157

diversity, sociocultural consciousness, and cultural competence. The participants'

construction and understandings of both race and class as well as their personal

experiences with assumptions, discrimination and relationships with others were all

major factors in the way they came to understand and incorporate culturally responsive

teaching.

The Influence of Course Work and Internship at Clayburn Elementary

This section addresses the second sub-question of how interning at a culturally

and linguistically school influenced the understandings of culturally responsive teaching

the preservice teachers held. Specific experiences within course work and during

internship introduced the participants to the authoritative discourse of culturally

responsive teaching, giving them the language and theory behind some of the beliefs they

held about teaching even prior to entering the program. Teacher education courses,

seminar, and internship were places they encountered authoritative discourses of teaching

(e.g., constructivism, culturally responsive teaching, assessment, etc.) through readings

and projects, observing and working with cooperating teachers, planning for culturally

responsive lessons and units, and discussing the theory and practice of culturally

responsive teaching. The ways in which they negotiated these authoritative discourses

into their own understandings of culturally responsive teaching is the topic of this section.

It is organized first around experiences within their course work and then those during

internship and student teaching.

Course work. The participants went through their teacher education program as a

team, taking methods courses and seminar together, interning at Clayburn Elementary 10

hours each week, then student teaching full time for 15 weeks. Victoria said of this

experience,

> Being with a team where I could call 20 other people and say, "Hey, have you
> taken this class yet or did you all do this yet?"…I *always* knew that there was
> somebody I could talk to or ask a question of…I guess the whole support system
> itself is *so* smartly designed…you've got the same team leader for two years and
> they're also your advisor so they know what's going on with you. (Interview,
> 4/14/09, 374-379)

The structure of the program led participants to develop strong relationships with

teammates and know each other at a deeper level than simply taking a class or two

together. Cliques emerged, as within any large group, some based on strong personal

beliefs about culture, religion, and teaching. Maria called herself a floater and tried to be

friends with everyone but was most comfortable with those like Victoria and Natasha

with whom she shared similar understandings of culture and teaching. Karissa often

appeared distant from the team and did not seem to be included on a deep level.

The team leader, Dr. Fire, was an important influence on the team's

understandings of culturally responsive teaching. Dr. Fire's ability to model an ethic of

care and deliver explicit instruction through constructivist methods made a lasting

impression on all of the participants. Victoria attributed feeling so prepared to student

teach to Dr. Fire's expectations throughout the program and explicitness in facilitating

their journey through the program. "I never felt like I was in the dark or I didn't know

what to expect" (Victoria, Interview, 4/14/09, 358). Maria and Karissa felt that Dr. Fire's

example and expectations in methods courses led them to approach their lesson planning

and teaching in culturally responsive ways, naturally making modifications for ELLs and

159

using specific teaching methods proven to aid culturally and linguistically diverse students.

> She knows where we're at (Clayburn Elementary), so she focuses [her teaching] towards that because she knows who we're working with. The lessons that she teaches, she makes sure she shows us how it can apply to like all of our students and then also ones that are ESL students…Some of our [other] teachers keep it general…they didn't know how much differentiation we would need. (Karissa, Interview, 8/22/08, 171-174, 185)

Karissa felt Dr. Fire understood the needs of the students at Clayburn Elementary and was able to apply that knowledge to the courses she taught at the university, modeling culturally responsive teaching and making the team conscious of the need for it. Natasha spoke often about Dr. Fire's influence on her as a person and a beginning teacher:

> She's the most amazing person that has taught all of us more than I ever thought I could learn. She's nothing but a positive influence. (Interview, 8/11/08, 391-393)

> She's the reason why, hopefully I'm going to be the educator that I want to be. (Interview, 4/20/09, 356-357)

> I think she's is the absolute definition of what a teacher should be…the most thoughtful person I've ever met. (Interview, 8/11/08, 420-426)

> I don't think any other education team has gotten or will walk away with what we have. Because I've heard stories from different cohorts and I've seen different team leaders and they just don't have the heart, the passion, and the respect that Dr. Fire has. (Interview, 4/20/09, 358-361)

Natasha believed that her ability to teach in culturally responsive ways and to meet the needs of ELLs was the result of the expectations that Dr. Fire placed on the team from the beginning. "We're already subconsciously putting so many of these practices into action

160

and not even realizing that they're fabulous for English language learners but also for all students" (Interview, 4/20/09, 80-82).

The team's senior seminar in the fall of 2008, which focused on culturally responsive teaching, deepened the participants' understandings. Karissa said,

> When you get the chance like we did in seminar, to sit down with so many people and get all these different points of view and it's not something like *taboo* that you're doing, like it's-- you're *supposed* to be doing [it], it's nice. And I think you get more actual opinions whereas if you just were talking you might [pause] not like hide them but people might tone them down. (Interview, 1/14/09, 140-144)

She valued the opportunity seminar gave them, "I like getting other perspectives. I don't just want to be in my little Karissa box" (Interview, 1/14/09, 132). Natasha echoed this saying seminar has been an opportunity to be "able to see or hear other people's opinions and how different they are from my own" (Interview, 1/9/09, 94).

Seminar gave the team opportunities to examine different aspects of culture (i.e., race, ethnicity, social class, language, gender, and religion), read about the theory of culturally responsive teaching, and discuss how to implement it in the classroom. From assisting in seminar, I found that members of the team, including the participants in the study, worked to incorporate the discourse of culturally responsive teaching into their discourse of teaching (i.e., stories about internship and talk during planning). Such instances of bringing the words of others into one's own discourse are called assimilation (Bakhtin, 1981). For many team members, their discourse on culturally responsive teaching remained in the rigid form of assimilation known as "reciting by heart" where they could use the language as they had heard it in course work or seminar but did not

161

make it their own or internally persuasive. For example, one student during seminar could parrot the discourse of culturally responsive teaching saying that "race is more than color, it's culture and traditions…" and "I don't like the categories that you have to check for race. They're too narrow…" (Seminar, 9/3/08). Yet sitting with colleagues at Clayburn Elementary during student teaching, she told the story of "all the Mexican kids" being out of the room for testing while her "three little Black boys" remained with her. While she spoke with sensitivity toward issues of race and ethnicity during courses or seminar, it was not internalized to influence her day to day thoughts, actions, and speech.

In contrast, Victoria moved past this recitation by heart to "retelling in one's own words," where she was able to populate the discourse of culturally responsive teaching with her own intentions (Bakhtin, 1981). She articulated a strong sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence in courses and seminar evident in such comments as:

> I think she (Vivian Paley, author of *White Teacher*) just totally thought of [race] as an outward, surface thing until she started communicating more with the parents and teachers within her school and even her students, to see that it went deeper than just the outside. Race is a way of life, the way they grow up, they way they think about different things, and how they perceive different things. Their reality would have been different from hers because she didn't question it (race), it was just surface. (Seminar, 9/8/08)

> I just see [cultural diversity] as being different, but not in a bad way but in a "what makes you *you* way"…it has a lot to do with how you grew up and…what has brought you to the point that you're at now. (Interview, 8/13/08, 18-24)

> The more you open people up to the differences in different races, cultures, or backgrounds, the more comfortable I think they would be with it. We're scared of things we don't know and…rely on what we've been told or saw at home. (Seminar, 9/29/08)

162

She likewise demonstrated that this was not merely a parroting of the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching she encountered in the program but an internally persuasive discourse for her as a person and teacher, as evident in the following story of her interactions with a student during student teaching.

Fred was a fifth-grade student who was often in trouble with frustrated teachers or ostracized by peers because of his abrasive demeanor. He was outspoken and never hesitated to give his opinion even when it was intolerant in nature. Fred would tell his Hispanic classmates not to speak Spanish because it was stupid, they were dumb, and he hated it. Fred often felt like they were talking about him since he did not understand the language. Over time Victoria realized that she could not be frustrated with Fred because he was parroting the things he had heard from home. Victoria said,

> You want to think that parents wouldn't instill any hate but then I don't know that the parents know that they're doing [it] 'cause that's what they were taught...to them it's just that they're different and that's maybe something that they don't understand or aren't comfortable with. (Interview, 4/6/09, 320-321)

She used a conversation they had about Fred's mom teaching him Hebrew as an opportunity to help him understand that learning a new language is hard and just because he did not understand it, that did not make a language stupid or the speaker dumb. Together they decided they would each learn one or two new Spanish words a day, using Emilio, his desk mate, as a source of knowledge rather than someone to be feared or hated. She reflected on this experience saying,

> …some things I just can't expect because if they've never been introduced to being in a diverse group of people or if all they hear at home is, "Mexicans this or

163

Black people that" or whatever then of course that's what they're going to take to school with them. So my job essentially is to start to chip away at that, that negative thinking and let them see I guess the different side of it…I think [Fred]'s gotten better with it but it's so hard not to think of how it's going to affect him if he *doesn't* change the way that he is, like 'cause people aren't going to be so nice. (Interview, 4/6/09, 310-316)

Victoria's ethic of care for her students was also very evident in this experience. Of all the participants, it was easiest to see Victoria practice culturally responsive teaching. For her culturally responsive teaching was part of her nature, "…it's actually in *every* thing that you do" (Interview, 4/6/09, 260).

Throughout the teacher education program the issue of culturally responsive curriculum was raised. For Karissa and Maria using multicultural literature, bringing in multiple perspectives and culture, and recognizing the students' cultures was important with regard to curriculum. Karissa told two separate stories of how her cooperating teacher included different perspectives in the literature she selected (i.e., Thanksgiving from Native American and Pilgrim view, Christopher Columbus story that challenged the discovery of America myth, Cinderella stories from multiple countries) and saw this as an important part of culturally responsive teaching. Maria's talk of exposing her students to "everything there is to offer" centered on multiple perspectives through literature and integration of subjects (i.e., art and music into subject areas). She rarely talked directly about how she would make the curriculum reflect her desire to broaden the minds of her students. When asked what made a unit on courage, that she taught during student teaching, culturally responsive Maria stated, "I don't know, you said it was…they were learning about culture…it was multicultural" (Interview 4/1/09, 549-550). Maria

struggled to articulate in concrete ways what culturally responsive teaching involved but
she believed it was very important and that she did it.

Victoria and Natasha on the other hand, could clearly articulate specific aspects of
the curriculum that reflected being culturally responsive. Natasha for example talked
prior to Black History Month about the frustration she had in watching colleagues trying
to fit so much information and material into one month. She said,

> Teachers just go about trying to cram all of this African American history into
> one month…I feel like that's harder than…if you just look at your curriculum and
> what you have to teach. How could you *not* bring in all these different things
> throughout the whole year? (Interview, 1/9/09, 56, 66-68)

For Natasha, it was important to include the knowledge and accomplishments of all racial
and ethnic groups throughout the school year and weave it into the curriculum. On entry
to the program she did not think about being culturally responsive in regard to teaching.
She envisioned herself teaching math and science and then incorporating different
cultures as an aside but by the end of the study she saw the importance of integrating this
curriculum within the subject areas. She also recognized the need to validate her students'
cultures, "seeing the kids, you know the Hispanic ones that were able to tell the rest of
the class about [Dia del los Muertes] (the Day of the Dead), you know their little eyes got
brighter because it's something that they're bringing from home" (Interview, 8/11/08 90-
92). Natasha saw culturally responsive teaching as incorporating the cultural knowledge
of her students into the curriculum in ways that validated and empowered them. She
gained such understandings through course work and experiences at internship.

Victoria's own experiences in school greatly influenced her desire to include literature and curriculum that included and validated the cultures and backgrounds of her students. "We really didn't talk about Native Americans in American history *at all* really. And then when I got older, I was like *no wonder*, because they didn't want to make Americans or America look bad" (Interview, 8/28/08, 543-545). Victoria felt it was important

> …to point out how things started and, like with slavery and all that stuff. Like people don't understand that…it's definitely not talked about like I think it should be…and the truth really isn't told…this is *their* history, their American history. And how can you deny them of knowing that? (Interview, 8/28/08, 528-534)

She believed that it was the responsibility of the teacher to go beyond the given curriculum to make it relevant and meaningful to students. Victoria assumed she would use diverse children's literature in her classroom at the start of the program but because of her course work she began to see the *reason* for doing so, "I would hate for them (her students) to think, she never talks about you know, Hispanic people. Does she want me to change?" (Interview, 8/28/08, 486-487). Victoria challenged the traditional knowledge that dominates schools today and desired to recognize, validate, and incorporate the cultural knowledge and experiences of marginalized groups into her curriculum.

Internship. All of the participants found their experience at Clayburn Elementary valuable on many levels. In terms of their understanding of culturally responsive teaching, they were given the opportunity to work directly with culturally and linguistically diverse students, they participated in in-service training through the TESOL for All (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) grant with their cooperating

166

teachers, and they were able to observe and implement best teaching practices in working with diverse students.

Victoria commented on the influence of the principal's leadership, "she has so much energy and she's *so--* like I see so much passion in her that it makes me want to be that much better because…I have to live up to her expectations which are really high" (Interview, 8/28/08, 788-781). The faculty at Clayburn worked hard to meet the principal's expectations and high level of commitment to the students. "There are a lot of really awesome teachers there that you can tell, they love their students and they care about them, and they'll do anything for them" (Natasha, Interview, 4/20/09, 523-524).

Karissa said of being at Clayburn Elementary, "You're *always* aware of it (the diversity) instead of just like sometimes you're like, 'Oh wait, I've not been doing this.' So it keeps it on your brain more I guess" (Interview, 1/14/09, 26-28). Actually being in a classroom of diverse students helped Karissa see the importance of being "aware of where the kids are from, like [their] backgrounds and their culture and stuff. That you don't just make assumptions" (Interview, 8/22/08, 221-223). She came to see that as a teacher of linguistically diverse students she had to be conscious of the words and phrases she used because language learners weren't aware of things like idioms. Through working with the students at Clayburn, Karissa said she also learned to be willing to adapt lessons based on what the students needed. By the end of the study Karissa felt prepared to teach in culturally responsive ways because of her experience at Clayburn Elementary, explaining,

I'm a very learn-by-practice kind of person so…if they just tell you all these theories and like what you're supposed to do-- they *tell* you what it's [culturally responsive teaching] supposed to look like but actually being able to do it and like seeing *how* it works, and like doing it yourself, it's different then…so actually getting to do it yourself in the kind of environment that we have in our internship is-- I mean to me it's *not* something you can learn by just hearing about it. (Interview, 4/15/09, 407-413)

Maria echoed this perspective, saying, "Talking about it is one thing and doing it is completely different" (Interview, 7/12/08, 726). She felt she learned more from being in the classroom than from methods courses. She entered the program wanting to teach in a predominantly African American school but interning at Clayburn made her realize "there's a greater need [here] because they need to learn English" (Interview 7/12/08, 74-75). This sentiment perhaps tied to her custodial positioning of teacher (Pennington, 2007). Maria was attracted to the diversity and felt Clayburn "made [her] more aware of the differences and more aware of culture…There's almost *more* culture there, 'cause they bring their own culture outside of America…a lot of these kids bring cultures from different countries" (Interview, 12/29/08, 28, 35-38). While Maria struggled with aspects of teaching (e.g., taking on a strong teacher identity, being comfortable in front of the class, time management), she valued one-on-one relationships with students. In the end, Maria felt Clayburn Elementary was a great experience "I mean I wouldn't want to be at any other school for student teaching and internship…I think that we've gotten a lot more opportunities than other people [in the program] and a lot more experience" (Interview, 4/1/09, 186-188).

Victoria likewise felt that they had "gotten a lot more opportunities than other people [in the program] and a lot more experience" (Interview, 4/1/09, 188). She also

said being "in a classroom that's very diverse, that just means so much more than if I was in a private school with all, you know like all White [students]" (Interview, 4/14/09, 396-397). Victoria's experience at Clayburn continued to strengthen her desire to be open to diversity and work with diverse students. "In the beginning we *all* kind of felt, 'Oh well, we're understanding people,' but then you're just like, *am I really*? And [being at Clayburn] just made you open up *even more*" (Interview, 4/14/09, 86-88). Victoria used opportunities like one-on-one "reading buddy" instruction, sitting with students at lunch, playing with them at recess, and even hallway conversations to learn about her students. Understanding where her students were coming from became an important part of culturally responsive teaching for Victoria. She explained:

> [Knowing] all the little parts that makes each student diverse, I think you have to pay attention to that and then gear your teaching and the things you have for that child specifically [accordingly]…in order to have appropriate lessons and ways to reach them. (Interview, 1/5/09, 15-17)

Victoria's experiences led her to believe "that being culturally responsive may also mean kind of being uncomfortable 'cause you may have to address situations that you've never addressed before or discuss things that you've never even thought about" (Interview, 1/5/09, 21-24).

This was true for Natasha as well, who dealt with the issue of gang related activity among some of her third graders during her internship. This was not an issue Natasha anticipated dealing with in elementary school, but she was able to observe her cooperating teacher and the school administration deal with three boys using hand signals

and writing gang symbols at school. The schools' response was to suspend the students but Natasha felt this was not the correct way to handle the situation,

> You're sending them home? What are they going to do at home? They're going to go hang out with their gangster brother and older friends and who ever in the neighborhood because obviously the *school* doesn't want them there…what I realized [is] it's a hard, hard subject to deal with a child, especially at third grade, but if you don't *deal* with it [pause] they're not going to feel comfortable. They're not going to like school because they keep getting suspended and keep getting in trouble and that just like feeds the fire for wanting that family, that companionship in a gang. (Interview, 1/9/08, 221-228)

The experience helped her see the importance of knowing her students deeply within and outside of school. It also helped her understand that students come to schools with very different experiences shaping how they will interact and experience school. Although Natasha didn't articulate it explicitly, she implied a failure on the part of schools to understand the real needs of students in such circumstance as well as implicating schools in the perpetuation of the status quo for such students.

Because of Natasha's proficiency in Spanish, she was able to intern in a dual-immersion classroom. This placement gave her the opportunity to observe and work with two cooperating teachers during her senior year. She credits this experience for her desire to eventually get a Masters in ESL. Interning at Clayburn gave Natasha the opportunity to merge her personal and professional beliefs into the beginnings of a strong culturally responsive teacher identity.

The experience of interning at Clayburn Elementary allowed all of the participants opportunities to examine the knowledge they were gaining from their course work and seminar, observe best practices in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse

students, and identify possible teaching selves. Internship also helped them scrutinize and challenge their own beliefs and assumptions about diversity, develop relationships with culturally diverse students, and begin the construction of culturally responsive teacher identities.

The Journey to Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher

This section addresses the understandings of culturally responsive teaching that the participants were able to articulate and demonstrate in their teaching. I trace the development of each participant's understandings giving evidence from interviews, focus groups, and observations to support their definitions. The definitions of culturally responsive teaching that the participants arrived at were greatly influenced by their experiences prior to teacher education as well as during course work and internship. Because of the strong emphasis on culturally responsive teaching from Dr. Fire, the team leader, during courses and seminar, as well as it being a focus of professional development and strongly valued at Clayburn Elementary, the participants were all exposed to both the theory and practice of culturally responsive teaching and actually each came to see themselves as a culturally responsive teacher. Recognizing the fact that one cannot fully become a culturally responsive teacher in the course of two years during teacher education but rather it is a continuum that continues throughout teaching, it is interesting that each participant took on culturally responsive teaching as a "possible self" (Bruner, 1986; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Their individual understandings of culturally responsive teaching and that which became internally persuasive follows.

171

Karissa

Early in the program Karissa said that culturally responsive teaching was "making sure when you teach that you're aware of where the kids are from, like [their] backgrounds and their culture and stuff. That you don't just make assumptions" (Interview, 8/22/08, 221-223). During this time Karissa was aware of her need to be flexible with lesson plans and willing to change them based on what her students needed. While this reflected an awareness of her students it did not necessary include an awareness of their culture or backgrounds. She articulated the importance of "being aware of the words you use [pause] and phrases" because language learners are not always aware of things like idioms, which she called, "phrases that you say that like only make sense if you're from that country" (Interview, 8/22/08, 236, 227-228). Much of this language appeared borrowed from the things Karissa heard Dr. Fire talk about as she introduced them to Clayburn Elementary and began preparing them to plan lessons that would be appropriate for ELLs as evident in Karissa's struggle to remember the word idiom.

By the time Karissa was ready to begin student teaching she continued to talk about culturally responsive teaching as "taking into account everything that encompasses people and kids because you're teaching the kids *and* their families" (Interview, 1/14/09, 11-12). She stressed the importance of not ignoring the background and culture of her students, "they're here, don't leave them as some big elephant in the corner" (Interview, 1/14/09, 16). This sentiment most likely borrowed from an activity done in her social studies methods course where they saw a slide show called "The Elephant in the Room,"

which is part of a PBS website entitled *Race – the Power of an Illusion*. Having just

finished her Children's Literature course that fall, she also stressed the importance of

exposing students to multiple perspectives, citing examples from her classroom where the

cooperating teacher had done this. At the end of the study, Karissa defined culturally

responsive teaching as,

> It's everything. It's *you* and the kids and like everybody's attitudes about each
> other and-- I mean 'cause everybody has so much to them, so many aspects of
> themselves and when you throw 18 kids into a classroom together, like each one
> is a person, they have so many different pieces of themselves, that's like
> enumerable parts of stuff that you have to take into consideration and teach *them*
> to take into consideration. I mean like-- 'cause you are going to have kids who are
> going to come up and say things to another kid and you have to be the one, when
> it's your classroom, to explain why you don't do that or hopefully preemptively
> explain-- well not really explain but just let them experience and show them like
> this is all there is and you can't really do more than that. You just have to show
> them what there is and explain to them hopefully that they can be understanding
> and accepting of stuff and then you know if you *get* situations where they're not
> being understanding of stuff, then you know explain to them why [pause] even
> though they might not like it or accept it. You can't go, for instance, calling
> people names or bullying somebody because of you know, the way they dress or
> something they wear or the color of their skin… (Interview, 4/15/09, 420-433)

For Karissa, culturally responsive teaching seemed to stay at a somewhat

superficial level. She recognized that her students would come to her with diversity but

did not seem to understand how that diversity would play into their learning or her

responsibilities in teaching. She remained committed to helping students see and accept

diversity. Of all that Karissa was exposed to in regards to culturally responsive teaching,

this piece about exposing students to diversity seemed to be the most internally

persuasive for her. She felt that one could not be a culturally responsive teacher without

being open minded. "It's really your choice to be open minded…you can't fake that"

(Seminar, 9/3/08). "It's not just being open to what they [your students] have…but also being open to learn for yourself and change if you realize you're wrong. You have to be open to being wrong and saying you're wrong and fixing it" (Focus Group, Spring 2009).

Because Karissa was unable to see the institutional racism or discrimination present in schools, she never challenged the hegemonic curriculum with the exception of a desire to include multiple perspectives through literature. This inclusion of diverse perspectives came, however, at the suggestion of her team leader, methods instructors, and cooperating teacher. This then became culturally responsive teaching for her, the inclusion of "stuff that they're not always around" (Interview, 4/15/09, 468). Her cooperating teacher did this through multicultural children's literature, which Karissa talked about as a example of how she herself was culturally responsive as well. Karissa tried to expose her students to different things but it always seemed to remain at a low level of engagement and thinking for the students.

For example, Karissa tried to tie her own interest in and knowledge of Asian cultures into a first-grade lesson on Japanese writing. The lesson lasted 18 minutes. Karissa began by connecting what they would do that day with a previous lesson in which they wrote in Chinese to make fortune cookies (this lesson was not observed). She told the students that she spoke Japanese and asked them if they knew where Japan was on the map. Through a series of clues she helped them find Japan and they put a sticky note on the map. A girl asked where Clayburn was so she put another sticky note on the state. Several students wanted to ask questions about the map and Karissa tried to go with their questions for about two minutes but then moved back to writing their names in

Japanese. She had precut name tags for each child and wrote their Japanese name in pencil. The students traced over their names with black paint. When finished they took out their writing folders and worked on the stories they had started the day before, totally unrelated to the topic of writing in Japanese (Observation, 2/11/09). This lesson is detailed to demonstrate what Karissa viewed as culturally responsive teaching. Whether there was discussion or critical thinking involved was not as important as the exposure of something new and different. This was the extent of making the curriculum culturally responsive for Karissa.

While Karissa displayed a great deal of cultural competence with Asian cultures, which had always been a fascination for her, this knowledge did not necessarily translate into a similar interest in the Hispanic culture from which most of her students came. Despite this, Karissa had a strong ethic of care for both students and their families. She did not view them through a deficit lens and had a willingness to be flexible in reaching and involving parents in their child's education. Karissa's ethic of care was evident in her relationships with the children. She valued building strong relationships with her students explaining,

> I don't know how you can't have compassion [as a teacher]. Like I think that's a big part of building relationships. At least with me, when I sit there and talk with my kids, having an understanding and being compassionate like about what they're going through and their situations. Just understanding them. How can you have relationships to that level without it? (Focus Group, Spring 2009)

Karissa identified herself as a culturally responsive teacher by the end of the study. When asked, Karissa struggled to pick out instances of her being culturally responsive in the

classroom. It was easier to identify in the teaching of others or while in dialogues with team members where she could springboard off their comments with her own examples or ideas. Despite not always being present in observations, culturally responsive teaching was most definitely a vision of teaching that Karissa aspired to and a possible teaching self that she worked to enact in the classroom.

Maria

During her first semester in the program, Maria displayed a high level of sociocultural consciousness in her conversations about diversity and teaching. She worked to internalize the authoritative discourse she was hearing regarding English language learners. When talking about her Hispanic students she said, "They all speak English, well, but I mean of course there's academic language and spoken language." When asked where she had talked about that she said, "I learned it somewhere. I don't know. I don't remember but yeah probably in [seminar]. I think before we actually started interning, we talked about that" (Interview, 11/29/07, 773-774, 776-777). Although Maria did not use the terms BICs (Basic Interpersonal Communication) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) she was aware of them and trying to incorporate them into her discourse of teaching.

Maria first defined culturally responsive teaching as,

> …being sensitive to everybody's cultural differences and backgrounds. Being aware of what that background plays-- you know like how they can be affected by where they come from. [sighs]… How everybody is affected by where they come from in different ways and um, I mean there is really no as a whole how they're affected, because everybody's individually different. So for me it's kind of hard to define [culturally responsive teaching] because like groups of people, they

176

definitely have the same cultural beliefs but they-- within that culture, there's so many variations on you know [long pause]. (Interview, 7/12/08, 449-455)

She went on to explain the importance of exposing children to diversity.

I just want them to be exposed to as much as possible so that they can learn about who they are and where they come from and other cultures. And if their culture is similar to another culture and just realize we're all unique but we're all [pause] people…I just want to make sure I'm able to teach them...well enough that they are [pause] you know culturally responsive in the same way. You know like they turn around and are very knowledgeable about different cultures and how everybody's different. (Interview, 7/12/08, 482-485, 494-496)

Like Karissa, Maria saw exposing students to diversity in cultures as very important. Maria also saw it as the teacher's responsibility to really know and understand her students and expressed this throughout the study. She felt it was her job to not place them in a category (e.g., ELL, LD, race or ethnicity) and then assume to know them because "they all have a story, they all have things that [are] different about them and *why* they might have trouble" (Interview, 7/12/08, 440-441). This understanding of students for Maria was the basis of being able to actually teach them something. "If you don't know how to relate to your kids, you don't know how to read them, then all the academic stuff won't even matter, 'cause you can't even get to them" (Interview, 7/12/08, 508-510).

By her second year in the program, Maria talked about culturally responsive teaching as "more of a mindset than actually being physically aware that you're aware [of cultural differences]…I think it's an unconscious-consciousness" (Interview, 12/29/08, 10, 17-18). During this year she also tried to stop making assumptions about students and

177

realized they each brought their own unique set of circumstances and backgrounds to the classroom. She continued to want to expose her students to different things but never elaborated on what these different things entailed.

During her final interview after student teaching, Maria said of culturally responsive teaching:

> [It's] just being open to everything: your students' input, to diversity, to anything that walks into your classroom. I mean if that's what they have to offer, then that's what they have to offer, and that's what you should value because that's what they value. (Interview, 4/1/09, 476-478)

> It's like a mindset. Openness is a mindset that you have to have and if your mind isn't open to that then you can't really [teach]. (Interview, 4/1/09, 496-487)

Maria saw openness as a major part of being culturally responsive. She said,

> Just being willing to learn you know. Like I don't know everything about Hispanic culture. I mean it's many countries. So I don't know everything about El Salvador, I don't know everything about where my kids come from but I'm willing to learn. (Focus Group, Spring 2009).

Maria also spoke of compassion as being a requirement of culturally responsive teaching. She did not think it was possible to teach without compassion, evidence of a strong ethic of care. For Maria, having such compassion and openness was sometimes difficult. "I feel like it's hard to be *us* [the participants in the study]…It's hard to be as open as we are and not understand why others aren't" (Focus Group, Spring 2009).

Despite Maria's strong ethic of care and commitment to being open to diversity, she saw the parents as unable to give the students the opportunities and exposure to diversity that was required perhaps suggesting a deficit lens through which she saw her

students and their families. While Maria exhibited a strong level of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence she only brought this into the classroom with regards to the teacher, evident in her emphasis on knowing and understanding her students. Maria did not alter curriculum in significant ways to help her students think critically about society and gain sociocultural consciousness themselves, but rather, was focused on exposing students to diversity. She also struggled to enact the caring relationships with students that she spoke so vehemently about in interviews.

At times, Maria seemed to have a deeper understanding of what it would take to be culturally responsive in the classroom than she was able to articulate or enact in the classroom. For Maria, the theory of culturally responsive teaching matched her internally persuasive discourse of diversity and teaching. Thus, she identified herself as a culturally responsive teacher and was committed to helping her students develop openness to diversity.

Natasha

Natasha began the program feeling that diversity was "one of the most important things somebody can learn" (Interview, 11/27/07, 6). This belief coming from her own positive experiences with diversity, from attending a Spanish dual-immersion program, working at her father's warehouse, and traveling internationally. The importance of exposing students to diversity became part of her vision for teaching. She first defined culturally responsive teaching as

> …using different teaching strategies and different activities and different ideas to teach an entire class and hitting on how your classroom is gonna be diverse. Including everybody into the activities, not just celebrating American traditional

holidays…even if it's just a read aloud book. Just incorporating different read alouds that are just not the typical…there needs to be different ideas, different situations and topics brought in. (Interview, 8/11/08, 337-350)

Natasha, unlike Maria and Karissa, was able to articulate early in the program that culturally responsive teaching was much more than sensitivity to differences in culture and encompassed the way one should teach. This continued to deepen throughout the program and entered her lessons during student teaching.

By the time Natasha began student teaching, she saw culturally responsive teaching as much

…more than just being aware of different students' cultures and beliefs and traditions and all that. It encompasses their way of life, their way of learning coming into the educational realm and how they're taught by their family. You know a lot of that coming from a family and how they're expected to come to school and how you need to be aware of that and realize that all of your students are coming from such different places. And you need to embrace that and not ignore any of it, not give one "culture" more validity than another one. (Interview, 1/9/09, 4-11)

For Natasha, that meant a culturally responsive teacher must "*never* stop learning, and you can never stop asking question…you have to be comfortable with asking questions. (Interview, 1/9/09, 162-164). Her understandings displayed a great deal of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence.

During her final interview Natasha said, "the reason why and the way I am is because…you can't teach open-mindedness but I had it going into [the teacher education program] and I had already embraced it, so I was ready" (Interview, 4/20/09, 371-373). She considered herself to be a culturally responsive teacher and attributed this to her

educators, both at the elementary level and during teacher education. "The information my educators have passed on to me have molded me into the person I want to be and what I want to pass on to my students" (Interview, 4/20/09, 365-366). She also saw her students as teaching *her* things that would influence her teaching.

Natasha exhibited this sense of learning from one another in the lessons she designed and implemented during student teaching. In social studies for example, Natasha taught a unit on customs and traditions. They worked to understand American culture as something more than a "melting pot" as described in their text. They students made an edible mixture using various foods (i.e., cereal, raisins, nuts, chocolate, and pretzels) and after eating some, talked about the distinct flavors of each food and how you could still taste them even when they were combined into the larger bowl. The students then began to investigate and learn about different traditions from around the world that continued to be observed in America. Natasha worked hard to incorporate some of the cultures represented in her classroom as well. One such lesson focused on worry dolls from Guatemala. The children not only made their own dolls but wrote about what they might tell their doll, and then shared with the class. The lesson incorporated art, writing, social studies, and speaking skills. The students were honest in their discussion and revealed home situations that might not have ever surfaced if Natasha did not provide such an opportunity for conversation (Observation, 2/15/09).

In her final interview Natasha defined culturally responsive teaching as:

It's having the knowledge and being open and respectful and ready and willing to educate any and every student that comes into your classroom. And you know caring for each student no matter who they are and being excited and open not

only to teach them but to learn from them…'cause you're going to learn so much from your students and the different cultures and backgrounds that they come from. So it's all about [pause] embracing it all and [pause] and you know taking *all* counts, taking in all different chords and spinning them back into the way that you teach them. Kind of taking what they teach you and spinning it back to how you teach them. (Interview, 4/20/09, 386-393)

This definition, using an analogy to a tapestry, was the most thorough of all participants in terms of defining culturally responsive teaching. It touches on the knowledge teachers must have, coming from their own sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence; having an ethic of care; and the importance of these things influencing one's teaching methods. These things were part of an internally persuasive discourse for Natasha, thus she identified herself as a culturally responsive teacher and struggled to name specific instances of being culturally responsive during her student teaching, but rather said, "I'd like to think that I was [culturally responsive] the majority of my time" (Interview, 4/20/09, 434).

Victoria

Victoria's life experiences brought her to the program with much greater sociocultural consciousness than the other participants. She had learned the lesson in life that people are much more than they appear to be and applied this philosophy as she entered teaching. Early in the program Victoria expressed that teaching was much more than simply the academics and her job was to help students grow as people by exposing them to new things, challenging their thinking, and helping them see differences and similarities between cultures. "We can be so closed minded…there *is* so much more to the world than just the United States…I want to point out the differences but also show

182

commonalities" (Interview 8/13/08, 728-735). Victoria articulated the importance of challenging traditional curriculum by the end of her first year in the program, insisting on moving beyond the "old, dead, White men" curriculum found in the textbooks and incorporating heroes for Hispanic children and helping her students "be proud of their heritage" (Interview, 8/28/08).

Prior to student teaching, Victoria defined culturally responsive teaching as "knowing where your kids are coming from based off the personal connection you make with them *and* their parents" (Interview, 1/5/09, 5-6). She saw the importance of knowing families as well as students and seeing "all the little parts that makes each student diverse…you have to pay attention to that and then gear your teaching [to it]…in order to have appropriate lessons and ways to reach them" (Interview, 1/5/09, 15-17).

In her final interview Victoria defined culturally responsive teaching as helping students "think beyond what they're being taught at home maybe of the only thing they've ever known just because there were born here…[helping them] think outside and beyond themselves" (Interview, 4/14/09, 262-264). It also included "teaching every child at or on their level" and when pressed to explain what their level meant, Victoria went beyond academics to include cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Again stressing the importance of teaching the whole child Victoria commented,

> I think if a teacher does just look at the student on the academic level and what
> their ability is, they're really doing a [in]justice because just because a child
> performs well on a test or whatever, doesn't mean there aren't other parts of their
> character or personality that couldn't-- you couldn't help or you know kind of
> open their eyes to different things. 'cause I've met some of the smartest ones that
> can be some of the meanest ones and very closed minded. (Interview, 4/14/09,
> 180-185)

Victoria was committed to her students' growth as people not just students seeing them as a "total package" where you have to take the whole child and work from there. A big part of this was exposing her students to diversity and the idea that their world was much larger than their "tiny place in North Carolina." She fully recognized the way curriculum perpetuated the dominant world views and felt it was her responsibility to not only expose her students to more but help them become critical thinkers and consumers of knowledge.

Victoria's class often engaged in teachable moments and class discussions about what they were studying, with Victoria using these moments to challenge their assumptions. For example, while they studied the presidential election they used a web-based topic page to learn about each of the candidates. Some students were making comments about Barack Obama being a Muslim and others argued that he was Christian. She explored where they got their information and corrected the students, using the facts from the websites they were exploring. Later in the lesson when they were exploring the candidates' views on immigration the issue of being a legal citizen came up. They talked about how difficult the process of becoming an American citizen was and how long it took. Victoria challenged the students' assumption that it was easy to pass the naturalization test, sharing some of the questions and the fact that she herself, an American born citizen, might not even be able to pass it (Observation, 10/30/08).

During her final interview, Victoria shared the merging of her personal beliefs about being open to diversity with her professional beliefs about teaching in culturally responsive ways:

184

I'd never put that part of my life and the teacher part together until you know the past two years taking these classes. And now I'm like…well that's who I am as a person anyways but I could be *even more* [open] and pay more attention to it and know *why* it's important and not just be like well they tell us to do this you know. I can have a reason or an explanation as to why I think that being understanding and open is a good quality to have and then it just makes me also want to express that to the students and try to get them to kind of think in that way too. (Interview, 4/6/09, 290-296)

Such a comment demonstrates how the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching became internally persuasive for Victoria, causing her to incorporate the language and actions into her teaching in powerful ways.

Summary

As an educator who identifies herself as culturally responsive, it was with great interest that I examined the ways in which the participants made sense of the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching and came to construct understandings of both the theory and practice of culturally responsive teaching. The factors with which they entered teacher education (i.e., their amount of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence, constructions of race and class, interest in diversity issues, and experiences with assumptions and knowing the other) greatly influenced how they heard and worked to incorporate the discourse of culturally responsive teaching into their discourse of teaching.

Each participant articulated aspects of each characteristic of culturally responsive teaching identified in the first section, although to different levels and understandings. Some were able to enact these aspects in their internship experiences as well. Having Dr. Fire for a team leader and interning at a culturally and linguistically diverse school gave

them both knowledge and skills as well as opportunities to embrace and enact cultural

responsiveness as they were learning to teach, influencing the possible teaching selves

they identified for themselves.

Chapter five will address the ways in which the preservice teachers took their

understandings of culturally responsive teaching, incorporated them into their own talk

about teaching, identified possible teaching selves through course work and observations,

and ultimately began to enact cultural responsiveness in the classroom. The chapter

includes stories reflecting the participants' visions of teaching and their negotiation of

multiple discourses presented through course work and internship.

CHAPTER V

CONSTRUCTIONS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHER IDENTITIES

> A person's identity becomes the lens through which they see themselves and which informs their understanding of others. (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 163)

This study examined the understandings preservice teachers have of culturally responsive teaching and the impact of these understandings on their developing professional teacher identities. The purpose of this chapter is to address the second research question which asked:

2. How do elementary preservice teachers begin to author culturally responsive teacher identities in response to their teacher education program and their experiences in a culturally and linguistically diverse intern setting?

   2a. How do elementary preservice teachers describe their process of becoming a teacher?

   2b. How do preservice teachers negotiate the tensions between multiple authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of others presented to them in their courses, seminar, and intern setting?

Teacher Identity

For this study, teacher identity is seen to develop from preservice teachers' interactions within various figured worlds of teaching and learning that are mediated by micro- and macro-social structures (Holland et al., 1998; Horn et al., 2008). These

figured worlds are shaped by both local context (e.g., the town of Clayburn, a strong ethic of care, value placed on culturally responsive teaching, etc.) and global discourses (e.g., historical notions of teaching, curriculum issues, No Child Left Behind, an era of accountability, etc.). The figured world of teacher education programs also works to shape preservice teachers' understandings of teaching and learning and emerging teacher identities.

All of these figured worlds represent competing voices that preservice teachers encounter during teacher education. Their teacher identities are constructed through the negotiation of these authoritative and internally persuasive discourses or the struggle to find one's voice amid the voices of others, what Bakhtin (1981) called the authoring process. This process involves both actions and narratives. Preservice teachers observe the actions of teachers, generate a variety of potential teacher identities, and engage in the actions of teachers all within the figured worlds of intern settings where certain teacher identities are promoted and others marginalized (Gee, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Preservice teachers adopt, modify, negotiate, or reject practices and "possible selves" during this time (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). They share narratives of observing others in their professional role of teacher as well as of themselves enacting the role of teacher. These stories further construct the teaching selves they are, those they wish to become, and those they reject or are afraid of becoming.

This process is highly individual because of the social and cultural positions, lived biographies, and beliefs and understandings that preservice teachers bring to teacher education. It is further complicated by the wide array of authoritative and internally

persuasive discourses they encounter from those involved in the teacher education program like teacher educators, supervisors, cooperating teachers, peers, students, and families. The following is a reporting of four preservice teachers' journey in constructing their professional teacher identities. It demonstrates both the power of teacher education to influence teacher identity development as well as the importance of recognizing and building on what preservice teachers bring with them to the program.

I have organized this chapter around the two major categories of narratives that emerged from the data. The first section, visions of teaching, includes stories about the participants' reasons for going into teaching, the kind of teacher they envisioned themselves becoming, and the kind of teacher they were during their internship and student teaching. These stories contain both possible selves and enacted selves. Their possible selves are based on observations of other teachers (during their own schooling as well as during teacher education course work and internship), personal beliefs about teaching and learning, and a growing knowledge of what it means to teach. Their ability to enact these possible teaching selves was dependent upon many factors (e.g., personality, self-efficacy, content and pedagogical knowledge, the cooperating teacher and classroom, etc.) that both enabled and restricted certain kinds of teaching.

The second section includes narratives of negotiation. The participants encountered authoritative discourses of teaching throughout their teacher education program and internship at Clayburn Elementary. These were accompanied by internally persuasive discourses from the individuals they worked with. This section examines the ways in which the participants worked to reconcile such discourses with their own

internally persuasive discourses of teaching and learning. It is divided into three sub-sections. The first looking at two major authoritative discourses they encountered throughout the program, constructivism and culturally responsive teaching and their struggle to reconcile these discourses with their own discourse of teaching. The second, examining the negotiation of their place or role in the school during internship. In part, this sub-section is the story of negotiating their simultaneous role as both student and teacher. The last sub-section examines how the participants came to define themselves in relation to the teacher educators, cooperating teachers, students, and peers with whom they worked. It includes stories of admiration and opposition as the participants created possible teaching selves through the negotiation of observation, internally persuasive discourse, and envisioned teaching selves.

Visions of Teaching

All of the participants entered teacher education with certain ideas about teaching and learning developed through their many years in schools (Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992). They came from different backgrounds, with different experiences, and for different reasons that all mixed with their experiences in teacher education to influence the teacher identities with which they left. To understand this journey one might begin with their reasons for entry into the teaching profession.

Why I Chose Teaching?

All of the participants expressed a strong desire to work with children and two entered college knowing they would become teachers. Maria expressed, "I've always liked kids. [Being a teacher is] really the only thing I've ever wanted to do" (Interview,

190

7/12/08, 4). Likewise, Victoria said, "I have always, always, always wanted to be a school teacher. Like I *never* wanted to do anything else" (Interview, 8/13/08, 464-465). Victoria recalled instances throughout her own elementary education where she helped her teachers in various ways, from correcting papers to erasing boards, earning her the title "teacher's pet." She left school, only to go home and continue playing school with her little sister.

The path to teaching was not as direct for Karissa and Natasha. Karissa started college thinking she would major in biology. She changed her major as a result of receiving a Teaching Fellows scholarship during her freshman year. She took her introduction to education course twice, failing it the first time. She explained,

> It wasn't necessarily like, "Oh, I'm going to be an education major!" it was like, "Oh, I have a Teaching Fellows scholarship. I'm going to be an education major." So coming into it, I took the 250 course [Introduction to Education] twice. I failed the first time just because I didn't enjoy it yet. Like I still went, I think I went to the internship more than I went to the class, 'cause I liked the *kids*. (Interview, 1/14/09, 630-634)

Early on Karissa considered teaching at the secondary level. "I knew I liked working with kids, I just didn't know what area" (Interview, 8/22/08, 5-6). Karissa said that something inside her made her switch to elementary education and her experiences interning in the schools early in the program validated this desire to teach younger children. Karissa stated, "I'm not one of those people [who] from kindergarten knew they were going to be a teacher" (Interview, 8/22/08, 622), but she loved school growing up and said of her early experiences in internships:

191

> I enjoyed being in the classroom…so even though I wasn't sure at the beginning I wanted to be a teacher, like as I've gotten to be in the classroom more and more, it's convinced me that if I was doing something else, I probably wouldn't be enjoying it as much. (Interview, 1/14/09, 645, 649-651)

Further pushing her toward working with lower elementary was Karissa's own elementary experience of being home schooled and entering third grade not knowing how to read. This experience seemed to have contributed to her struggle to feel confident in academics and second guess her teaching. "I guess [elementary education] is a good place to work with kids, 'cause I like knowing what they're learning, [and] while I'm with them I can just play with them the whole time. Teaching seems to be a good middle ground for that" (Interview, 8/22/08, 10-12). Karissa's early vision of teaching seemed to fit with her desire to work with kids, her love of learning, and her desire to have fun. Her understanding of learning, in the early elementary years in particular, was filled with low expectations for critical thinking but rather an avenue for fun.

Natasha also came to elementary education during college. As a child Natasha "always gravitated kind of towards being friends with the younger ones and kind of protecting them" (Interview, 8/11/08, 3-4). She stuck up for them when they were picked on and helped them, some how understanding these experiences to be a reason to teach. In high school, Natasha said she steered away from helping younger children and set her eyes on becoming a nurse. During her freshman year of college, Natasha was walking to organic chemistry class one morning. She walked past the on-campus child care center, and the children were waving to her and smiling. Natasha thought, "I could drag my feet and go to organic chemistry every day and not enjoy it or be around kids that I can

192

hopefully help and educate" (Interview, 8/11/08, 12-13). She struggled with this decision

at first but during the study felt she was "pretty positive it's what I want to do. It makes

me happy" (Interview, 8/11/08, 15). Natasha came to see teaching as a way to pass on her

love of culture and Spanish language to her students and move them toward being open

and accepting individuals.

Another influence on participants' reasons to teach was the inspiration of prior

teachers and experiences with school. Maria said:

> My third grade teacher was just the best teacher I ever had and she kind of
> inspired me to be a teacher. She tutored me throughout elementary school and
> stuff. [pause] She was great. So I wanted to be a great teacher for somebody
> else…. try to pay it forward and all that mess. (Interview, 7/12/08, 5-7, 10)

Maria gravitated toward teaching third grade early in the program, perhaps because of

this teacher's influence. Victoria also talked directly about one of her teachers:

> [My] social studies [teacher] in seventh grade, she was just *so*-- such an awesome
> teacher…she was our friend and everybody felt comfortable to talk to her. Like
> she was a friend but she was also the disciplinarian. Just a really good teacher! I
> just felt like I took a lot away with me that year [pause] like besides just academic
> stuff. She spent a lot of time, I guess grooming our personalities and who we
> wanted to be and letting us experience that there's other things than just being a
> doctor or a lawyer or a teacher. Like she always introduced different careers to
> us…She just invested a lot of time. She was one of those teachers that you knew
> took it home with her and worked even harder than you saw at school. So she was
> really a big impression on me…I want to be like her. (Interview, 8/28/08, 8-15,
> 17-19, 22)

This teacher not only influenced Victoria's desire to become a teacher but her gravitation

toward upper grades and her love of social studies. Her view of teaching as much more

than academics and involving the whole child was most likely influenced by this

experience as well. Victoria said of teachers, "I grew up holding my teachers in such high regard and to this day I see many of their teaching styles coming through in my teaching. How wonderful…to have the chance to touch someone's life in a concrete way" (Written Reflection on Dispositions, Spring, 2008).

While Natasha never spoke directly of an individual teacher who inspired her, collectively the teachers she encountered during her elementary years at the Spanish dual-immersion program greatly influenced her learning and beliefs. She said of her experiences in elementary school, "You know I've grown up in sort of a sub-Hispanic culture, with all of my teachers being [pause] from Latin America" (Interview, 8/11/08, 34-35). Having this interest and knowledge of Spanish culture and language contributed to Natasha's ability to see unlimited possibilities for her future, "I never knew I'd have this many opportunities…there's multiple things that I'll be able to do" (Interview, 8/11/08, 683-686). Natasha also talked about all of her teachers' (from elementary to teacher education) influence on her becoming a teacher, "my educators [and] the information that [they] have passed on to me have molded me into the person I want to be and what I want to pass on to my students" (Interview, 4/20/09, 365-366). For Karissa it was also not a specific teacher but rather school in general that inspired her. "I *loved* school growing up" (Interview, 11/30/07, 377). "I *really* liked school. Going to school was a refuge for me and it was just-- I want to be able to recreate that for the kids I teach" (Interview, 8/22/08, 16-18).

Maria and Victoria both used the words, "I want to make a difference" in describing their reasons for teaching. Both expressed a strong desire to work with

students who were culturally or racially diverse. They saw themselves as being able to make a difference in the lives of such children. Maria was attracted to teaching in a predominantly African American Title 1 school because as she explained, "I've never envisioned myself teaching anything *but* culturally diverse students" (Interview, 7/12/08, 425). Victoria also wanted to work with diverse students, "I *thrive* on diversity just because of you know, me being a diverse person myself" (Interview, 1/5/09, 494-495). Both felt strongly about teaching diverse students in lower socioeconomic schools. It is difficult to tell whether this desire came out of altruism or a custodial view of teaching (Pennington, 2007) where they saw themselves as a savior going in to fix these students.

The participants in this study came to teaching for similar reasons. Interestingly, the factors influencing their understandings of culturally responsive teaching from the previous chapter also appeared to greatly influence the kind of teacher they wanted to become. The following section highlights the topics that came out in interviews concerning the kind of teacher they envisioned themselves to be and wanted to become.

The Kind of Teacher I Want to Be

All of the participants stressed the importance of building strong relationships with their students and envisioned themselves as caring teachers. This strong ethic of care was also part of the participants' understandings of culturally responsive teaching as reported in the previous chapter. Karissa felt,

> …if you have a good relationship with your kids…they're going to be more
> willing to listen to you and to do what you're asking. Or if you have a good
> relationship, you're going to know better if you're teaching a lesson what's going
> to get their attention or like what they *need* so they're going to be more willing to

195

learn and engaged and if they are, then you're going to have less behavior problems. (Interview, 4/15/09, 178-182)

Likewise, Maria constantly brought conversations and situations back to "what's best for the kids," expressing strongly her ethic of care. She described the role of teacher and schools saying, "You know, the kids come first and I think that's what a school *should* be and needs to be, because that's what we're there for" (Interview, 4/1/09, 220-222). Maria also said, "I don't think you can be a teacher without being compassionate" (Interview, 4/1/09, 496). This sentiment was a large part of her discourse throughout the study but not as evident in her daily interactions with students.

For Natasha and Victoria strong relationships with students were both part of their discourse and their observed actions in the classroom. When talking about the kind of teacher she wanted to be, Natasha explained, "I just want to be a very comfortable, open, and respectful [teacher]. You *have* to be respectful of your students" (Interview, 1/9/09, 178-179). Natasha desired to be a "role model for [her students]…an outside source…I'd like to say that whenever I become a teacher it would be easy for my kids to come talk to me" (Interview, 8/11/08, 21-23). This vision of teacher resonated with Victoria as well. She said, "I want them [her students] to feel as though they could talk to me and that I would try to help them" (Interview, 8/28/08, 297-298). Victoria spoke in very concrete ways about how she would establish such relationships with students (e.g., eating with them at lunch, playing with them at recess, talking to them during non-instructional time, asking them questions about life outside of school, etc.) and actually began to enact them during student teaching.

Victoria also wanted to be the teacher who makes a difference, "teaching them about things… [beyond] whatever the curriculum has laid out for you 'cause I think it's *so* much more than that. Like it's teaching them how to be good citizens or responsible" (Interview, 8/28/08, 25-27). For her, teaching required challenging traditional curriculum, presenting material that all students can relate to, and helping students be proud of their heritage. Such teaching would ultimately help her students develop sociocultural consciousness themselves. Victoria also shared in great detail her plans for creating community and a sense of citizenship in her students once in a classroom of her own. Her plans included service projects in the school and the community, classroom jobs involving applications and interviews, and even physical fitness activities. Her ideas for classroom management involved setting high expectations for students, involving them through responsibilities and jobs, and focusing on positive rewards for correct behavior. Victoria saw her role of teacher as one of "building them [her students] to be a better person and to be more productive and to think outside of just themselves and *want* to help other people" (Interview, 8/28/08, 48-49).

While on the surface, Victoria's comment about "building [students] to be a better person and to be more productive…" may appear to be a fine goal for a teacher, one must stop and ask: What was wrong with the students to begin with that they must be made better? Were they not productive when they came into the classroom? Why the desire to fix or mold them into something different? And who defines what "better" or "more productive" means? Do such comments from a participant so committed to cultural responsiveness not demonstrate the pervasiveness of the discourse of privilege in our

197

society? Even with the best of intentions, the discourse of White privilege enters into her language and ultimately racism is perpetuated in Victoria's discourse.

Maria, Natasha, and Victoria all spoke of their vision of engaging students in active learning reflecting a desire to teach in constructivist ways, another characteristic of culturally responsive teaching. Maria talked of plans for student-directed activities where students figured things out for themselves making it more in depth and time consuming. She said, "I'm ok with my class looking crazy if that means that they're going to learn better" (Interview, 12/29/08, 384-385). She envisioned herself as a teacher who would help students develop critical thinking skills and experience hands-on, active learning and often echoed phrases or terms (i.e., classroom looking hectic, I'm all about critical thinking, figure things out for themselves, deeper level thinking, hands-on activities) from the discourse of constructivist teaching she was exposed to in teacher education. Natasha explained her desire this way,

> I'd like to say that I'd be a teacher that tries her hardest to tie in as much with the subject that I can and to make it as interactive and as fun as possible. I want to be a fun teacher. I want my kids to have fun and enjoy it and not just sit at their desks. (Interview, 8/11/08, 231-234)

She was less likely to use phrases or words from teacher education and seemed to have assimilated constructivist language into her own vision of teaching. Victoria likewise had incorporated constructivism into her internally persuasive teacher discourse and talked often of the importance of actively engaging students. She saw the teachers' role in facilitating this type of active learning involving every aspect of teaching, from planning

and implementing hands-on activities that are engaging to being spontaneous and creative in redirecting students.

Although Karissa did not speak directly about constructivist teaching, like Maria she echoed words and phrases from teacher education (i.e., hands-on activities, engaging, student centered) that indicated an understanding of the importance of such teaching strategies. Karissa's vision of teacher was tied to her desire to make school fun and a positive experience for students as well as her personality. She said, "…I'm very *kid-like* myself still so when I get around my kids and they start goofing off, I'm like 'Ah, that looks like fun'" (Interview, 1/14/09, 322-323). Having enjoyed school herself, Karissa wanted to recreate that in her own classroom. She said,

> I guess I want to be the kind of person that can make kids *want* to go to school and want to learn and 'cause I like learning for the sake of learning. [pause] I want to try to make other people like that and I think if I'm a teacher I'll have the opportunity to do that. (Interview, 11/30/07, 378-380)

While Karissa articulated a strong desire to make learning fun and positive for her students she never talked about what that meant or what it would entail on her part as teacher. This vagueness about the role of teacher was present in her interviews throughout the study. At times, it was almost as if Karissa was not quite sure what it was teachers do but perhaps brought her own memories of school to her role as elementary teacher. She explained,

> I do enjoy playing with the kids and being on their level and just like, I guess coloring and doing fun little stuff myself so I have to make sure I keep, I guess the line of "Oh yeah, this is fun but I'm their teacher," so I have to watch them and

just encourage and that sort of thing. [pause] I'm still working that out. (Interview, 8/22/08, 112-115)

There was always a somewhat superficial, vague sense of the role of teacher in Karissa's discourse (i.e., having fun with the children, being silly and fun, being their friend, making jokes, maintaining control of the students, teaching them something new). It was difficult to pin Karissa down on specifics when talking about the role of teachers and her vision of teaching.

Maria also struggled to articulate in concrete terms the role of teacher. She talked often of her desire to help her students be well-rounded and how she wanted to "be the person that expose[d] them to the things that they haven't been exposed to" (Interview, 7/12/08, 86-87). She said, "My [teaching] goals aren't really academic goals…but really my goals are to help mold, you know, open-mindedness and good character" (Interview, 12/29/08, 633-635). Her religion studies concentration also contributed to this feeling,

> It's like hard for me *not* to want my kids to be exposed to everything there is to offer…I want them to know about how other people are and other religions and how they're influenced and not be [pause] ignorant and just say, "Oh, this person is that" and just categorize them automatically. (Interview, 7/12/08, -95)

Such a comment can appear to be culturally responsive but at times her desire to expose students to diversity seemed almost hegemonic with the discourse of privilege seeping through. While comments about exposing students to diversity were frequent for Maria and demonstrated her desire to help her students develop sociocultural consciousness, she struggled to articulate what this type of teaching would actually look like in the classroom. For Maria, it involved "integration of subjects: art, music, PE, and health; all

the things that are important that kids don't necessarily get when they go home"

(Interview 7/12/08, 22-23). The importance of such integration in developing a well-

rounded and open-minded person was perhaps tied to her own experiences as a student,

"I took art throughout, elementary school to high school and music in high school and

like I was *offered* those opportunities" (Interview, 7/12/08, 29-31). She viewed herself as

an open person, "I deal with diversity pretty well," (Interview, 11/29/07, 504) who turned

out well because of her own schooling and wanted to pass this on to her future students.

Natasha also expressed a vision of teaching as opening minds. Natasha said, "I

want to be the teacher to open minds" (Interview, 8/11/08, 462-463). Then again in a later

interview, "…just to open minds…to integrate that in *every* thing that I teach is-- you

know the idea of being open and being understanding. I think that that's very possible to

be taught through everything" (Interview, 1/9/09, 378-381). This was a theme throughout

Natasha's interviews and one of her main goals as a teacher possibly suggesting an

assumption on Natasha's part that her students' minds were closed.

In a similar manner, Victoria spoke often about opening students' minds to

diversity. "I think we can be so closed minded 'cause you just think about your

surroundings and yourself but [there] *is* so much more to the world than *just* the United

States" (Interview, 8/13/08, 728-729). She echoed this in a later interview saying, "I am

so geared towards getting them [her students] involved in thinking about the world

around them and what's going on…I'm so excited about the idea of introducing them to

things that they may [have] never heard about" (Interview, 1/5/09, 449-451). Victoria

wanted to be a teacher who developed both cultural awareness and sociocultural consciousness within her students.

Unlike the others, Karissa never articulated such a vision of teacher. In fact, not once did she talk of teaching as opening minds. There were two conversations however where Karissa talked about exposing students to diversity, "I guess I want to make sure that they're exposed to different stuff in my classroom" (Interview, 8/22/08, 36-37). She explained the elusive "stuff" as diversity and coming from different cultures. The other time Karissa talked directly about this topic she was explaining that "part of being culturally responsive is exposing them [students] to other stuff, like stuff they're not always around but also like taking advantage of the stuff that you *do* have around but not necessarily everybody's aware of" (Interview, 4/15/09, 467-469). Again, Karissa was vague in her description of how to bring diversity into the classroom in concrete ways but recognized its importance. Her words appear to be an example of ventriloquation, which "occurs when a speaker speaks through the voice of another for the purpose of social or interactional positioning" (Samuelson, 2009, p. 52). Karissa recognized the importance of exposing students to diversity from the authoritative discourses she had heard within teacher education and used such language to position herself as a culturally responsive teacher in our conversations and in seminar but not necessarily making it her own.

All of the participants were committed to working with racially and linguistically diverse students. They each arrived at this commitment in different ways but by the end of the study each expressed a desire to be a Title 1 school teacher in a culturally diverse setting. For Karissa, her life history drew her to work with students from low

socioeconomic status. She explained it was "partly because I can identify with them…having been on the lower end myself growing up. There's a certain, I guess deeper sounds really corny, but like deeper kind of something that you can connect with the students" (interview, 1/14/09, 570-574). As a result of this connection, Karissa did not see being poor as a negative thing or something to be overcome in the classroom. She said she did not "want to be in a school where there's a bunch of English speaking White kids…I like diversity so I want to be somewhere where there is diversity in the population" (Interview, 11/30/07, 349-351).

Like Karissa, Natasha's life history greatly shaped the type of students she desired to work with. Despite beginning the program being interested in eventually teaching in a Montessori school, Natasha ended the program committed to returning from Spain to teach in a Title 1 school with culturally and linguistically diverse students. She attributed this decision to her experiences at Clayburn. Maria always envisioned herself teaching in a school with a majority of African American students but interning at Clayburn created a desire in her to work with other racial and ethnic groups as well as linguistically diverse students. She wanted to work with students who she deemed less fortunate than herself and in need of extra help. Victoria, likewise saw herself as a teacher of diverse students but went on to express a desire to work with diverse colleagues as well, explaining that she wanted to see

> …racial diversity among the teachers there too. Not just thirty-something [pause] middle class, White females. Like if there is someone where English is their second language and they're teaching a class, like that kind of diversity. And diversity in even the office staff and things like that, 'cause it just shows there is no-- or hopefully there's no true barrier or it's not just like we want to shelter our

children and we want all of one kind. 'Cause I've been in that school too and it jus-- I don't feel like I belong there. I don't feel like I could be a part of that. (Interview, 4/14/09, 21-26)

Victoria was determined to find such a school to begin her teaching career.

All of the participants desired to be teachers who lived their understanding of culturally responsiveness. They wanted to work with and for diverse people, modeling acceptance and care. Their understandings of culturally responsive teaching influenced the kind of teacher they envisioned themselves to be as well as the students they hoped to work with someday.

The Kind of Teacher I Am Now

To understand the kind of teacher the participants were during their internship, it was important to not only rely on their descriptions during interviews but to triangulate such data through observations. For example, Victoria talked often during interviews and seminar about the importance of knowing her students well. Such discourse manifested itself in her actions as well. She was observed spending lunch, recess, and non-instructional time with her students talking and asking questions. She said, "I'm so receptive to *their* ideas. I listen. I think I'm just a really good listener and I try to soak up *every* thing that they talk about or they say that they're interested in" (Interview, 1/5/09, 419-420).

Victoria worked to understand where her students were coming from and things that influenced them not only as students but as people. During internship, Victoria noticed one girl did not select lunch for the day. She told the following story about this incident:

204

I was telling you that some of the girls felt comfortable with me and they wanted to talk to me. Well, this little girl didn't make a lunch choice for the day and I asked her why that was and she said, "You know I'm fat. I need to lose weight. I'm not going to eat anymore." And she's like, "I want to look like you!" I'm like, "Have you *ever* seen me *not* eat? I get extras sometimes. [laughs] Like have you ever seen me not eat once?" And she's like, "No." I asked, "Why do you think that you're fat or that you want to lose weight?" And she said, "My dad told me I was fat." That stayed with me for a really long time because I was just like…she's already talking about trying to be anorexic. That was a very awakening moment for me because I realized that they'll be with me five days a week but they're also with their parents, who might not think the same way I do or [pause] not think at all, saying things like that. But you know, I'm going to take that home with me and it's going to be hard to separate, to-- I don't know I just worry that I'm going to get in there and see a child abused or things like that and that's going to be really, really hard for me to not be emotional about or to separate myself from and not want to try to do something about it. Even though all I can really do is notify someone else…I took her telling me that as a way to make it a teachable moment. So then I brought in snack the next day and I brought in grapes and fruits and strawberries and stuff like that. Everybody loved them and they were all about it. And I was like, "So you like this stuff and it's healthy for you and it's good too! You know you don't necessarily have to *not* eat, you know you might just *change* the way you eat." (Interview, 8/28/08, 616-638)

Another example being when Victoria realized Andrea, a shy ELL student in her class, was processing information slower than the others. She stayed inside with her at recess time to help review skills and provide extra problems. These instances also demonstrate culturally responsive teaching in Victoria's strong ethic of care and knowledge of her students' needs.

Victoria also saw her role as "kind of being like a surrogate mother in a way," (Interview, 1/5/09, 503-504) introducing them to new things, expanding their experiences, and caring for them. When thinking about her students moving to middle school the following year, Victoria expressed what any "mother" would, "It's hard not to worry about them" (Interview, 4/06/09, 238-239). Many students at Clayburn Elementary

came from low SES homes and teachers had to work hard to build prior knowledge at times. However, Victoria's positioning of herself as surrogate mother seems more than this; it is another instance of the discourse of privilege seeping into her best of intentions to be culturally responsive. What was wrong with the student's own mother that she had to step in as surrogate? In what ways did she view their experiences as limited and how was her caring for students different from their parents? While Victoria's care for students was obvious, the motivation for that care seemed at times to derive from a position of privilege.

Because of this deep care for students, Victoria struggled with the role of teacher as authority in the classroom.

> I'm still trying to find myself as the disciplinarian though; because I feel *bad* sometimes calling people down 'cause they give the sad look or the slumped shoulders or something…I think in my head, "I hope I didn't just ruin their day"…'cause if you *don't* establish [discipline and control] it can be bad [laughs]. (Interview, 8/28/08, 175-178, 187)

Early in the program, Victoria saw her struggle to take on this authoritative role conflicting with her strong desire to develop positive relationships with students. She credits developing her "teacher look" to working with first graders during her second semester of internship,

> With the fifth graders [during her first semester]…I was too caught into trying to be their friend…With the first-graders, I realized they don't care whether you're a friend or not, they're going to tell you what they think…so that's when I realized I *had* to be like, "What are you doing?"…*the look* works for them. (Interview, 8/28/08, 222-230)

Victoria also talked about what was required to develop good classroom management and control in the following narrative,

> …it's so hard because I do want them to [pause] not be my friend I guess, but I do want them to have a comfort level with me…and to see the disciplinarian side of course, because I will be stern because I know that that's what I *have* to do. But then I also want them to see the side that…they could talk to me…I want the trust factor but I also want the respect factor too. So I think both are *so* important, because if they don't trust me then the respect-- they almost go hand in hand. I want them to respect me as well so we can have an orderly classroom and a good year and learn and do as much as we possibly could but then at the same time, both of them [respect and trust] have to be present in order for that to happen. (Interview, 8/28/08, 292-305)

Victoria's developing understandings of culturally responsive teaching led her to identify respect and trust as key ingredients to managing student behavior. She also realized with respect and trust she would be able to reconcile the role of authority with her ethic of care for students. By the time she finished student teaching, Victoria shared, "Something that I noticed right off the bat…I was going to have to be a lot more stern than I had been before because like I *needed* their attention all day, instead of before teaching like one lesson" (Interview, 4/6/09, 7-10). Victoria worked to put responsibility for behavior on her students, rather than have to stop or be constantly calling them down. Of all the participants, Victoria most successfully managed to develop both strong positive relationships with students and effective classroom management.

Like Victoria, the other participants struggled with the line between friendship and authority in the classroom. Natasha explained, "I ride that line between friendship and teacher, which can be dangerous…but I really want my students to know that *they're* respected and that I appreciate them just as much as they should appreciate me"

(Interview, 1/9/09, 369-374). Natasha developed positive relationships with her students throughout her internships, clearly demonstrating her strong ethic of care. This was evident in the way students pleaded to sit with her at lunch or play with her at recess, held her hand in the hallway, and expressed their sadness on her last day of student teaching. Her small stature, standing at just five feet, made Natasha at times blend in with her students in the classroom, which made taking control of the engaging and active lessons she planned even more difficult. In observations, Natasha often had to repeat directions to stop an activity, to put things away, or to move on to something new. Although classroom management was at times a struggle for Natasha, she was able to develop ways of maintaining positive relationships and control of the classroom by the end of student teaching.

Karissa also spoke to this issue of balance saying, "I guess I kind of like tread the line between being really fun and like their friend [and being their teacher]. Still I guess part of that has to do with, I'm still the intern and not the *real* teacher" (Interview, 8/22/08, 107-109). At the beginning of student teaching, Karissa was still looking for that balance, "I feel like I'm still too much on the friend side, like having fun with them and stuff" (Interview, 1/14/09, 306-307). In early observations, Karissa struggled to develop strong control of the classroom and students' activity, especially when they were doing something she deemed "fun" or working in small groups. By the time she finished student teaching, Karissa was gaining comfort and confidence in her role as authority within the classroom, not hesitating to call a student down or redirect students as needed.

Maria's discourse expressed the importance of developing strong, positive

relationships with students as well. She, like the others, struggled to find balance between

these relationships and developing classroom management. Maria explained her struggle

in the following narrative:

> I like to try to be on their level you know. Like I don't want to be so far above
> them that they can't relate to me. I don't know, like the friend thing [pause] you
> know [the] teacher/friend line that you don't know where you stand type thing.
> Right now I mean I like to joke around with them, especially the fourth graders
> but then it's like I want them to like respect me and listen to me and stuff like that.
> But it's that line-- like I need to define the line. You know I want it to be
> something where I can have fun with them and they can learn like they need to.
> (Interview, 7/12/08, 378-385).

Maria felt like she did not have enough experience to find that balance even during

student teaching. She acknowledged that her student teaching placement was with a class

that did not have major discipline issues. After one semester she said of them, "they're

like the best class in the school" (Interview, 12/29/08, 447-448). She realized that her

cooperating teacher had worked hard to establish such an environment over the previous

two years, having looped up with them twice. Maria recognized the struggle it was for

her to take on an authoritative role in a classroom that she felt did not have typical

behavior issues explaining, "I pulled the easy straw or something 'cause it's been easy to

deal with them" (Interview, 4/1/09, 366-367). Because of this experience, Maria worried

whether or not she would be able to develop classroom management the following year in

a classroom of her own. She explained her style of classroom management in the

following description of her as a teacher, "I think that I'm fun [sighs, then laughs], pretty

laid back. I'm more of the, I'll wait till you get quiet than screaming at you to be quiet,

'cause that's not my style" (Interview, 4/1/09, 437-438).

All of the participants spoke of the performance aspect of teaching. Karissa talked

about teaching in an almost theatrical manner, being able to recognize herself as teacher

most easily when she was in front of the students.

> When I'm up there in front of the kids, I can feel myself *being* the teacher and I
> think…even though I'm really nervous about it, I'm comfortable at the same time
> because I feel like [pause] this is what I want to do. I need the practice so it's
> encouraging I guess to be up there and be able to like, pretend I'm over the crowd
> and watching me and be like, "Yeah, I'm really doing it, like it's happening."
> (Interview, 8/22/08, 300-304)

Karissa's discourse about teaching contained a sense of teacher as performer in front of

students as audience. "I'm nervous but it's fun up there in front of the kids and having

their attention…I mean that's really cool to me but I do get really nervous so I need to

just keep practicing being up there" (Interview, 8/22/08, 143-145).

Because Maria's personality was so laid back and easy going, she struggled with

this performance aspect of teaching. "I'm just very laid back, I'm like whatever, just go

with it" (Interview, 11/29/07, 813). This relaxed demeanor at times came across as a lack

of interest in or passion for teaching. Maria shared that her first cooperating teacher told

her to practice in front of the mirror and work on being enthusiastic with the students. By

the second year in the program, Dr. Fire also spoke to Maria about needing to express

enthusiasm for and in her teaching. During the two years in the study, Maria rarely raised

her voice (with the infrequent exception of talking about cultural topics like race and

religion that she was extremely passionate about), never yelled, and at times even spoke

passionate words in a monotone voice. She explained, "I *am* enthusiastic [whispers] like on the inside [normal voice] but I don't necessarily show it. But that's with everything, that's just how I am" (Interview, 7/12/08, 288-290). She felt, "It's harder to change my personality than it is to learn how to teach" (297-298). Maria saw her personal identity conflicting with her professional identity as teacher.

This sense of struggle to perform as teacher was evident in observations. Maria did not step in front of the room, take charge, and begin a lesson. Rather, she went up front; the kids continued to talk, read, or work on something; and then suddenly the lesson was under way. Maria described teaching a lesson this way, "I'm usually pretty slow at like everything I do, like getting there but once I'm there, I'm into it. But it's like getting myself together to-- like getting my thoughts together, it's hard for me" (Interview, 7/12/08, 309-312). Her difficulty in enacting the role of teacher was evident in observations as well as her discourse about teaching. For example, Maria could clearly articulate the need for culturally responsive teaching but had difficulty in describing what it might look like as well as enacting it within the classroom and in her relationships with students. It seemed much easier for Maria to talk theory than to enact practice. Taking on the role of teacher was very difficult for her.

Maria's lack of confidence in her own knowledge of the curriculum also made the performance as teacher difficult. She explained,

> I'm *not* an academic person…so when I get into the classroom, my [dis]comfort with academics definitely shows…I don't know if I know what I'm doing and the kids *definitely* don't know what I'm teaching. You know they don't know the information that I'm teaching them, but for me to get that through my head that

211

they're gonna learn, it's harder for me. That's one of the major things I have to work on is confidence. (Interview, 7/12/08, 211, 218-223)

As a result of these feelings, Maria worried about student teaching and said she didn't feel "smart enough to teach them 'cause I don't necessarily *know* everything they're learning. Like I have to go reteach myself and I know that's normal but it's just confidence stuff" (Interview, 12/29/08, 683-685). Maria seemed to struggle with confidence in her content knowledge of subjects more than pedagogical knowledge.

Natasha also felt like a performer during certain semesters of internship. As with her work with younger students, this was not as natural for her, as evident in this narrative:

> At times, I felt like I was putting on a show, with like the younger kids; being really sweet and stuff. But I realized that…with fifth-grade, I was able to use sarcasm with the kids and just, I became really comfortable with them…I felt more like myself. I didn't feel like I was putting on a show all the time. (Interview, 8/11/08, 137-144)

Early on Natasha expressed nervousness about being in front of the students. She struggled with self-doubt that she would fail. Her insecurities were evident at the beginning of student teaching when she compared herself to teammates at the school, "Some of these girls, I feel are *already* teachers…just like power walking around the school with their [cooperating teacher] like they are *teachers*. They got their expandable file folders and they're walking into class and they're on top of it." (Interview, 1/9/09, 279-282). For Natasha, being a teacher was in the performance or the look that she felt she had not yet achieved.

212

Even more than the others, Victoria felt that teaching *was* performing, every day in every lesson. She explained,

> [Student teaching has] brought out the actress in me… like I'll change up my voices or I'll be like-- I'll use really sarcastic arm movements and just you know [pause] just to switch it up and make it different for like-- [bored voice] "Today we're going to learn about." [normal voice] You know that's boring for me so I'm just like every lesson it's something, I'm trying to change it up or make it different. (Interview, 4/6/09, 168, 173-176).

During observations it was easy to note Victoria's excitement and enthusiasm for teaching and learning. She used exaggerated actions and dynamic voices to draw students into her lessons and keep their attention. Her lessons were engaging, active, and constructivist in nature. She worked hard to connect new information to the students' prior knowledge in creative and interesting ways, representing her cultural competence. Victoria felt her students might describe her as a little crazy but she labeled herself as animated explaining,

> I like to just be sporadic and kind of spontaneous. Like if they're not paying attention to me, I'll do something really just off the wall and then they're like, "What is she doing?" and I'm like, "Ok, so now that I got your attention"…I'm still getting their attention, just I'm going about it a different way…I definitely like to make them laugh and be involved. (Interview, 1/5/09, 407-413, 418)
>
> I try to make it entertaining. I feel like, in my mind, if they're laughing *at* me then they're at least paying attention you know 'cause I'm so goofy, but then that means at least I got their attention. So I'm going to take it and run with it while I can. So I do silly stuff. (Interview, 4/6/09, 62-65)

Victoria's classroom was filled will laughter, and students often expressed enjoyment with her lessons. An example of her animated performances was during an observation

when Victoria had students solving math problems on the board. She called volunteers her "math rock stars" and after they solved a problem they had to play air guitar with her and take a bow. She explained, "They *want* to be the next rock star so it gets a lot more hands raised" (Interview, 4/6/09, 68-69). Such lively performances were regular occurrences in Victoria's classroom throughout her student teaching.

Despite feeling like an actress, Victoria did not feel as though she had to be or was the authority on knowledge in the classroom. She said, "I'm not on a pedestal. I'm no better than they are. I make mistakes like they do and I'm totally ok with making a mistake in front of them and laughing at myself" (Interview, 4/14/09, 323-235). This attitude allowed Victoria to model being a life-long learner and someone who enjoyed learning something new. It also empowered her students to share in generating knowledge versus simply receiving knowledge.

All of the participants considered themselves to be culturally responsive teachers by the end of student teaching. At times they felt alone in their knowledge of culture and openness to diversity. In a final focus group discussing culturally responsive teaching, Maria expressed that "it's hard to be *us*. It's hard to be-- really we are the minority because *we* think the way we think. I don't know it's hard to be as open as we are and not [pause] understand why others aren't" (Focus Group, Spring 2009). The others agreed and went on to share stories about instances where they encountered people who were very closed to diversity, had the understanding that all Hispanic people come from Mexico, and did not understand their excitement and enthusiasm for working at Clayburn Elementary.

The group began to use the word "mindset" to explain how they understood culturally responsive teaching. They explained this mindset in the following dialogical narrative:

> K: It's where you've come from and what you've been through and how you choose to take and apply to yourself [the information from teacher education].
>
> M: *That's* the openness; the major part of culturally responsive teaching.
>
> C: So, if you're not open you can't be a culturally responsive teacher?
>
> M: If you're not open [pause]--
>
> K: It's not just being open to what they have. It's like being open to your kids by giving them what you know but also being open to learn for yourself and change. And if you realize that you're wrong you have to be open to [pause]--
>
> V: Being wrong.
>
> K: To being wrong, *saying* you're wrong and fixing it.
>
> M: Or just being willing to learn you know. Like I don't know everything about Hispanic culture. I mean it's many countries. So I don't know everything about El Salvador, I don't know everything about where my kids come from, but I'm willing to learn. (Focus Group, Spring 2009).

For each of them being open was a key ingredient in being culturally responsive and something they each felt they were. Later they shared the importance of taking that openness and using it to teach their students about diversity.

> M: It's not something I *think* about…I don't think about it and like with planning; I *want* to incorporate diverse books. I *want* to. I mean *why not*?
>
> C: What makes you want to?

215

M: 'Cause there's no reason *not* to. I mean it's out there, I might have to go find it but I mean why wouldn't you want your kids to be exposed to as much as they can be exposed to?

K: Yeah, there's so much out there, let them see.

N: I think that's really scary for some teachers.

M: Mm hmm. 'Cause they don't know.

N: …if they don't have the idea in their head, how are they going to pass it on to their students? I don't want to say that they're scared, but if they don't know and if they don't feel completely secure with it, I think that keeps a lot of people from-- and it robs their children of it because there is so much out there and for a person to be uncomfortable with it and not pass it on is *so* unfair. So unfair. (Focus Group, Spring, 2009)

Karissa, Natasha, and Victoria each told stories about helping students deal with cultural issues in the classroom. Karissa had a student tell another that he hated Black people. She had the cooperating teacher help her deal with this issue by talking to the students. Natasha had a little girl singing in Spanish during recess. Another girl went up to her and said, "Stop singing, your language is stupid." She brought the girls together and had a conversation. Victoria dealt with a White student telling children on the playground that everyone in his group home "weren't nothing but a bunch of Blacks and Mexicans." The other students went to Victoria calling him a racist. She had a private conversation with the student about his feelings and words. Each of them dealt with the situation differently but they identified such work as part of what culturally responsive teachers must do.

N: [We have to] break the cycle.

V: Use those moments and use them to your advantage and to their's [the students] and to their children if they take it to heart.

216

M: Teaching them to think for themselves.

V: Yeah.

M: I think that's a big part of it too. Not just take what their parents or siblings or whoever is telling them or even *us* you know. That decision making, you give them what they need and whether they choose to keep it or do something with it for themselves you know--

N: They can take the ball and keep running or just drop it. (Focus Group, Spring 2009)

Because of their own openness to diversity and cultural topics the participants were each attracted to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching within the teacher education program and worked to assimilate the language into their own discourses of teaching. For them, culturally responsive teaching was natural, it was just teaching, the only way they knew how to teach. This may account for the difficulty they had in picking out ways that they themselves were being culturally responsive in their teaching as evident in this dialogical narrative:

N: I mean I think [being culturally responsive has] been engrained in us from the very beginning so like to sit there and be like, "Oh, I'm being culturally responsive when I do that," that's completely foreign to me. Because we've been doing it since the very beginning so I mean I don't know any other way.

K: It's hard to pick it out for yourself. Like what am I doing? Like I think we *know* what [culturally responsive teaching] is and we *can* pick it out like with this [viewing a video and talking about it] so like if I sat down and watched a tape of myself I guess I could pick it out but just sitting here and thinking. Like it's something that we try to do all the time…

V: I think it's probably even in the little basic things that we *don't* think about. (Focus Group, Spring 2009)

Each participant expressed that they wanted to be a culturally responsive teacher and each demonstrated, although to different levels, cultural responsiveness during student teaching.

Narratives of Negotiation

Research shows that preservice teachers often believe their own experiences in schooling have given them the knowledge of what good teaching looks like and how to do it (Pajares, 1992; Lortie, 1975). Lasley (1980) found that preservice teachers believe learning to teach should be done through experience in the classroom. The experiences within Clayburn Elementary gave the participants opportunities to observe as well as enact cultural responsiveness in ways that they might not have had without interning in such a diverse school. They identified possible teaching selves and worked to enact them within a context that valued such cultural responsiveness. Also important to their developing teacher identities were the negotiations that took place as the participants worked to reconcile authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of teaching and learning. First, the participants worked to reconcile the authoritative discourses of teaching they encountered in course work with those they observed in the school as well as the internally persuasive discourses of teaching and learning within themselves. Second, they negotiated the dual role of both student and teacher as they sought to step into the classroom as full-time teachers. And last, the negotiation of practices and "possible selves" as they sought to author their teacher identity in relation to those around them. Each type of negotiation allowed the participants to find their voice, author

218

themselves in specific and unique ways, and ultimately begin to construct their professional teacher identities.

Negotiating the Authoritative Discourses of Course Work and Internship

The participants in this study all specifically selected to be placed on a team that would intern at a culturally and linguistically diverse Title 1 school. They were all interested in pursuing ESL certification by being on this team. As discussed in chapter four, the participants came to teacher education with a predisposition to take interest in cultural issues as well as different life experiences that made them open to diversity. Each had a certain degree of sociocultural consciousness upon entry to the program that deepened because of their experiences, especially during internship at Clayburn Elementary. Because of these factors, the participants seemed more receptive to certain authoritative discourses they encountered in the teacher education program (e.g., culturally responsive teaching, constructivism, differentiated learning, alternative assessments) and incorporated this language into their own discourses of teaching and learning and ultimately their teacher identity.

While there were several negotiations of authoritative discourse present in the data, in this section I will look at two in particular. The first being the authoritative discourse of constructivist teaching, which is one of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and one that the participants assimilated readily, although with different levels of understanding. The authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching is the second discourse addressed in this section. As discussed in chapter one, these two authoritative discourses gained a sense of authority from their presence within

the university curriculum and presented by those in authority who were seen as more knowledgeable but are not authoritative in a Bakhtinian sense.

The discourse of constructivist teaching. The teacher education program was committed to demonstrating constructivist teaching for its preservice teachers. Despite this commitment, the teacher educators implemented constructivism within their courses to different degrees. Some designed lessons and activities that were constructivist in nature but did not necessarily discuss it, others had students read about it or stressed its importance without clearly modeling it, and a few made it implicit in the lessons' activities and dialogue as well as explicit in directing attention to or teaching about specific components of constructivism. For the participants in this study, most of their course work included aspects of constructivist teaching and their team leader, Dr. Fire, modeled it in powerful and concrete ways during her methods courses and seminar. As a result, each of the participants incorporated hands-on, engaging lessons in their planning and seemed to understand the importance of children being involved and active in their learning.

Karissa did not use the term constructivism in her talk of teaching and learning. The teaching she saw modeled during internship was not constructivist and lacked the engagement she expected to see. Karissa struggled with giving worksheets to her students as directed by the plans of the cooperating teacher, rather, she wanted her students to have opportunities to move around the room and explore. She often planned lessons that she felt would be engaging and fun for her students but her lessons at times lacked student-centered activities and relied on more teacher-directed learning. During small

group work, Karissa did not mind noisy interactions and lots of movement. As discussed in further detail in a later section, this was very different from what she observed in her cooperating teachers' small group instruction. She struggled to reconcile this difference questioning her ability to teach, "I'm still never one hundred percent sure that what I'm doing is the right thing" (Interview, 4/15/09, 222-223).

To her credit, Karissa worked to incorporate the hands-on, engaging activities that she saw modeled in teacher education into her daily reality within the school with some level of success. Her understanding of constructivism seemed limited, however, to hands-on and engaging activities for her students and did not move to include the students' construction of or sources of knowledge. She remained the authority of knowledge in the classroom and saw it as her responsibility to impart this knowledge to her students. This limited understanding may be due to the teacher education program's more implicit instruction of constructivism, and Karissa's exposure to teaching methods that were active and hands-on throughout methods courses. In the end, Karissa developed a teacher identity that valued hands-on, engaging tasks for her students, but she failed to see the importance of the students' construction of knowledge through such tasks.

Maria's understanding of constructivism was mostly centered on including hands-on and engaging activities in planning as well, although she ventured deeper during one interview to include critical thinking and the importance of longer, more sustained learning over time. Maria had incorporated phrases from the language of constructivism into her discourse of planning and teaching as evident in this explanation of planning:

Like every lesson I do is not a one lesson thing…I want my kids to get a lot out of everything…a lot of my lessons are like, *I'll do this over a week*…I think a lot of my stuff is *student directed*, like I want them to *figure out things for themselves*, so that's why it's kind of in depth. Like I want them to be able to take a week…that's kind of what we have been learning in [teacher education]…like *I don't give them all the answers*. (Interview, 12/29/08, 359-368, italics added)

She observed and was able to identify constructivist strategies in her internship classrooms listing the use of manipulatives, table groups, and shoulder partner talk as positive strategies she planned to use. However, it seemed easier for Maria to talk about planning in constructivist ways than to implement such teaching in the classroom, perhaps due to the time restrictions she encountered in the classroom. The fifth grade at Clayburn had a schedule that dissected their day into small bits and pieces of different subjects with most periods lasting 25-30 minutes at the most. Marie felt,

I could have made a lot of my math lessons more hands-on, although some of them were really good, I could have done more with [pause] well if I [sarcastic tone] had more time I *would* have done more [normal voice] with writing, like do[ing] more mini-lesson type things. (Interview, 4/1/09, 836-839)

Prior to student teaching, Maria worried about fitting everything in, especially since she tended to plan longer, deeper and more elaborate lessons. She explained,

I *want* to do so much, but then I don't have enough time…like I *want* to do a lot…but I just don't know how to get it all in there. (Interview, 7/12/08, 609-611)

I feel like as much preparation as we get, like best practices and all that, once you actually get in the schools, it's like you have to figure out how to put all that in there. Some times it doesn't all fit, it doesn't all work. (Interview, 4/1/09, 267-269)

Maria struggled to negotiate what she knew to be good teaching methods with what she could fit into the day.

Maria's struggle with fitting things in emerged from her teaching experiences prior to student teaching. As part of her methods courses and seminar, she was required to teach a certain number of full class or small group lessons each semester. These lessons centered on concepts, strategies, or methods from her coursework. For example, in social studies methods, the preservice teachers were asked to design a topic page on a concept from the state standard course of study for their grade level. They then taught this lesson to their students using either full class or small group instruction. Maria explained that she spent a great deal of time planning for these lessons and she did not always see how they fit within the larger curriculum sequence for the grade level. Therefore, when Maria went to student teach full-time she wondered, "How am I going to plan for an entire day?" (Interview, 12/29/08, 652). Her desire to spend a great deal of time planning engaging, constructivist lessons for her students was trumped by time limitations both on her for planning and in the classroom for teaching. As a result, she followed the scope and sequence of the textbook or the state pacing guide during student teaching, only venturing from them during a social studies unit they had planned the previous semester and were required to teach during student teaching. Maria's negotiations of the authoritative discourse of constructivism led her to embrace and enact part of the theory's characteristics. She believed teaching should be engaging, student-centered, and interactive. Despite the time limitations and not being able to always enact such teaching, this belief became internally persuasive.

Victoria student taught in a fifth-grade classroom as well, encountering the same

dissected daily schedule as Maria. She even expressed early on, "I'm not really nervous

about the teaching part of it because I feel like I got that. It's the planning part, where…I

have to chop my day up into 20 different directions to make sure I get everything in"

(Interview, 8/28/08, 723-726). For Victoria, the authoritative discourse of constructivism

from teacher education had resonated with her beliefs about teaching and learning and

had become part of her internally persuasive discourse of teaching; and because of her

commitment to and understanding of constructivism, Victoria was able to better negotiate

the time restrictions of the daily schedule.

> As a beginning teacher you're kind of freaking out because you're like, "There's
> so much I have to do and so little time"… but it *is* possible to fit everything in and
> to reach everybody on their level and help them get to the next steps…It does take
> a lot of work, but it's possible. Like it can be done, you just have to plan up and
> kind of plan down too. (Interview, 1/5/09, 305-311)

As Victoria planned lessons to meet the needs of all of her students she said, "I've

learned a lot of engagement is a key to get them excited about anything. So like I come

up with *really* probably over the top engagement activities now" (Interview, 1/5/09, 314-

316). Victoria discovered, "Something I've learned is the whole engagement thing is

meant for teachers too. For me, if I'm excited about teaching it, then they're going to be

excited about learning it or they're going to be interested in it" (Interview, 1/5/09, 335-

337).

> Victoria said of planning for such engaging activities:

> …if I can involve food or us getting up or doing something with our hands, that's
> so much more fun than reading out of a textbook or doing a worksheet…it does

224

take a little more planning and time to like, get materials together and really think through stuff [but] it's worth it because I think a lot of them are going to remember this. (Interview, 4/6/09, 155-160)

While students enjoyed and responded positively to the fun and hands-on activities Victoria planned, one might question whether Victoria relied too heavily on her engaging activities to motivate them rather than developing a more intrinsic motivation or whether her students were learning to use the texts effectively to construct new knowledge for themselves. Victoria worked hard to ensure that her students were engaged in her lessons and learning the concepts covered. Because of her understanding that good teaching and learning involved engaging, hands-on activities where students made connections and engaged in questioning and critical thinking, Victoria's planning did require a lot of extra time outside of school. She did not mind spending such time and said, "If it's not fun for me to plan it or fun for me to teach it, I'm like, 'Ah, I don't know that I want to do it'" (Interview, 4/14/09, 465-466).

Another aspect of constructivist teaching for Victoria, involved the source of knowledge. In Victoria's classroom knowledge was constructed through activities and conversations the class participated in together. She did not see herself as the keeper or dispenser of knowledge. As a result, she had no fear with making mistakes in front of her students or not knowing an answer to their questions. She explained,

When they ask me questions that I *don't* know the answer to, I'm like, "Wow, that's a really good question. I've never thought about that…but we can look at it. If you want to take some time, we can look on the computer and see if we can find it and then report back to everybody"…I make it an effort [to] do it together and I let [them] take the glory for telling everybody else…Just being human you know, not feeling like I have to be perfect and I can't allow them to see me

225

vulnerable, because they're vulnerable a lot of the times and I think they need to see that in you as a teacher so you can be more approachable and they can learn from you as you learn from each other really. (Interview, 4/14/09, 332-341)

Her insistence on all of them being capable of generating knowledge within the classroom empowered her students, validated their cultural frames of reference, and seemed to give them a powerful model of a life-long learner.

Victoria's negotiation of constructivist teaching was one that made her reconcile what she experienced in school as a child, what she learned in teacher education, and what she felt students needed to make learning engaging and meaningful. She came to understand constructivist teaching to be more than engaging tasks for students. She practiced scaffolded learning, provided opportunities for them to be responsible for their learning, and valued and validated the role of their prior experiences and cultural knowledge in their current learning. Victoria was not the authority and her students were not passive recipients of knowledge but rather they worked together to construct knowledge. Although Victoria did not refer directly to her teaching as constructivism she enacted an identity of a constructivist teacher by the end of student teaching.

Although Natasha did not use the term constructivism either, she placed a great deal of emphasis on planning hands-on, engaging activities for her students. She assimilated the language of this authoritative discourse from her teacher education program and was able to identify instances of it (without naming it) in the classroom in teacher education and internship. Natasha's understanding of constructivism involved engaging students in hands-on activities, critical thinking, and group work involving dialogue. She worked hard to incorporate such activities into her teaching.

During student teaching, Natasha was reading an ESL teaching strategy book that Dr. Fire had given her. Most of the strategies in the book would be classified as constructivist. Upon reading the book, Natasha realized that, "These activities that they're saying are so great for ESL students…we already do these. We're already subconsciously putting so many of these practices into action…" (Interview, 4/20/09, 79-82). The example and expectations of Dr. Fire throughout the program, as well as examples of best teaching practices with language learners that she observed in internship, led Natasha to incorporate such practices into her possible self as teacher and naturally plan for and implement constructivist teaching in her classroom.

Natasha's experiences with students during internship moved her past a somewhat limited understanding of constructivism as merely involving the nature of the tasks used to engage students. She began to see the importance of validating her students' cultural knowledge as well. The lesson in which her students shared their experiences with Dia del los Muertes was an example of empowering her students to share their knowledge. Rather than being the expert, she deferred to their experiential and cultural knowledge. Natasha shared other examples of validating students' cultural knowledge in her classroom throughout internship. This understanding of using students' cultural knowledge coincides with culturally responsive teaching as well.

Natasha's beliefs about teaching and learning and her experience in teacher education and internship allowed her to assimilate the authoritative discourse of constructivism. Her assimilation of this discourse was beginning to move to what Bakhtin (1981) calls "retelling in one's own words" by the end of student teaching, making

constructivism part of her internally persuasive discourse of teaching and part of her teacher identity.

The discourse of culturally responsive teaching. The authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching makes its way into most teacher education programs these days. With an emphasis on preparing teachers for diverse settings, teacher education programs work to incorporate courses in multicultural education or diversity into the requirements for graduation and discussions of culturally responsive or relevant teaching into their methods courses. The department at the university in this study for example, had incorporated the language into its mission statement saying,

> …The ultimate purpose of education is to ensure students' intellectual, cultural, and social growth so that they may become active, reflective citizens. To achieve this goal, our graduates draw from knowledge of educational theory, policy, research, and practice to engage students in the active construction of knowledge, enact culturally responsive principles, adapt to the specific needs of their students, and assess and respond to students' performances. (Mission Statement for Teacher Education Department)

Although most teacher educators agree on the importance of helping beginning teachers "enact culturally responsive principles," there is less agreement on exactly what this means and how to go about it. We lack a single definition of the theory of culturally responsive teaching, and there has not been enough research to clearly demonstrate how cultural responsiveness can be developed (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007). Each teacher educator brings to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching their own understandings, life histories, and experiences that make it either remain at an authoritative level or become internally persuasive. Because of this, the

participants in the study encountered both the authoritative discourse of culturally

responsive teaching in course work as well as the internally persuasive discourse of

teaching in culturally responsive ways from some of their teacher educators and

cooperating teachers.

For the participants' team leader, Dr. Fire, culturally responsive teaching was

internally persuasive, it was naturally a part of who she was as a person and a teacher. Dr.

Fire's definition of culturally responsive teaching was,

> Teaching that reflects the individual strengths and needs and experiences of each
> individual child so that *all* children can connect to the instruction in some way,
> can see how the instruction is meaningful to them, can be engaged by that
> instruction. (Interview, 7/31/08, 129-132)

Not only did Dr. Fire believe this on a theoretical level, she modeled it in her own

teaching. She worked hard to get to know each of her students on a personal as well as

professional level. Her goal was to help them be "sensitive to the needs of all

children…have a real *passion* for kids and for what they do and that they are open

minded and flexible" (Interview, 7/31/08, 32-33).

The participants all saw this in Dr. Fire and shared stories about her commitment

to them as people and beginning teachers. Natasha felt Dr. Fire was "the absolute

definition of what a teacher should be" (Interview, 8/11/08, 421-422), modeling for them

ways of building community, strong relationships with students, and constructivist

teaching. Karissa recognized Dr. Fire's influence at Clayburn Elementary through

professional development sessions, demonstration lessons, and simply her presence.

Karissa felt the connection with the university was an important avenue for the teachers at Clayburn to learn new practices and strategies.

Among the teachers at Clayburn, culturally responsive teaching was a term infused with authority used in professional development or Masters courses. Like the teacher educators at the university, for some teachers at Clayburn, culturally responsive teaching resonated with their own beliefs about diversity, their students, and teaching and learning. It had become internally persuasive for them and was evident in their teaching and interactions. This was true for some of the cooperating teachers in the study.

It is within this environment and with these various players that the participants worked to negotiate the discourses of culturally responsive teaching with their beliefs and developing teacher identities. For all of the participants, the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching resonated with their own internally persuasive discourses about diversity, culture, and teaching and learning. They each assimilated the language of culturally responsive teaching into their own discourses of teaching and ultimately came to identify themselves as culturally responsive teachers.

Karissa talked about how being culturally responsive had come up throughout teacher education, even in classes where the instructor did not mention it. It was in the conversations of her peers who seemed almost fixated on the importance of planning for *all* students and meeting the needs of diverse learners. Such language was used when working on projects or lessons together and in class discussions. Since Karissa was a Teaching Fellow, she participated in an additional seminar each semester led by a teacher educator for whom culturally responsive teaching was an internally persuasive discourse

and embedded in her work with the preservice teachers. Karissa was exposed to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching in her course work as well as developed relationships with teacher educators with culturally responsive teacher identities.

Karissa's life experiences and her own attraction to diversity as a person translated into an openness as a teacher. She did not see differences, whether racial, ethnic, economic, or religious, as an obstacle in the classroom but felt these differences could be used to expose students to diversity. For Karissa, culturally responsive teaching involved an awareness of students' cultural backgrounds, an acceptance of and openness to diversity, and exposing students to diversity. At different times Karissa explained culturally responsive teaching as:

> …it's taking into account everything that encompasses people and kids because you're teaching the kids and their families. (Interview, 1/14/09, 11-12)
>
> I don't want to push [diversity] on my kids but I want them to have the opportunity to see that it's (diversity) there. (Interview, 8/22/08, 58-59)
>
> Part of being culturally responsive is exposing them to other stuff. Like stuff that they're not always around. (Interview, 4/15/09, 467-468)

Karissa came to see herself as a culturally responsive teacher by the end of student teaching and worked to enact her understandings of this discourse in her teaching.

For Karissa, at that point, culturally responsive teaching seemed to be assimilated in the more rigid form of assimilation that Bakhtin (1981) called "reciting by heart" where the authoritative discourse demanded her "unconditional allegiance" but did not allow her to "play with it, integrate it, or merge it with other voices that persuade[d her]"

(Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 219). It was difficult to see culturally responsive teaching enacted within the lessons observed, but it was evident in her strong ethic of care and personal interactions with students. Her commitment to diversity and cultural issues suggest that as Karissa enters the teaching profession she will likewise remain committed to culturally responsive teaching and continue to develop her understanding of what it means to be a culturally responsive teacher.

Maria entered the program with a high degree of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence. She had life experiences that put her in daily contact with an array of diverse individuals, and she described herself on the pilot study demographic information sheet as having "extensive" relationships with racially or ethnically diverse people. Morson (2004) explained that we "learn from people different from ourselves: we incorporate their voices *as living presences* within us" (326, italics in original). The experiences and voices of Maria's friends became part of her understandings, assumptions, beliefs, and ultimately her discourse about diversity. As she entered the teacher education program, these understandings, assumptions, and beliefs about diversity, culture, racism, etc. shaped the lens through which she came to understand the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching. This theory resonated with her and Maria began to assimilate the language into her own discourse about teaching and learning.

Maria was a person open to and interested in cultures and diversity. She understood that one's culture and background influence their experience in the classroom and therefore it became important to her to not make assumptions about her students but

rather get to know them as individuals. Maria had a strong ethic of care for her students as she began to teach. In fact, she identified compassion as a characteristic of culturally responsive teaching saying, "I don't think you can be a teacher without being compassionate" (Interview, 4/1/09, 496). Predominant in Maria's discourse of culturally responsive teaching was the idea of being open, "[Culturally responsive teaching] is like a mindset. Openness is a mindset that you have to have" (Interview, 4/1/09, 486-487).

While Maria easily assimilated the language of the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching into her conversations in interviews, course work, and seminar, her struggle came in articulating concretely what this meant for her in the classroom and in enacting these characteristics in her teaching and daily interactions with students. When explaining how her cooperating teacher was culturally responsive for example, Maria said,

> I mean, I think Ms. Sanders, she's a culturally responsive teacher. She's accepting of all her kids and all that [pause]…Like [using] cooperative groups, like having them work in table groups, and be able to talk to each other, having shoulder to shoulder partners where they would talk to a partner about things. (Interview, 4/1/09, 725-731)

It was difficult for Maria to identify in concrete ways how she herself was culturally responsive as well. She identified her social studies unit on courage as an example but struggled to explain how it was culturally responsive. She explained, "They were learning about culture…it was multicultural" and "For [their courageous person project], that was a diverse person. I mean I can name a couple White people [on the list the students chose from] but most of them were non-White" (Interview, 4/1/09, 549-550, 556-557). Thus,

233

despite being a large part of Maria's discourse about teaching, culturally responsive teaching was more difficult to see in concrete ways in her daily interactions and teaching at Clayburn.

Ultimately, Maria assimilated the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching, and she appropriated more than simply the words of culturally responsive discourse "but the world view and the values of that view" as well (Coulter, 1999, p. 6). In other words, she viewed herself as a culturally responsive teacher. Freedman and Ball (2004) explain that "ideological becoming refers to how we develop our way of viewing the world, our system of ideas, what Bakhtin calls an ideological self" (p. 5). Maria's ideological teaching self was tied to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive. Whether she was able to fully assimilate the language of this discourse in the more flexible form of assimilation of "retelling in one's own words" was difficult to tell as her actions within the classroom did not always match her discourse. As a teacher, she was committed to teaching in culturally responsive ways, but how well she will be able to translate that into actions within the classroom in the future remains to be seen.

Natasha's life experiences (e.g., attending a Spanish dual-immersion elementary school, being raised in a liberal home, working at her dad's warehouse, foreign travel, etc.) created an openness and acceptance of diversity, as well as strong sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence. These personal beliefs and understandings translated into a strong commitment to teaching students about diversity and opening their minds. She explained, "You can't teach open-mindedness but I had it going into [teaching] and I had already embraced it, so I was ready" (Interview, 4/20/09, 372-373).

When Natasha entered teacher education then, the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching meshed with her personal beliefs, assumptions, and ways of viewing the world. She quickly incorporated the language into her discourse of teaching and learning and applied it to her work with students, making it internally persuasive.

During the first year of interning at Clayburn, Natasha was in a classroom where the cooperating teacher did not place value on creating a sense of community among students. For Natasha, the need for community was tied to her understandings of culturally responsive teaching. She struggled with not seeing this among the students and attributed behavioral problems and fighting between students at the end of the year to the lack of community. Natasha explained, "there's not morning meeting in the schedule, and you can see it through the behaviors of the kids…it's helped me realize community is huge, huge for the success of the students in your classroom" (Interview, 1/9/09, 346-348).

This experience and others led Natasha to commit to developing a strong sense of community among her future students utilizing a technique called morning meetings. She was taught this technique in course work and saw it as a way to expose students to and work through issues of diversity as well as to develop strong commitment to one another and a sense of community. Natasha felt committed to such techniques, even though she did not see them in internship. She shared that "there was definitely some times where I was like, 'This is the *complete* opposite of what they taught us to do in school'" (Interview, 4/20/09, 489-490).

Another time Natasha worked to negotiate what she was learning in course work

and experiencing in internship, dealt with speaking Spanish. Natasha explained that she

had learned the importance of having students work in groups and talk through what they

were learning, either in English or their native language. During internship Natasha

witnessed the opposite occur. She told the following story about the event:

> So [about] being culturally responsive in Clayburn, I got a little [pause] cringe in
> my neck today 'cause I heard my [cooperating teacher] say-- you know she's
> teaching a lesson and they were *really* excited about it because it was like pouring
> cups of water and seeing how many cups go into a gallon and they were getting so
> *excited*…no matter what language you speak, whenever you get excited and
> you're forced to speak in your second language there's going to be times when you
> just get so overwhelmed, like you can't verbalize what you want to say in the
> amount of time, so you're going to…say things in Spanish. So the kids were
> getting really excited and saying things in Spanish and my [cooperating teacher],
> she was like, "Shhh, don't say that." Because she doesn't speak Spanish…and then
> [they] calmed down and then got excited again and said things in Spanish and she
> said, "*No* Spanish!" And I was just kind of like [made face of frustration] "Ugh!"
> you know because they're getting excited about a lesson and that's really exciting
> as a teacher but to kind of cut it down and say don't speak Spanish-- which I get it
> if you don't speak the language, it's really hard to hear it all around you and not
> know what they're saying and *thinking* that it could possibly be something bad.
> But you could look at their faces and tell they're just excited about the lesson.
> (Interview, 1/9/09, 22-45)

Natasha was very in tune to the language that teachers used when talking to or about

students. She recognized the powerful ways that language affirmed or marginalized

students. The instance with Sally, a team member who used the words "my three little

Black boys" and "those Mexican kids" when referring to students in her classroom, was

another instance of this power for Natasha. In this way, part of her identity as a culturally

responsive teacher was tied to a responsibility in using affirming language with and about

students.

Individuals "are situated within various ideological communities, each with a different language to articulate values [and] resilient but fluid ways of seeing the world recreated and mediated each time discourse with another occurs" (McKnight, 2004, p. 284). Natasha gravitated toward members of the team or cooperating teachers who held similar ideological beliefs about teaching (those who valued culturally responsiveness). She situated herself among likeminded professionals and was able to enact many of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching during internship as well as integrate it into her internally persuasive discourse of teaching among friends. Thus by the end of student teaching, Natasha found it difficult to pinpoint specific instances of her practicing cultural responsiveness during student teaching saying instead, "I'd like to think that it was the majority of my time" (Interview, 4/20/09, 434).

Victoria came to teacher education with a high degree of sociocultural consciousness because of her life experiences. She embraced diversity and looked for commonalities rather than differences. Her assumptions, beliefs, and understandings of such things as race, class, diversity, and culture greatly influenced how she attended to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching she was introduced to in teacher education. For Victoria, this discourse immediately connected to her internally persuasive discourse of teaching and learning and she not only took in the language but examined closely those she worked with for instances of it and worked to incorporate its principals into her own vision and discourse of teaching.

Victoria entered teacher education with a desire to help students become good, responsible citizens and recognized her role in "mold[ing] them into the people that

237

they're going to be" (Interview, 8/28/08, 34). She envisioned herself doing such work

after school or on a Saturday once a month. Course work and internship helped her figure

out that "I could do that stuff within the day and even integrate it with different subjects"

(Interview, 8/28/08, 87-88). Later she explained,

> The whole idea of [culturally responsive teaching] and teaching to the *whole* child, that's some thing I've always *felt*, but I didn't think it was possible. Like it was something that I always kind of had a passion for, so in my mind I thought I'll teach [them] on the side… but now I realize I *can* do that while I'm teaching math and social studies. I just have to present it in a different way and make every minute count. (Interview, 1/5/09, 518-520, 525-527)

Victoria was committed to the success of her students both academically and socially.

She was able to identify instances of culturally responsiveness at Clayburn and was

drawn to teach in such an environment, "I'd *love* to teach in Clayburn…I'm kind of

looking for the criteria that Clayburn has" (Interview, 4/14/09, 4-6).

Victoria observed cooperating teachers modeling culturally responsive teaching

and felt like she was being taught strategies and methods that were culturally responsive

in her course work. Victoria explained one way she saw her cooperating teaching practice

culturally responsive teaching in the following story:

> She treats people differently but not based off of how smart someone is or how much money or color. She's very-- [she] treats everyone equally but different in specific ways I guess. I'd say like if they're going down to the whole idea of having particular people pass out things and not others, like that seems really small and minute but in the long run that could have saved someone from having their feelings hurt and you know feeling like they don't belong even more than they already do, which I know that she does. It's just like the little things, like paying attention to treating everybody equal like I said but also being like—Ok, like one of the students who she would never ever wear socks and she had lots of holes in her shoes or wear sandals and it was freezing outside and didn't have

socks on. So like she [the cooperating teacher] bought her some socks and kind of made it like a game. And she purposefully meant for the little girl to win so she could get the socks…So that kind of thing, she's treating everybody equally but she also knows that there are kids who need a little bit more and it's ok. (Interview, 4/14/09, 194-206)

Victoria had assimilated the concept of equity without having language for it and because of the cooperating teacher's example; she likewise acted in equitable ways during student teaching. For example, she made a conscious decision not to let a certain child pass out papers because of an issue with body odor that might cause others to tease her; rather she had her do things where she did not have to come into close contact with the other students. In another instance, Victoria did not allow a student to pass out birthday invitations to only a few girls in class while the others watched but instead asked her to put them away and had her slip them into the backpack of those invited later in the day.

Another way Victoria enacted culturally responsiveness was to model what she expected the students to do. She explained how this was helpful for her ELL students,

How can you expect someone to do something if you haven't *shown* them how to do it? So the whole idea of like the gradual release of responsibility is really, really good because for me it works you know…[I] talk about it and then [they] see it done, and then [they] *get* the chance to do it. You can process it more 'cause you've had that whole time to sit there and watch someone else do it and to think about it. (Interview, 1/5/09, 143-148)

This scaffolding strategy was stressed in teacher education and Victoria worked to include it in her own teaching.

239

Bakhtin (1981) explains well the process Victoria went through in regards to assimilating the discourse of culturally responsive teaching into her own discourse of teaching:

> The tendency to assimilate other's discourse takes on an even deeper and more basic significance in an individual's ideological becoming, in the most fundamental sense. Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth – but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse*, and an *internally persuasive discourse*. (p. 342, italics in original)

Thus, for Victoria, culturally responsive teaching became not only part of her discourse of teaching but part of her behavior within the classroom. She enacted her understandings of culturally responsive teaching in concrete ways. She came to not only identify as a culturally responsive teacher but be recognized as one, which Gee (2001) explains is what validates our identity.

Negotiating One's Place in Student Teaching

When preservice teachers step into the classroom it is always as a guest. They are in someone else's room, teaching someone else's students, using textbooks and materials that are not their own, and often teaching lessons that are directed or requested by someone else. There is often great tension between what preservice teachers are learning in their teacher education program and what they see in the classrooms. Part of this tension comes from conflicting views or authoritative discourses of teaching and learning between the two sites. This tension, although present to some degree, was not a major problem for the participants in this study. Dr. Fire worked closely with Clayburn

240

Elementary; teachers and staff were learning about and implementing many of the innovative strategies and methods that the participants themselves were learning in their course work.

Another part of this tension for preservice teachers comes from the view of cooperating teachers as veteran professionals with years of experience and themselves as inexperienced beginners. This tension was much more evident in this study. For three of the participants there was a sense that their own knowledge and understandings of teaching must be deferred in the face of their more experienced cooperating teachers' ideas and ways. For Maria and Natasha it meant longing for their own classroom where they could teach what, when, and how they wanted. For Karissa it meant gaining experience herself so her ideas would carry weight and she would feel more comfortable sharing them. Internships then are figured worlds in which preservice teachers can observe, adopt, modify, negotiate, or reject practices and possible teaching selves, but these figured worlds are constrained by the limits of the preservice teachers' ability to negotiate these tensions.

After a year in the program, Karissa expressed this tension while explaining her role at internship,

> I think [I'm] somewhere in between student and teacher. Like, I do still feel like I'm learning a lot, so that puts me in the student role in my head. But when I'm up there in front of the kids I can feel myself *being* a teacher. (Interview, 8/22/08, 298-300)

During the first year, Karissa felt like she had a minimal role in her internships, "…right now I'm just doing a little bit of teaching. I'm in the classroom all the time and exposed

241

but I'm not the main person" (Interview, 8/22/08, 323-324). The following year, Karissa interned in a first-grade classroom, quickly assuming responsibility for teaching small groups in reading and writing. Despite taking on more responsibility in the classroom, Karissa continued to negotiate teacher identity in this role saying, "My guided reading group never looks as serious as Ms. Sampson's [the cooperating teacher] or Ms. O'Neill's [the teacher assistant]" (Interview, 4/15/09, 264). Karissa went back and forth between feeling that her style of leading small groups was wrong because it was so different from those modeled to her and that it was right because they were able to get their work done, just in a different way.

Karissa recognized that she was a guest in someone else's classroom during student teaching. She explained, "I think when you're sharing a classroom, like with student teaching, even though I still talk about them like their my kids and it's my classroom, like it's *not*" (Interview, 4/15/09, 303-305). Karissa said student teaching

> …was hard getting started, like going into it…It felt weird taking over 'cause it was her stuff and I'm like stealing it or something. And then by the end all the kids would bring *me* their slips in the morning and stuff like that and I felt bad because I don't know…like I'm stealing her job. (Interview, 4/15/09, 14, 17-20)

When Ms. Sampson had taken the class back after Karissa's full-time teach, she had to remind the students to bring notes and work to Ms. Sampson again rather than to her. "It felt weird…like *she's* the teacher, go talk to her" (Interview, 4/15/09, 26, 28). Karissa had mixed feelings about this experience, saying that she must have done something right as a teacher but yet "it felt kind of awkward at times" (Interview, 4/15/09, 34).

242

Karissa struggled also with the responsibilities of being a teacher. "Sometimes, I'm scared that I'll teach them all this stuff but they won't actually *get* it" (Interview, 1/14/09, 587). She went on to share how the pressure had even become part of her dreams,

> It's a lot of pressure…I actually had a dream a few months back that I taught this class of first graders and none of them learned how to read. And thirty years later, I'm like walking down the street and there's a bunch of homeless people and like they go, "That's the teacher that didn't teach us how to read!" [chuckles] and I started running away in my dream. (Interview, 1/14/09, 590-594)

Karissa took the responsibilities of teaching very seriously, "…there's an awareness that if you fail at something as big as like reading or even basic math, addition, subtraction…[these are] the building blocks for everything else" (Interview, 1/14/09, 598-600). While this sense of responsibility for students' learning scared Karissa a bit, it was also something she looked forward to about having her own classroom: "…it's exciting, when I have my own classroom… at the end of the year, when they go on…to look back and be like *I did* all that, like it was *all me*, they were mine" (Interview, 4/15/09, 306-308).

Another negotiation Karissa had during student teaching involved her role in collaboration and working with colleagues. In her first-grade classroom there was a child having serious behavior problems about whom the cooperating teacher consulted the school counselor. Karissa had been learning about classroom management and behavior issues the previous semester in seminar with Dr. Fire. She shared the following narrative about the situation:

> We've been trying out all these different things like to work with her and try to do stuff and I've been able to feel like I can contribute to that because we had a behavior seminar course. So I can be like, "Well we had this idea in our course"…And then she [the cooperating teacher] talked to the counselor or something and the counselor told her to use 123 Magic. She's like, "I don't really quite get it." And I was like, "Oh, we learned about that in seminar." So just like [pause] I think I do see little stuff that I can be like, "Aren't we supposed to do it [this way or] isn't this the new way that we're learning about?" (Interview, 1/14/09, 283-289)

Within this situation, Karissa felt comfortable sharing her knowledge, most likely due to having recently had the seminar on behavior management strategies and an understanding of the strategies they were thinking of implementing.

Karissa did, however, find it difficult to share during collaborative planning meetings for her grade level. She said of the collaboration, "I couldn't have gotten through student teaching without it…if I hadn't had that grade-level science planning, I would have floundered in teaching science. Like, I just couldn't have come up with that stuff on my own" (Interview, 4/15/09, 113-114, 119-120). Although the planning meetings were very beneficial to Karissa, they also caused her frustration as she reflected on her role. She explained,

> While I was in those meetings, I don't think I had as much input as I felt I should have and it's *not* that they [the other first-grade teachers] were shutting me out. Like I was just kind of timid about what I wanted to say because I'm still the student teacher here and you know…I was just kind of like, "Ok, they've been doing this, I'm sure they know what they're talking about." (Interview, 4/15/09, 137-139, 143-144)

While Karissa valued collaboration, even saying it would be an important criterion for her selecting a school to teach at, she easily deferred to those with more experience.

244

Like Karissa, Maria struggled with deferring to veteran teachers' methods during her internship. During the first year, Maria's cooperating teacher was a veteran teacher with over thirty years teaching experience. Maria was asked to help with a science lesson on animal habitats.

> I wanted *all* the kids to help set up the habitats together, like each group do it together. But *she* (the cooperating teacher) told me to have one kid from each group do it…yeah that would be more [pause] organized but every kid wouldn't have the hands-on experience of doing it and that's what we were trying to teach, you know like *that* was part of our science methods objective was to have the kids hands-on you know [whispers] so I was like this is not going to work out. [normal voice] But I just do what she said because she is the teacher and she has more experience and all that. So I just did it…and you know all the kids were looking up trying to see what we were doing. They weren't engaged in what she was doing anyway…I would have done that differently. (Interview, 7/12/08, 636-646)

At the time, Maria said, "I wasn't *not* going to do what she told me to do" (Interview, 7/12/08, 692), and she returned to this story months later explaining, "I wanted *all* the kids to do it because they need that hands-on experience" (Interview, 12/29/08, 376-377). Her reason for following the cooperating teacher's method instead was that "She's been teaching forever and I was intimidated [chuckles] 'cause I was like she knows what she's talking about" (Interview, 12/29/08, 382-383). Since she struggled with her role as teacher, Maria followed the lead of those veteran teachers around her, whether or not their example fit the philosophy of teaching she was exposed to in teacher education or her own internally persuasive discourse about teaching and learning.

Of all the participants, Maria told the most stories of negotiating her place in student teaching and internship. She struggled greatly to find her role:

245

I didn't, at that point, feel like I had a role to play because she [the cooperating teacher] took care of it all. (Interview, 12/29/08, 442-443)

It was so hard in the beginning, coming in, like phasing in and even just being an intern because you don't really know your place...It's kind of like a dodge ball match, you don't know [pause] what you're supposed to do. Do I go answer this kid's question? I probably don't know the answer…It's like you don't know your place. So that was the hardest part for me I think. (Interview, 4/1/09, 774-780)

While Maria enjoyed her internships, because of her laid-back personality, insecurities, and feeling like she did not have a role to play, Maria did not engage with the teaching, colleagues, or students to the degree necessary to create a strong identity as teacher for herself. Maria explained that,

She [her cooperating teacher] knows what she's doing. Let her do it. That's how I feel so it's been hard to--…so I just kind of wait for her to tell me to do something and then I'll do it. Like I have no problem doing anything she asks me to do but I'm not going to go up to her and be like, "Um, so let me do this and let me do that." She might *need* that sometimes but that's hard for *me* to do. (Interview, 12/29/08, 462-467)

Maria also felt that, "…if there's somebody in the room [pause] that is better prepared than I am, [pause] can do something better than I can, I'd rather let them do it than [pause] *me* 'cause I don't feel like I'm as adequate as they are" (Interview, 12/29/08, 563-565). She felt that if more teaching or interactions with students had been required for course work or seminar she would have done it because it would have been "a matter of necessity" and required. She shared early that,

I feel like having somebody always there [whispers] like hinders my ability. [normal voice] 'cause like with me for a lot of things I do, it's like if I'm on my own, I'll do it but if somebody's there, I'll rely on them to help me or do it for me. (Interview, 7/12/08, 250-253)

Maria's inability to find a place for herself and feel comfortable in her cooperating teachers' classrooms manifested itself in the fall of her second year in her outward appearance. During every observation or visit to the school, Maria was in the back of the room with her jacket on the entire day. She seemed to lack the drive or ability to take her jacket off, roll up her sleeves, and engage in teaching during her internship.

Maria felt that student teaching would somehow change this lack of engagement. She said, "I think it's going to be different [softer voice] I *hope* it's going to be different [pause] It kind of has to be different" (Interview, 12/29/08, 605-606). As Maria took on more and more responsibility during student teaching her cooperating teacher, Ms. Sanders, sat at her desk at the side of the room and continued to engage with students throughout Maria's lessons, sometimes quietly and sometimes actually interrupting the lesson. Maria said, "I just feel like she needs to know that her presence is there. Like she's there and able to speak when she wants to speak. So I think a lot of times she just speaks and interrupts" (Interview, 4/1/09, 81-83). The cooperating teacher struggled to turn over control of her classroom and students to Maria, making it all the more difficult for Maria to assume the role of teacher. Maria did not feel supported to grow as a teacher but rather "I feel like she supported me because she knew her kids were being taught by me…if she didn't [support me] that her kids would be suffering" (Interview, 4/1/09, 90-93).

When Ms. Sanders was not interrupting, she simply disappeared from the room, giving Maria complete control. Maria shared,

> I liked it when she wasn't in the room because I could really be myself and then you know I feel like the kids got more out of it because I was really being myself…I was able to open up more to them or whatever. But then I wish that I wasn't so-- like when she came back, going back in. I wish she could have seen how I was when she wasn't there. (Interview, 4/1/09, 112-116)

It was these experiences where Maria was completely in charge, with no other professional in the room that she felt most like a teacher. Maria said, "During student teaching, because I was *in front* of them and *I was* the teacher-- for the most part [smiles]...I just didn't know my place before…I don't think it really kicked in until I was the full-time teacher" (Interview, 4/1/09, 768-772). Even during the weeks that Maria was full-time teacher, however, she used the existing classroom management system despite having very strong feelings against it. She explained that it was "because that's what *she* wanted me to do and I'm trying to pass student teaching" (Interview, 4/1/09, 587).

For Maria, the negotiations within the classroom to find her place were intense and filled with frustration. She said of student teaching,

> I grew a lot I think as a teacher…in the beginning I wouldn't say [I had] *no* idea what I was doing but I *felt* like I didn't know what I was doing…I had to put all that aside [her discomfort with the situation and her cooperating teacher] and just push myself to do what I needed to do, to get through it and so yeah, I mean I think I have become a better teacher. (Interview, 4/1/09, 5-13)

In the end, Maria did what was necessary to pass student teaching, to earn an elementary education degree but still struggled with her identity as a teacher. The summer following graduation, with the prospects of finding a teaching position dismal because of the

economic conditions in the state, Maria began thinking about going back to school, perhaps still not ready to move from her identity as student to that of teacher.

Natasha's internship during her first semester was one of fear and negotiations. She explained her fear in entering a classroom as an intern was from not really knowing what teachers do, "…other than going to school, I had really no idea of what it entails to be a teacher" (Interview, 1/9/09, 326). She said of her experience during the first semester,

> I was so timid, I was nervous, I was afraid I was going to mess up all the time and just kind of scared to jump in and take the reign. A lot of that also had to do with the control that my [cooperating teacher] had. She liked to have control in her classroom so I wasn't *able* to do a lot. So that kind of kept me being kind of timid. (Interview, 11/27/07, 131-135)

By the end of her first year in the classroom, Natasha said, "I've started to feel like I'm more comfortable, definitely don't get scared when I walk into the classroom" (Interview, 8/11/08, 162-163). Coming into education with her unique life history and desire to incorporate Spanish culture and language into the classroom, Natasha expressed some disappointment in the lack of opportunities she had and the controlled nature of her interactions with students during the first year of internship.

The following year, Natasha was placed in a Spanish dual-immersion classroom, working with two cooperating teachers. She viewed the program as "such a step forward in being culturally responsive" (Interview, 1/9/09, 152) and was very excited about working with the teachers and students. As she entered student teaching that year, Natasha felt a bit apprehensive, wondering how she would juggle all the things that

teachers do. She actually looked forward to "seeing the every day life that a teacher has…like staying after school and disinfecting desks, washing transparencies…just being one step closer to a real teacher" (Interview, 1/9/09, 540-542, 547).

During student teaching, Natasha worked hard to incorporate her students' cultural knowledge into her lessons (e.g., lesson on Dia del los Muertes, a unit on cultural traditions, using Spanish words to connect to new concepts, etc.), understanding such teaching to be culturally responsive and ways to validate and empower her students. Such lessons and strategies were valued in her cooperating teachers' classrooms. Both were veteran teachers with 14 and 16 years of experience and were pursuing and received their Masters in Education during the study. Mrs. Sanchez was from Puerto Rico and was bilingual, Mrs. Thompson spoke only English. Both cooperating teachers were committed to making the dual-immersion program work and incorporated Natasha into the classroom and teaching from the beginning. They allowed her freedom to plan and implement lessons within most subject areas (e.g., science was taught through inquiry kits and the teachers controlled the activities and planning for this subject, social studies was not a priority at the school and therefore Natasha had much freedom in this subject).

Despite this freedom, Natasha felt confined to the curriculum laid out by the state and her cooperating teachers. With math for example, Natasha observed her cooperating teacher using the school adopted Saxon Math textbook which is scripted in nature. Her internally persuasive discourse of teaching pushed for incorporating hands-on, engaging, and constructivist learning and her math methods course had taught her to incorporate critical thinking and the use of manipulatives but Natasha felt restricted to teaching it as

she had observed it. The following dialogical narrative describes her negotiation of her role as student teacher,

> N: I mean hello, the whole Saxton math and issues like that, that just made me want to file my teeth down!
>
> C: What about it?
>
> N: Just [pause] I mean just the whole scripted teaching [said with disgust] I [pause] you know I haven't really had a good experience with teaching math at all. I *love* math. I was tutoring eighth-graders with pre-algebra and I was like, "Man I miss this." [pause] Who says that? But like I enjoy math but I never enjoyed teaching it.
>
> C: Did you feel confined?
>
> N: Oh yeah.
>
> C: Because you were using the scripts?
>
> N: Because that's how my [cooperating teacher] was doing it.
>
> C: How it was modeled?
>
> N: …You know I've talked to Dr. Fire and she's like you know Natasha that's all relative to the reason you know you're-- there's only so much you can do the way you want to do it right now. (Interview, 4/20/09, 457-471)

Natasha went on to explain her frustration when the cooperating teacher took math back early during her student teaching so that she could prepare them for the upcoming end of grade testing. Natasha said, "She just completely dropped Saxon and started teaching math. And the whole time she was doing that, I was like, 'Well, *hello*, I could have been doing that.' I probably could have made it more fun!" (Interview, 4/20/09, 478-480).

For Natasha, her role as intern delegated her to a position of observation and teaching as expected and modeled.

251

I'm not going to feel comfortable being like, "Well you know, we learned it this way and it seems to work perfectly." That's just not the person that I am and I don't want to overstep *my* boundaries as a student teacher or an intern. These are professionals, this is their career. I know I've got different ideas and different ways of looking at things but you know, I'll share those in due time [pause] because right now, it's not my place. (Interview, 4/20/09, 492-496)

This struggle to teach within another's classroom in authentic ways is one all preservice teachers face, but for Natasha it limited who she could become as a teacher. There were times that she was not able to enact the culturally responsive teacher that she considered herself to be. The possible self of culturally responsive teacher, as Natasha understood it, was modified at times to fit with what she felt was acceptable within her cooperating teachers' rooms. As a result, Natasha was never fully able to enact the teacher she envisioned herself to be so that even by the end of the study, after two years in the school and student teaching for 15 weeks, Natasha never came to see herself as a teacher. She explained this in the following narrative:

I feel closer to [being a teacher]. I don't think I will *fully* feel like a full-fledged teacher until I have my own classroom and I can make my own decisions on what I want to teach, when I want to teach it…I felt like I was kind of-- a lot of what I wanted to do was muffled because of you know the ideas and the expectations and just all the other things that went on around my [cooperating teacher] and all that. So I definitely feel more *like* a teacher, don't feel like a teacher yet…[It's] kind of like being a mom, like I can take all the parenting classes I want to but until I have that baby in my hands, I'm not going to feel like a mom. (Interview, 4/20/09, 147-156)

Ultimately, Natasha's struggle to practice the possible selves she envisioned for herself as teacher kept her from feeling fully like a teacher despite observations demonstrating emerging characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and a comfort with teaching.

252

Victoria's negotiation of her place in internship was a bit different from the other participants. While she most definitely felt she was a student and learning how to teach, she also stepped into the classroom with a higher degree of confidence in her role as teacher. Teacher education gave her teaching theory, practices, and methods that were new to her. She explained, "…coming in, I guess all I had were *my* own experiences [in school] to go off of…what I've definitely learn[ed] these past two semesters is *not* the way that I was necessarily taught" (Interview, 8/28/08, 119-123).

As she stepped into the classroom Victoria began to achieve a life-long dream, of becoming a teacher, and naturally took on more and more responsibility. She even expressed a desire to be at Clayburn more, "I almost wish that we were in the classroom a little bit more before we start student teaching…I really wish we could be there *every* day" (Interview, 8/28/08, 249-251). Her desire to be present at the school reflected her enthusiasm for teaching. She explained that teaching was "more of a passion and something that I *want* to do. I'm not there just because I'm getting a paycheck. I want it to be more than that" (Interview, 8/28/08, 308-309). As a result of this passion, Victoria stepped into the role of teacher quite easily. She did not express the same fears about student teaching that the other participants did. In fact, she felt ready to begin student teaching and said, "I'm definitely comfortable with my kids. Like I *know* they're excited about me being there every day" (Interview, 1/5/09, 535-536).

Victoria had a positive experience with her cooperating teachers throughout internship and student teaching. She viewed them as role models for her to learn from, saying: "To see how they're doing things…I've picked up a lot just from that, like the

253

language [of teachers]" (Interview, 8/28/08, 189-191). Victoria watched the teachers at Clayburn Elementary carefully, readily adopting teaching selves that fit with her understandings of good teaching and rejecting or modifying those that did not. Her cooperating teacher, during student teaching, seemed to hold similar views of teaching and expressed a renewed enthusiasm for teaching because of Victoria's presence.

Victoria's cooperating teacher was impressed with her confidence and natural abilities in teaching lessons and taking over the classroom. Other teacher educators and cooperating teachers also noticed Victoria's ability to take on the identity of teacher. Dr. Fire and another university supervisor on separate occasions commented on her "natural talent" as a teacher. Of all the participants, Victoria appeared the most comfortable during observations, demonstrating a relaxed and confident demeanor while teaching.

Defining One's Self in Relation to Others

A large part of creating an identity as a teacher comes from one's understandings of what teachers are like and what they do. These understandings are shaped by one's beliefs about teaching, the examples of teacher that one has been exposed to, and socio-historical meanings of teaching. Preservice teachers must negotiate their personal understandings of what it means to be a teacher with what they encounter in teacher education as well as what they see during internship. Often internship is their first experience within a classroom in a role other than student. It is in these settings that they begin the process of enacting the role of teacher and constructing their teacher identities. As they observe professional teachers enacting that role of teacher, they often find themselves defining who or what they want to become as a teacher in relation to what

they see. This was true of the participants in this study. They often spoke of the kind of teacher they wanted to be either in aspiration or opposition to those veteran teachers they observed in the school.

For example, Natasha explained that while at Clayburn, "I learned a lot about the teacher I wanted to be but also I learned a lot about the teacher I *didn't* want to be" (Interview, 4/20/09, 6-7). During her internships, she saw teachers who were very business like and she clearly did not want to be like that saying, "I just don't want to be that [mimicking, stern voice] *sit down, do your work* kind of teacher" (Interview, 1/9/09, 536). Natasha often defined herself as a teacher in opposition to what she saw or experienced in the classroom during internship. For example, she did not like how one teacher's frustration with a parent came across in her relationship with the child. She explained that the teacher

> …had issues with some of the parents of the children [and] she kind of took it out on the kids, which I thought was so unfair. You don't do that. You don't do that! I don't care if the mom's a nag and she calls all the time because so and so's outfit gets dirty on the playground. I'm not going to treat her differently in the classroom because of that!" (Interview, 4/20/09, 210-213).

Natasha was also turned off by the harshness with which one of her cooperating teachers sometimes treated students. She shared of a time observing Mrs. Sanchez discipline a student in front of his peers. She said of this,

> I tensed up because…I mean you don't do that, especially with a struggling student. Don't call him out when they're doing something wrong or they're not doing something exactly how you asked them to do it…I mean I've seen that happen all the way through school. That's why I was scared to say things out loud

or to be completely myself in the classroom [as a student] because I was afraid that I was going to get barked at. (Interview, 4/20/09, 452-457)

As a result, Natasha worked to create a classroom community where she treated all students fairly and they felt safe. During observations, Natasha tended to correct students' misbehavior on an individual basis and quietly while the others worked, reinforcing this possible self as teacher.

The importance of teaching in culturally responsive ways was also highlighted through her observations of teachers during internship. Natasha told the following story of her cooperating teacher's poor choice of words one day:

There was a student that got up from his desk and went up to the front to ask a question because he was really excited. And she said, "*Go back* from where you came from," talking about him going to his desk. But he was like, "*Fine*, I'll go back to Mexico." And I was like, "She didn't mean that, she meant go back to your desk." So that was just kind of a slip in choice of words but he was like, "*Fine*, I'll go back to Mexico." but she didn't hear it and I went, "She wasn't talking about that Demario, she was talking about you need to raise your hand and if you need to ask a question, you need to raise your hand and wait for her to call on you. You don't jump up. She was telling you to go back to your seat." But he kind of gave me this look like, "I *know* but you know she said it." (Interview, 4/20/09, 241-251)

Natasha recognized the importance of the language a teacher uses in the classroom. She worked to be aware of the unintentional meanings that could be construed by her students. The ways in which Natasha authored her teacher identity in opposition to the teachers she observed was clear in this story following student teaching:

…you know, Mrs. Sanchez is very stern and you know very just on point [slaps hand against other hand] like you do that *this* way kind of thing. And there wasn't much room for error in her class. And then Mrs. Thompson was more quiet about

256

things but she still didn't like a lot of classroom talk… *I* like for the kids to be active and involved so if they're talking, as long as they're on topic, I don't have an issue with it…I just realized how open and comfortable I want my class to be. (Interview, 4/20/09 24-31)

Natasha came to author her teacher identity in specific ways in opposition to those she observed during internship.

Natasha also recognized qualities in teachers that resonated with her understanding of culturally responsive teaching and the teacher she envisioned herself to be. She shared this story of what she learned from her cooperating teachers during student teaching:

My [cooperating teachers,] they were two completely different people. They were both good teachers but they were completely different you know, so I learned a lot from both of them. I learned compassion from Mrs. Thompson because she, you know she cared a lot about her students. She might not have known the best ways to handle some things or certain situations but who does know all the right things to do. Mrs. Sanchez, on the other hand, was very stern, was not compassionate at all but she like curriculum wise was awesome…And you know her being from Puerto Rico, she was able to connect a lot better with the students, being culturally relevant with a lot of the issues you know. And being that she taught in both languages, she was able you know when students were struggling with the work or didn't know, she said it in Spanish and you know they were able to get it a lot easier. (Interview, 4/20/09, 192-203)

Despite Natasha's qualms about Mrs. Sanchez's sternness with students, she was attracted to her ability to work with ELLs and draw on their cultural knowledge in the classroom. She felt early on that she and Mrs. Sanchez connected well because of instances like this conversation they had about teaching culture,

We were talking about the stigmas of the fact that there was a "cultural week" and you know, February being African American History month and January being

257

Hispanic month. And we were just talking about how unfair that is and how teachers go about just trying to cram all of this African American history into one month, which obviously is ridiculous because every day you should be doing this no matter-- We have not one single African American in our class but we're still going to talk about it and it's not just going to be in February. So we were kind of talking about that whole [idea of having cultural] *food* for cultural week and all that and how that really bugs her. And it really bugs her that in Clayburn there is just a lot of shelteredness when it comes to teaching cultures other than your [own]. (Interview, 1/9/09, 50-62)

Educators who expressed similar views of culture and culturally responsive teaching to Natasha's were often talked about with admiration and those Natasha borrowed from as she authored her own teacher identity. Like the principal at Clayburn Elementary who Natasha described as a great educator because, "She knows every student's name and she's *so* involved and she cares so much about the well being of her students" (Interview, 4/20/09, 97-98). Or Dr. Fire who did not force ideas on the team but gave them the information and facilitated the conversations needed for learning. Natasha felt Dr. Fire was a major influence on the kind of educator she was going to be.

Ultimately, Natasha's understanding of and commitment to teaching in culturally responsive ways most clearly influenced the possible teaching selves that she took on and worked to enact in the classroom. She modified and negotiated the teacher identities she observed in such ways as to appropriate the behaviors, strategies, and ways of teaching that fit with her desire to be culturally responsive and rejected those that did not. She recognized that not all of her peers or colleagues valued the same things as her and in the end, Natasha describe herself as a teacher saying, "I'm not like the majority of other teachers out there, I'm coming to realize" (Interview, 4/20/09, 159).

Karissa struggled to see herself as a teacher throughout the study. Part of her struggle was that she felt her possible teaching selves were not being validated. The kind of teacher she wanted to be (i.e., fun, humorous, easy going) was not modeled for her in the school, she explained, "I think it would be easier to like do it if I saw somebody else doing it" (Interview, 1/14/09, 390). When working with small groups, Karissa was aware that her group tended to be louder and "not like completely serious about [the work] the whole time" (Interview, 1/14/09, 313). Her cooperating teacher confirmed this sentiment, explaining that Karissa was too loud when working with small groups, at times she yelled out and was disruptive to other groups. The cooperating teacher saw Karissa struggling to maintain control of her groups but Karissa explained it like this,

> …my guided reading group never looks as serious as Ms. Sampson's [the cooperating teacher] or Ms. O'Neill's [the teacher assistant]. Like they're [her students] always kind of over there and maybe one of them rolls on the carpet or something but then he sits back up and does two or three more [card] sorts. And then, he rolls on his back again but then he'll-- I mean he's getting his work done. (Interview, 4/15/09, 264-267)

Karissa had a much higher tolerance for noise and off-task behavior than both the cooperating teacher and the teacher assistant.

Karissa talked often of her style of teaching being different from those she saw all around her. She described her style as silly on three occasions but did not like how that sounded saying, "I try not to say that I'm a silly teacher, 'cause that sounds bad" (Interview, 4/15/09, 245). But in the end, Karissa explained,

> It feels counter productive to just sit there and fuss at [a student] when he's still getting his [card] sort done and he gets it right at the end so obviously he's

learning it. But [my teaching] just doesn't *look* like everybody else's [teaching] looks so [pause] yeah [pause and very soft voice] I'm a silly teacher. (Interview, 4/15/09, 269-272)

However, Karissa's possible teaching self as a silly, fun, humorous, and easy going teacher was not a vision of teacher that she saw modeled in the school, causing her to second guess her role as teacher throughout the study.

> C: I get this sense when you're talking about yourself as this fun and energetic teacher with the kids that you somehow feel it's wrong or--
>
> K: I *do*! [very quick and emphatic response] I mean [laughs] 'cause I just don't see other people doing it, so it's just not what I see. It's not the example I get so I'm like, "Oh, maybe I'm not supposed to be doing this sort of thing." (Interview, 1/14/09, 335-339)

Karissa felt all of the teachers she had been paired with were "traditional teachers" and more serious than she was, which caused her great stress as she prepared to student teach. She explained, "I'm still really nervous about teaching full-time next semester because I am kind of unsure if I'm allowed to be like [pause] what I do…it's never been openly acknowledged that it's ok to be goofy" (Interview, 1/14/09, 376-379). It was difficult for Karissa to have confidence in developing her teacher identity when those around her (both in teacher education and internship) looked and acted so differently.

Despite this struggle, Karissa did find qualities in her cooperating teachers that she worked to appropriate into a possible teaching self. She often talked about specific strategies she was seeing at Clayburn that reinforced what she learned in course work. She explained, at the university

…we learned about [a] balanced literacy framework or like guided reading, independent read-alouds and she [the cooperating teacher] uses all of those. She uses morning meeting and like for math she doesn't just like do whole class lessons or always centers, she mixes it up…[it's] a good variety of everything which is so important at that age [third/fourth-grade combination class]. She makes the classroom really active, like you don't just sit at your desk all day. (Interview, 11/30/07, 423-429)

Karissa shared again in a later semester how she saw a lot of best practices in her classroom, naming guided reading and writer's workshop in particular. She explained:

…to me it's really good to like *see* [best practices] in the classroom and know that the kids are getting the best that they can. But also it's kind of like a reminder, "Hey don't forget to do these things yourself" when you're doing it…I think if I had been in a classroom that hadn't done a lot of those things, it's not that I wouldn't have remembered to do them, but like [pause] I guess it wouldn't have been as strongly in my mind like how well it does work. (Interview, 4/15/09, 545-551)

The kind of teaching she observed resonated with Karissa's understanding of teaching and learning and the constructivist teaching methods she was exposed to in course work, thus she appropriated these strategies into her role as teacher.

Karissa had great respect for the cooperating teaching that she worked with during student teaching. Mrs. Sampson was a fairly young teacher, having taught only four years at the first grade level at Clayburn Elementary. Karissa aspired to be like her as evident in the following story:

One of my little boys this year came up to a girl and he was like, "I hate Black people!" And I was like-- I was taken aback that a first grader would *say* that and I *know* that he didn't just get that from himself, but I was kind of befuddled. Like, how exactly do I go about this? Like what exactly am I supposed to say to him? How is this conversation supposed to flow? And so I *did* hand it over to Ms. Sampson and she was able to have the conversation. That's not something I could

have done on my own I don't think. I *want* to be able to and obviously I *will* when I have my own classroom but I want to have like more-- I want to be more confident in being able to have that kind of conversation. (Interview, 4/15/09, 449-456)

When talking about having her own classroom, Karissa was talking about being responsible for her students and she commented,

Some times there's like-- Ms. Sampson will *know* something and I'm like, how did she just know that? Like how did she find that out? There's some stuff she just [knows] and I'm sure that comes with practice but she just can tell stuff and something's going on or whatever and I think to myself, I could never have picked that out. Like, I wouldn't have known that. (Interview, 4/15/09, 310-315).

The knowledge Ms. Sampson had of her students typically required an understanding of her students beyond school and this resonated with Karissa's strong ethic of care and her understanding of culturally responsive teaching and thus became part of a possible teacher self that Karissa desired.

In the end, Karissa still struggled with doubt about her role as teacher, "I think I'm a little more timid than I should be…I don't know, like I'm still never one hundred percent sure that what I'm doing is the right thing" (Interview, 4/15/09, 221-223). Despite not seeing her possible teaching self in those around her, Karissa worked to enact a fun, energetic, and even "silly" teacher identity in the classroom. She appropriated these teaching strategies and behaviors that resonated with her beliefs about teaching and her envisioned self as a teacher who would make learning fun for her students.

Maria's negotiation of possible teaching selves was tied closely to her strong ethic of care which she attributes to her mother who instilled in here a sense of service,

262

Christian love, and acceptance through volunteer work at a crisis ministry. Maria found it very frustrating and difficult to negotiate instances of what she perceived to be mistreatment of students. Often these instances solidified possible teaching selves that Maria refused to take up or even consider. She defined herself most often in opposition to what she observed in cooperating teachers.

Starting in the first semester of internships, Maria worked with a student she considered very smart. The boy had a tendency to be disruptive, especially when in transitions. Maria's frustration with how the cooperating teacher and teacher assistant dealt with Ronnie grew throughout the semester. "I understand he's disrupting class but give him a second you know. Like as soon as he walks in, it's like [heavy sigh] he's in trouble" (Interview, 11/29/07, 623-624). She observed Ronnie spending the majority of his time in the back of the room or even sent out of the room. He also spent his recess time walking laps as punishment for his behavior. Maria felt this only made his frustration level rise because he could not play with his friends.

Maria desired to help make this transition easier for Ronnie and sought answers from her mom and a neighbor, both having a background in teaching. Maria explained, "I want them to come up with a completely new discipline system for him and I doubt that will get done; but if he was in my class, I guarantee that this would not be happening" (Interview, 11/29/07, 738-740). Maria began to define herself in opposition to the ways in which her cooperating teacher worked with and disciplined this particular student. She desired to include him in ways that limited his outbursts and helped him be part of the class. Maria described her effort to do this:

263

A lot of times he gets in trouble because he gets so excited because he knows the answer and stuff like that. But he calls out and we're like, "You can't call out." So I'll try to do things like, well this has been working lately. I've done it a couple of times. If I just have him stand next to me and put my arm around him, he's like perfect. (Interview, 11/29/07, 640-644)

Ultimately, Maria's care for Ronnie drove her actions, "You still have a kid here who needs to learn and needs to be included in everything that the other kids are doing" (Interview, 11/29/07, 612-613). Interestingly, Maria took an active role in helping Ronnie during this first semester, where as the following year, with a different cooperating teacher, Maria remained detached from the class choosing to keep her jacket on, stay in the back of the room, and only teach what was required. Her sense of justice and strong ethic of care drove her to take action in that situation and begin to see a possible teaching self that put students' needs first and cared deeply about their welfare.

Maria continued to define herself as a teacher in opposition to events or situations she saw in the classroom. During student teaching she explained that the best practices she was learning about in course work did not mesh with what she saw at internship. She explained, "…classroom management stuff that we say are best practices [in teacher education] are not practiced. Like there's yelling at kids and getting in their face and making them cry and the whole humiliation type stuff" (Interview, 4/1/09, 562-564). Maria struggled with her cooperating teacher's discipline style.

M: She's more [chuckles and smiles] strict and this is my way-- We do it my way. And I'm more [pause] *not* like that.

C: What are you?

264

M: *Not* like *that*! [smiles] I mean [long pause] I don't want to get in a kid's face and my intention [in] making them go out in the hall [is never] so they come back in the room crying. And on several occasions that was her intention. I'm going to make this one cry.

C: Hmmm. Would she say that?

M: *Yeah*! (Interview, 4/1/09, 595-602)

The cooperating teacher's dominance over the students was something that Maria could not reconcile with her sense of justice and care for students. She, thus, defined herself in opposition to this, actually being devastated the first time she made a student cry by taking a quiz from her for talking. This consequence was modeled for Maria and part of the class discipline system set up by the cooperating teacher. Her position as student teacher led Maria to enact a system of classroom management she did not fully believe in. She explained this negotiation in the following dialogical narrative:

M: But of course I *did* it. I mean, I don't have any other management system to install in there…I wasn't really doing [it] for a while but then I'd think that she would think that I was just not good at classroom management and I was afraid to-- it's not that I was afraid to, I just didn't want to have them move their pins down. I mean it's [pause] it's stupid. I mean I'm sorry but--

C: But in the end you did it because?

M: Because that's what *she* wanted me to do and I'm trying to pass student teaching. (Interview, 4/1/09, 579-587)

Maria's perceived lack of power in her classroom and the lack of a clear alternative led her to implement a system of behavior management that she did not believe in or think worked effectively, while inside she rejected another possible teaching self.

265

Maria did talk about some positive aspects of her cooperating teacher's methods. She observed many of the best practices for working with ELLs about which they had been learning in course work (e.g., using manipulatives, table groups, and shoulder partner talk). Not all of the techniques she was studying were reinforced in the classroom however (e.g., morning meeting, guided reading, and writer's workshop). Maria felt strongly about implementing morning meeting, "I feel like that's when you have time to build your community" (Interview, 4/1/09, 704). When given the opportunity to do so while student teaching, Maria chose not to incorporate morning meeting into her day, perhaps because of the pressures she felt concerning a lack of time or not wanting to "rock the boat" with her cooperating teacher.

The majority of possible teaching selves that Maria encountered in internship were ones she ultimately rejected because they did not fit with her ethic of care and understanding of culturally responsive teaching. These teacher identities that emerged as possible selves for Maria remained possibilities because they conflicted with the expectations of her cooperating teacher. As Maria voiced these selves, however, she was able to author her herself as a specific kind of teacher who desires to always do what is best for her students and act in culturally responsive ways.

Victoria entered the teacher education program with only her experiences as a student to draw on in forming possible teaching selves. She shared how she used to think teaching was, "so easy, but now I'm like…there's a lot more that goes into it and a lot of background work that happens before it ever gets to the classroom" (Interview, 8/28/08, 742-743). At times, there was a sense that most of Victoria's teachers had not put that

266

kind of time or effort into their teaching and she learned in ways that did not engage her.

This feeling made her determined to make learning more engaging and meaningful for

her own students. As a result the authoritative discourse of constructivism was easily

assimilated into Victoria's possible teaching self.

Victoria felt like she needed to reconcile the ways she was taught with what she

was learning in course work and in observing her cooperating teachers.

> I was constantly thinking about things I had done while I was in school or when I was in fifth-grade to try to relate and find that-- the middle of the road with what I was learning [in teacher education]. Because what I've definitely learned these past two semesters is *not* the way that I was necessarily taught…it's very eye opening. And then at the same time, I feel like I was jipped because I'm like man, if I would have learned *this* way it would have helped me so much better than the whole class instruction and wanting to cry because I didn't understand but I was too embarrassed to raise my hand because everybody else understood it. (Interview, 8/28/08, 120-127)

Her own elementary experiences gave Victoria a keen understanding of struggling

students, and she expressed a desire to not "be the teacher that leaves people behind"

(Interview, 8/28/08, 96-97). Thus, Victoria authored her teaching self in opposition to her

own teachers in elementary school and more traditional ways of teaching. As a result, she

was attracted to the teaching strategies and methods introduced in course work and

learning from the teachers she observed in internship.

One such strategy resonated with Victoria because of her own experiences in

schools where teachers used more negative discipline techniques involving punishing

students in front of their peers. Victoria explained that "the principles of positive

behavior management and being a positive person, pointing out that instead of the

negative" was important to her (Interview, 4/14/09, 318-319). She attributed this attitude

to what she learned in course work and seeing it done in internship. She came to realize,

"It's less exhausting to be like, 'I really like how you all are being quiet and ready to

listen.' Instead of, 'Why are you *still* talking?'" (Interview, 8/28/08, 203-204). Again, she

realized a possible teaching self that differed from what she saw as a student.

Victoria explained her approach to developing her teacher identity in the

following dialogical narrative:

> V: I think definitely being in the internship has helped a lot [in creating my teacher identity], to see it played out and you're like, "Ok, I liked how she did that." So then that's something that I take to myself.
>
> C: Stick that one in your bag.
>
> V: Yeah. And then I'm like, "Ahh uhh ahh! That wouldn't work for me." So I chose *not* to speak that way or not to do things that way. So it's really just being a sponge, I'm just soaking in little things from each person that I really, really like…Cause [with] Ms. Montgomery [the cooperating teacher], I had observed in her classroom for an hour one day and I *knew* that I wanted...to student teach with her just because of-- [pause] her classroom management was awesome and like she had so many different things going on and I kind of talked to the students and I said, "What kind of teacher is she?" Just noticing people you know in the hallway, so much of their personality comes out, even in staff development and… It's wild 'cause you've got like the negative ones and I'm like, "I won't go with her. I don't want to hang out with her." And then you have the ones that you *know* are still passionate about teaching and are constantly like if we did this or you know I like to brainstorm and come up with ideas with other people. I think that's a lot where I've built who I am as a teacher, is interaction with other teachers and you know learning what may have worked for them and what didn't work or what I think I could make work for me and change it to suit *my* needs. So it's definitely just being in the school system period. (Interview, 8/28/08, 816-835)

Victoria greatly valued her experience in internship, which she felt provided her with role models for effective teaching and an array of possible teaching selves to pick from, modify, and adopt as her own.

Victoria was able to read people fairly quickly, perhaps because of her years of bartending and many interactions with diverse people in this setting. She was able to tell a lot about the teachers at Clayburn just by looking around, listening, and observing their interactions. She shared her observations of a kindergarten teacher at Clayburn (not a cooperating teacher) when reflecting on being culturally responsive:

> One of the teachers at Clayburn, she's a kindergarten teacher, and in her classroom she has *everything* that can be touched, looked at, manipulated. Like she has the word written, she has it labeled in English and Spanish…So they can start to see the difference or the relationship between the two words and I thought that's really cool because, especially in kindergarten, for kids who may *not* have even begun really to learn the English language that's a great way for them to start…I think it helps the English kids to learn Spanish [too] because then they kind of ask their friends about stuff. I thought that was really cool. She had pictures of stuff too…It's just so much information that you can take in just by looking at the walls. Like you can learn something from any aspect of her classroom, which is I think really interesting how she chose to do that. The way she has her centers set up, she has stuff from other countries like dolls and stuff…like little artifacts that…represent outside of just Clayburn or whatever. Which I think is really great to have them start asking questions. I've only been in there like twice but I'm sure she probably uses it you know in a demonstrative way. I just think that's interesting to let them be able to *gain* so much not through her lessons but just when they're hanging out [in her room]. (Interview, 1/5/09,100-124)

Through this observation, Victoria came to see the importance of making conscious choices in how you set up your room and what to include. She took on a possible teaching self that made deliberate choices about what to include in her room and curriculum. For example, drawing on multiple perspectives through the use of

multicultural literature was important to Victoria. This strategy was stressed and modeled

in course work, which gave Victoria a reason or an explanation as to why she would do it

in her classroom. It also fit well with her understandings of culturally responsive teaching

that included the need for *all* students to have characters to relate to in the curriculum.

Victoria also came to create a possible teaching self that was fun-loving, caught

up in the performance of teaching, and human. She defined herself in opposition to some

of the teachers she observed at Clayburn, explaining that some of them were just too

serious about their work, as she described in the following story:

> I just think if more teachers would take off their graduation cap and put on the
> dunce cap or maybe the little spiny wheel multicolored hat-- You know we think
> about backpacks [referring to a cultural exploration activity we had done in
> professional development] but I think about hats. If they would do that more often
> I think that they would probably have more *fun* with their job. I see some of the
> teachers here and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I would *not* want to be a student in her
> class." She's so strict and she's so iron-hammer all the time. I'm like *smile* or let
> them know you're human… I understand the whole idea of being firm on things
> early on and then kind of being lax once they've got it…like you can do that, but
> you can do that with a smile on your face. (Interview, 1/5/09, 612-624)

Victoria was not afraid to smile and show her students the fun side of her personality,

which moved from a possible self to one she came to enact during student teaching. She

saw teaching as performing and felt like student teaching had "brought out the actress in

me" (Interview, 4/6/09, 168). This role as performer was not a possible self that Victoria

saw modeled as much as one that came out of her personality and desire to engage

students in meaningful learning. It was perhaps a possible self that was formed in

opposition to the kind of teaching she experienced as a student and in some observations

at Clayburn Elementary.

Ultimately, the possible teaching selves that Victoria collected throughout teacher education and internship led her to identify as a culturally responsive teacher. She explained that she felt like a

> …culturally responsive teacher *by nature*…in a way because of where we've come from but *now* going through the studies and being able to apply it, I see it a lot clearer. It's more…[than] a role… I am a culturally responsive teacher, like it's actually in *every* thing that you do. (Interview, 4/6/09, 257-260)

As a result, the possible teaching selves she gravitated toward and took up in her own teaching were those that fit well with her understandings of culturally responsive teaching. In the end, Victoria said of being a culturally responsive teacher, "I don't know any other way to be a teacher" (Interview, 4/14/09, 48).

Summary

It was an honor accompanying the participants of this study on their journey through teacher education. They each came to author their teacher identities in unique and meaningful ways based on their life histories; the personal experiences, assumptions, and beliefs with which they entered the program; and their negotiations of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of teaching that they encountered in course work and internship. Each of the participants came to teaching with an interest in and acceptance of diversity that greatly influenced the ways in which they attended to the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching, envisioned themselves as future teachers, and began enacting possible selves. Their internship at Clayburn Elementary likewise influenced their understanding of what it meant to teach in culturally responsive ways,

271

the possible teaching selves they had to choose from, and the ways in which they ultimately were able to enact the role of teacher.

Clayburn Elementary was a unique setting for this study. The students were predominantly Hispanic, and many were immigrants or first generation Americans and classified as English Language Learners. The faculty and staff were led by a principal committed to the students, developing programs and methods to assist English Language Learners in the school, and developing cultural responsiveness in the faculty. It was within this setting that the participants negotiated the authoritative discourses from teacher education, those present within the school, and those internally persuasive discourses of teaching within themselves. As part of that negotiation, the participants told stories about teachers from their past or ones they were observing then, about beliefs that influenced how they approached students or teaching, or about situations or events that excited, frustrated, or angered them. There were countless stories of struggle, of triumph, of fear, and of excitement. During analysis these narratives were organized around two categories, visions of teaching and narratives of negotiation.

The participants' visions of teaching, from their reasons for entry into the profession to the possible teaching selves they envisioned becoming and those they were able to enact, were powerful narratives which allowed them to author possible teaching selves as well as narratives that demonstrated their struggle to enact these possible selves. The narratives of negotiation reflected their struggle to take in the language of educational theories and teaching methods learned in teacher education and appropriate it into their own discourse of teaching. As Bakhtin (1981) describes, "the word in language

is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intensions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (p. 293). Some of the narratives within this chapter are the participants' attempts to appropriate the language of culturally responsive teaching or constructivism, making it their own. But

> …not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294)

It was in these negotiations of language and world views constructed by language that the participants came to author their teaching selves. In analyzing these narratives one had to pay great attention to the context (e.g., who was speaking, where and when they said it, how it was spoken, etc.) as there were always multiple layers to the words spoken or multiple meanings within the language. Ultimately, each of the participants saw themselves as culturally responsive teachers and worked to appropriate the language of the theory into their internally persuasive discourse of teaching. As discussed in this chapter, the level to which each was able to do this was unique to their understandings of the theory and practice, to the ways in which they were able to negotiate their role within internships, and to the level that they were able to enact their possible teaching selves. The participants' journey to becoming culturally responsive teachers does not stop here; it has just begun.

Chapter six will discuss the significance of the findings in regards to how preservice teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching and how their understandings influenced their developing teacher identities. The implications for teacher education will be presented, with suggestions for five focus areas that, when implemented, may assist preservice teachers in developing a vision for culturally responsive teaching. Suggestions for future research are also addressed.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In our increasingly diverse society, it is more important than ever to prepare teachers who are culturally competent, aware of the role of culture in education and society, and committed to teaching in culturally responsive ways. Such a goal requires that we understand how preservice teachers receive, comprehend, and either reject or incorporate culturally responsive teaching into their developing teacher identities. Insight into this process comes through studies like this, where we examine carefully and closely the beliefs, understandings, experiences and developing teacher identities of individual students as they move through teacher education. Because there are so few studies that document empirically the process of developing cultural responsiveness in preservice teachers this study is significant (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007). It offers insight into how preservice teachers work to orchestrate their life histories, beliefs and assumptions, and experiences in teacher education and the ways this process influences developing culturally responsive teacher identities and practices.

Helping preservice teachers gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward culturally responsive teaching is not an easy task for three reasons. First, culturally responsive teaching is not easily defined and therefore left to the interpretation of individual educators. For some teacher educators, the theory's tenets resonate with their beliefs and understandings of what it means to teach all children. For these educators,

culturally responsive teaching may be internally persuasive, and as a result modeled in their teaching of preservice teachers and stressed in their courses. For others, culturally responsive teaching remains an authoritative discourse among the many other authoritative discourses of teacher education and can remain infused with such authority but may not be part of their daily practice or understandings of teaching and learning. Teacher educators, then, present the theory of culturally responsive teaching to preservice teachers in different ways, with different levels of understanding themselves. These factors mean that preservice teachers experience the theory differently depending upon who exposes it to them and how it is incorporated into courses, affecting how they themselves come to understand it and to some extent the importance they give it.

Second, culturally responsive teaching involves knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Like any teaching, it is complex and cannot be reduced to a mechanical routine that works automatically for all teachers and all students in all contexts. Culturally responsive teaching requires knowledge of cultures and the ways in which culture influences students' education. It involves pedagogical knowledge of various teaching strategies and methods and an understanding of when to employ them. Culturally responsive teaching takes skills in planning lessons that draw on the prior knowledge of students and their cultural backgrounds to engage them in the construction of knowledge; breaking with traditional views of teaching and learning. It involves skills in examining (and teaching students to examine) critically the curriculum and knowledge contained within textbooks and presenting multiple perspectives on traditional curriculum content. It takes a strong ethic of care for all children and a commitment to their growth

276

as individuals and students. Because culturally responsive teaching involves dispositions of teachers, it involves beliefs, attitudes, and feelings. Culturally responsive teaching then must be seen as valuable and worth pursuing in order for it to become internally persuasive for preservice teachers.

Third, culturally responsive teaching is not achieved instantly upon recognition of a need for it or an understanding of its characteristics but rather it is achieved across a lifetime of practice. "It would be unrealistic to expect teachers-to-be to develop extensive and sophisticated pedagogical knowledge and skills of culturally responsive teachers during their preservice preparation" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b, p. 30). Instead, we must cultivate a vision for culturally responsive teaching, knowledge of how it is practiced, and skills for enacting it in the classroom.

Knowing the difficulty in developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward culturally responsive teaching, I felt it was important to better understand how preservice teachers came to comprehend this theory and either reject it or work to incorporate it into their practice and teacher identity. The following research questions guided the data collection and analysis:

1. How do elementary preservice teachers understand culturally responsive teaching?

   1a. What factors, beliefs, and experiences influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

   1b. How does an intern placement in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting influence their understanding of culturally responsive teaching?

2. How do elementary preservice teachers begin to author culturally responsive

   teacher identities in response to their teacher education program and their

   experiences in a culturally and linguistically diverse intern setting?

   2a. How do elementary preservice teachers describe their process of

   becoming a teacher?

   2b. How do preservice teachers negotiate the tensions between multiple

   authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of others presented

   to them in their courses, seminar, and intern setting?

In this chapter I will discuss the significance of the findings, which suggested three

important factors to consider in teacher education: (a) the importance of recognizing and

incorporating the life histories of preservice teachers into teacher education, (b) providing

experience working with diverse students under the direction of culturally responsive

teachers, and (c) engaging in meaningful dialogue with preservice teachers. I will also

address implications for both the practice of teacher education and future research.

The Journey from Understanding to Authoring Oneself as Culturally Responsive

Preservice teachers enter teacher education with strong beliefs and understandings

of what good teaching looks like (Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992). The question for teacher

educators then is how to cultivate a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways

when preservice teachers might not have previously encountered or even considered the

importance of such teaching. It was the intent of this study to examine how preservice

teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching in a context that presented and

valued such teaching and then in turn explore how those understandings influenced their

developing teacher identities. The first research question sought to identify the factors influencing how preservice teachers came to understand culturally responsive teaching and how course work and internship influenced the understandings.

All preservice teachers enter teacher education with life histories and experiences that shape their beliefs about teaching and learning as well as their constructions of and assumptions about such concepts as culture, race, class, and diversity. Each enters teacher education with different levels of understanding of such realities as discrimination, individual and institutional racism or classism, and social positions. These beliefs, understandings, and assumptions all influence how they attend to the authoritative discourses they encounter in teacher education. For some, such as the participants in this study, the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching resonates with their understandings of culture, diversity, and teaching. For others, the authoritative discourse of culturally responsive teaching and the concepts surrounding it (e.g., culture, individual and institutional racism or classism, strength versus deficit approach, etc.) create cognitive dissonance because the theory does not fit with their beliefs, assumptions, and understandings. Such dissonance can lead to a rejection or modification of the introduced theory or an inability to take it in and make it internally persuasive (Goodman, 1988; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Pajares, 1992)

In this study, the participants did not seem to experience such dissonance, rather, the discourse of culturally responsive teaching introduced in teacher education fit with their beliefs and understandings about diversity. It gave them language to explain the reasons for valuing such practices as presenting multiple perspectives through literature,

drawing on the cultural background and knowledge of students, or creating a strong sense

of community in their classroom. It offered an avenue for them to practice what they

believed. The discourse of culturally responsive teaching then became part of their

visions of teaching and the language with which they talked about teaching and learning.

As they engaged in dialogue about their experiences in teacher education, they also

engaged in the development of their teacher identities. The opportunities at Clayburn

Elementary, course work, their appropriation of the discourse of culturally responsive

teaching, and opportunities for meaningful dialogue supported and encouraged the

participants' efforts to author themselves as culturally responsive teachers. The second

research question focused on this process, examining the participants' stories for their

visions of teaching and instances of negotiation and orchestration of the many competing

discourses encountered along the way.

Synthesis of the results from chapters four and five suggest three major factors in

the participants' identification as culturally responsive teachers. First, their life histories

(i.e., the beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that the participants brought with them to

teacher education) became important factors in how they attended to and ultimately

appropriated the language of culturally responsive teaching into their talk about teaching.

Second, their vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways was informed and

reinforced through their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students under the

direction of culturally responsive teachers. Finally, the participants had opportunities to

engage in meaningful dialogue about diversity issues and both the theory and practice of

culturally responsive teaching. The significance of these three factors will be discussed next.

Recognizing and Incorporating Life Histories into Teacher Education

Why is it that the participants in this study were so receptive to the discourse of culturally responsive teaching? The analysis showed that each of the participants entered the program with a certain amount of sociocultural consciousness, giving them insight into the ways in which constructions such as race, class, and gender influence people's social positions and the power differentials that exist within these constructs. When looking at the team as a whole, the four participants seemed to be either slightly above (Karissa) or far above (Victoria) the average level of sociocultural consciousness among team members during their first semester in the School of Education. Starting the program with more sociocultural consciousness meant that as the participants encountered discussions in seminar about race, class, discrimination, etc., they had a different, perhaps deeper, understanding or insight into the topics.

The sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence the participants entered the program with were the result of previous experiences and life histories. They entered with certain understandings of social positions and the ways in which culture operates to shape one's world view. The participants' life histories positioned them in unique ways, allowing for different understandings of culturally responsive teaching during teacher education. Karissa and Victoria grew up in working class or poor families, leading to more awareness of how class operated within individuals and schools and an interest in working with students living in poverty. Victoria developed relationships with culturally

diverse people through her work and had an openness to learning about diversity. She resisted categorizing people and the stereotypes that come with such labels. Maria surrounded herself with ethnically and racially diverse students when she entered college and learned a great deal through these relationships about racism, prejudice, and discrimination. She had a strong sense of social justice and desire for equity in her discourse and held strong views about issues of race, culture, and diversity. Maria could easily point out when people were not being culturally responsive, despite not always being able to enact it herself. Natasha's experiences in an elementary Spanish dual-immersion program laid the foundation for a lifetime of openness and a desire to learn about diversity and culture. She saw first hand and was able to articulate the ways in which race and class worked to advantage the White, middle-class students and disadvantage and marginalize students of color or lower socioeconomic status in her high school.

The participants' experiences with their own culture, in terms of race and ethnicity, likewise influenced their interest in and understanding of culturally responsive teaching. Victoria had experienced racial discrimination as early as the fourth grade, an experience that shaped her racial identity for years. Natasha and Maria felt compelled to learn more about different cultures because of the number of times people had made assumptions about their race, based on physical appearance. These experiences were sources of frustration at times for both of them, but they were perhaps also sources of understanding in that they knew what it felt to be considered "other" giving them greater insight and deeper compassion for racially and ethnically diverse students.

Another factor influencing the beliefs and assumptions with which the participants entered the program were their experiences with knowing people of different races and cultures. Each of the participants had direct contact with either family or friends who were racially or ethnically diverse and others who were homosexual. These relationships worked in different ways to open their minds, challenge their previous assumptions, and give them insight into the struggles with discrimination that these individuals experienced. This insight gave them stronger convictions to work against things like labeling, overgeneralizations, and categorizing people based on appearances.

For example, Maria talked about the importance of not labeling kids and the impact such labels have. She shared this story about labeling:

> We were talking about labeling kids with disabilities and…all of a sudden [I] made this connection to religious studies class, where we were talking about this Buddhist monk who labels water and prays for [the] water…He takes jugs of water and labels them different things like love and hate and you know just different negative and positive things. And the things that were positive, you look at the water crystals after they've been labeled and they're really beautiful and stuff like that. And then you look at the negative ones and they look all jaggedy…*So* I made a connection to kids because we're 70% water so if you label a person as something then they become it. (Interview, 7/12/08, 586-595)

Maria worked hard not to categorize people and realized the importance of not making assumptions about her students. Victoria developed a few deep cross-cultural relationships through work that helped challenge some of her assumptions about immigration and language acquisition. Natasha worked with employees at her father's business that she came to regard as close friends or even family despite her friends questioning how she could work with "those people." These relationships helped

challenge her assumptions and beliefs about the homeless and those living in poverty. She came to see the importance of looking beyond physical appearances in getting to know people. Karissa's personal beliefs about homosexuality were challenged when her brother came out and she witnessed her father's rejection of him. Her words, "When you don't have a personal experience with it, it's kind of abstract" (Interview, 4/15/09, 610-611) can be applied to all of the participants' experiences with the other. For each of the participants, these experiences moved them past the abstract, forcing them to grapple with their own beliefs and assumptions and at times move past their own prejudices.

These beliefs and assumptions were formed and the experiences occurred prior to entry to the teacher education program and greatly influenced both how they heard and attended to the discourse of culturally responsive teaching as well as their response to it. Each participant had an interest in cultural issues as evident in their expressed willingness to participate in the study during the first weeks in the program. As a result of such openness to the topics of culture and diversity, I would argue, the participants were more receptive to the theory of culturally responsive teaching. This receptivity would account for each of them taking in the language of culturally responsive teaching and appropriating it (to different degrees) into their talk of teaching and ultimately identifying themselves as culturally responsive educators.

Work with Diverse Students under the Direction of Culturally Responsive Teachers

The internship experience in a culturally and linguistically diverse school was a vital component in the process of identifying as a culturally responsive teacher for each of the participants. Their initial understandings of what it meant to teach in culturally

responsive ways came from instruction by the team leader, a culturally responsive educator, and course work. These understandings were definitely influenced by what the participants brought with them to teacher education; however, their experiences during internship enhanced and deepened these understandings. The participants' desire to teach in Title 1 schools and with culturally diverse students drew them to this particular team and led to their internship in at Clayburn Elementary, which offered the opportunity to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Clayburn Elementary was unique in that most of the cooperating teachers were committed to teaching in culturally responsive ways, albeit to differing points on the continuum. They were dedicated to their students' growth as both academic students and individuals. During the four years before the end of the study, the school had changed drastically. It moved from more traditional, whole class instruction to small group work, differentiated and individualized instruction, and an emphasis on best practices for ELLs. The principal acted as the main change agent in this situation and worked closely with Dr. Fire and the university to provide staff development that would assist her teachers in learning to see the students differently, committing to more progressive teaching methods, and becoming more culturally responsive to the students. Many of the teachers and administrators attributed the school's improvement on end-of-grade testing during the course of the study to these efforts. Clayburn Elementary was a "high growth" school during the 2008-2009 school year with over 60 percent of the students passing reading, math, and science end-of-grade tests. This outcome represented more than triple the

number of students who passed in previous years (Personal communication with Team Leader, 8/11/09).

This unique opportunity to intern at Clayburn Elementary gave the participants not only the exposure to the theory of culturally responsive teaching in their course work but the opportunity to observe it in action within a school setting. They also had the opportunity to enact cultural responsiveness in their planning and teaching throughout internship because such teaching was valued and encouraged by most cooperating teachers. Perhaps most importantly, the participants were able to develop personal relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse students. These relationships gave them occasion to put into practice the strategies and techniques they were learning about in course work as well as their ethic of care for students.

Like other members of the team, the participants entered the program with a desire to work with children and care for the students they met. Having an ethic of care, however, goes beyond simply wanting to work with children. For the culturally responsive teacher it means having an affirming attitude toward *all* students, validating their cultural frames of reference, having patience with students and persistence in teaching them, and recognizing the whole child not just the student (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). The participants in the study had such an ethic of care, although they articulated and enacted it in different ways and at times even spoke language that perpetuated the hegemonic discourse of privilege.

Karissa had a deep desire to make her classroom a space of fun and safety for her students. Although she struggled to articulate the deep care she had for her students, they

286

could tell she was genuinely interested in their lives. She had a relaxed and playful style in the classroom that drew the children to her. Thus, she was showered daily with stories about personal life from her students and children lined up at her desk to talk with her. As she heard their stories, Karissa struggled with the realities of their daily lives and what to do with some of the information (e.g., the boy who told her they did not have any food at home). Karissa learned that teachers must possess an understanding of students that goes far beyond academic skills to include life outside the classroom, something she recognized in her cooperating teacher and desired for herself.

Unlike Karissa, Maria could clearly articulate a deep ethic of care, but her struggle was in creating deep relationships in her daily interactions with students. Also evident in Maria's talk was a sense of privilege. Her desire to provide opportunities that the parents could not, expose students to things they had not been exposed to, or her vision of helping the "less fortunate" all suggested her custodial positioning over her students. Despite her best intentions to be culturally responsive and anti-racist as well as her direct experiences with diverse students, Maria used language that authored her students as in need of saving and her in a position of savior. Throughout the study, Maria expressed a strong sense of justice in dealing with students and often defined herself as a teacher in opposition to how she saw other teachers treat their students.

For Natasha, internship with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds led her to move past a superficial understanding of constructivism as fun, hands-on, engaging lessons to a style of teaching that draws on and incorporates the students' prior knowledge and cultural backgrounds into the curriculum. She came to see

the possible validation and empowerment of students that comes with such teaching. Without the diverse students in her classroom, it is doubtful that Natasha would have arrived at this deeper understanding. Natasha developed strong relationships with her students. They knew she genuinely cared for them and often scrambled to sit next to her at lunch. They shared stories of home life and their struggles and excitements with her throughout her internships. She spoke of riding the line between being their friend and teacher as difficult for her to negotiate.

Victoria most clearly articulated and enacted her strong ethic of care. She seldom took down time explaining that teaching "can be *so* rewarding but *so* exhausting at the same time because you're giving *so much* of yourself everyday, trying to reach them" (Interview, 4/14/09, 447-449). Her care for students led Victoria to see lunch and recess as times to get to know her students outside of the classroom and she always sat with her students, played with them on the playground, and engaged in conversations about their lives. These relationships were very important to Victoria and helped her learn lessons such as: do not make assumptions about your students or do not blame them for prejudice or hate they express when they are reflecting what they have learned at home. Despite these strong relationships with diverse students, as well as Victoria's high level of sociocultural consciousness and cultural competence, occasionally her language did not reflect her intentions and desire to be anti-racist and culturally responsive. Her feelings of being their "surrogate mother" or strong desire to mold them into a *better* person reflect the larger discourse of privilege and deficit notions that are so pervasive in our racist society.

Had the participants not interned in a culturally and linguistically diverse school, their ethic of care would have still been present in their relationships with students. However, their beliefs and assumptions about teaching diverse students may have remained unchallenged and their knowledge, skills, and dispositions for working with culturally diverse students would have been limited to discussion and exposure to best practices and theory in course work. Internship, which offered direct experiences with culturally and linguistically diverse students and the modeling of culturally responsive teaching, then became an important factor in cultivating cultural responsiveness in the participants. Through enacting possible teaching selves within a setting that emphasized being culturally responsive, the participants were not only able to see themselves and their cooperating teachers as culturally responsive teachers but were enabled to act in culturally responsive ways with diverse students. Thus, internship became the bridge between research question one, which focused on their understandings of culturally responsive teaching and research question two, which focused on how they began to enact cultural responsiveness in their teaching. Although each participant came to different levels of understanding of what culturally responsive teaching is and were able to enact it within their classroom to different degrees, each left with a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways and a commitment to becoming more culturally responsive as teachers.

Meaningful Dialogue

Having experiences working with diverse students, in and of itself, is not sufficient to develop a vision for culturally responsive teaching. The participants in this

study were given opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue about diversity issues and their experiences at Clayburn Elementary. These conversations became opportunities for the participants to examine personal beliefs and assumptions, discuss what it means to be culturally responsive, share experiences from their observations and teaching, and orchestrate the authoritative discourses they encountered. Such conversations occurred both within the structure of seminar as well as individually with Dr. Fire, other supervisors, peers, and me.

Seminar offered a safe atmosphere for participants to examine their own experiences, beliefs, and assumptions about such issues as race and ethnicity, social class, language acquisition, gender, religion, and exceptionality. All participants emphasized the importance of seminar as a chance to talk about these "taboo" topics, engage in discussion of important topics in teaching, and expand their own thinking by hearing different beliefs and opinions. Dr. Fire cultivated an environment where preservice teachers were able explore difficult issues as both individuals and professionals. Each week the students read from different sources about a diversity issue prior to seminar. During class they engaged in different activities to elicit their personal beliefs and assumptions. They worked to understand the issues at both a societal and school level, drawing on personal experiences and internship for examples and illustrations of issues being discussed. Dr. Fire made a clear connection between their exploration of these issues and the theory and practice of culturally responsive teaching.

The dialogue of seminar was not always easy or uncomplicated. It proved challenging at times, like the topic of religion for Natasha, discussions of race and

ethnicity for Maria, or team members' comments about social class for Karissa. But through such talk, the participants were able to gain a better understanding of themselves as well as come to see different world views. Despite Natasha's frustration with team members who did not want to even approach the topic of religion in school, she came to see that not all of her colleagues will value the same things as she but their different views should not keep her from exposing her students to diversity. Karissa recognized clearly that many of her fellow team members approached students living in poverty with negative attitudes, a sense of privilege, and deficit thinking. Karissa resisted such views of her students and framed their lives outside of school in positive ways in her discourse.

Conversations outside of seminar were likewise important sources for examining personal beliefs and experiences during internship. These conversations occurred on many levels from informal chats while at internship or class to more formal professional development sessions at Clayburn Elementary in which the team participated. Victoria, for example, moved past a belief in the adage, "I don't see color, I see children," through a conversation during a professional development session on culture, further reading and reflection, and then a discussion in seminar. Such reflective thinking enabled Victoria to move past this assertion and consider another perspective. She came to see it as a disservice to students when teachers do not recognize their individual cultural identities. As part of her dialogue associated with this change, Victoria not only examined her personal beliefs and engaged in an alternative perspective, she also began authoring herself as a teacher committed to seeing and validating her students' cultural identity.

Because one's identity is rooted in dialogical interactions with others (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2001; McKnight, 2004), seminar and internship were sites of identity formation for the participants. The ways in which they spoke about diversity issues, their students, and their experiences at internship became ways in which they tried on possible teaching selves and authored their identities as teachers. During teacher education, the participants encountered multiple discourses of teaching from professors, cooperating teachers, supervisors, and peers that offered both possibilities and constraints for their possible teaching selves. The act of orchestrating, rejecting, or assimilating such voices into their own talk about teaching was part of the complex process of identity formation. In the end, each participant came to use language from the discourse of culturally responsive teaching to talk about their own experiences with students and teaching.

Although the participants fell at different points on the continuum, expressing their understanding and enacting cultural responsiveness in the classroom differently, they each authored their teaching selves as culturally responsive. It should not be presumed, however, from this study that such authoring of oneself as a culturally responsive teacher is an easy process. The presence of prior beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that lead one to be more receptive and appreciative of diversity coupled with an internship in culturally diverse schools under the direction of culturally responsive teachers and opportunities for meaningful dialogue do not automatically translate into an identity as a culturally responsive teacher. Cultural responsiveness is ultimately an orientation or disposition that can only be initiated during teacher education to the degree that a preservice teacher is able and willing to appropriate the language, ideas, and

practices into his or her own discourse and practice of teaching. This process is a complex one that must be studied further and has great implications for teacher education.

Implications for Teacher Education

While there are many studies demonstrating the need for culturally responsive teaching, we are only beginning to examine how preservice teachers come to understand culturally responsive teaching during teacher education (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007) and what the process of becoming culturally responsive looks like. The task of preparing culturally responsive teachers is multifaceted and challenging. It involves

> …supporting future teachers in developing a set of fundamental orientations, including an awareness that their worldviews are apt to be dramatically different from the worldviews of children who are racially, culturally, socially, and linguistically different from themselves; an appreciation of and respect for cultural diversity; and a willingness to teach in ways that challenge existing inequalities and promote social justice. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, p. 177)

Moving preservice teachers to this point is not an easy, step-by-step process but rather one that is more gradual. The process is filled with starts and stops as they come to new understandings of their own beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions and work to orchestrate the competing discourses encountered in teacher education into their own understandings and practice of teaching. This journey is influenced by both what they bring to teacher education as well as their experiences in teacher education (e.g., course work, internship, seminar, formal and informal discussions, etc.) and the teacher educators and supervisors with whom they work.

It is important to note that the participants in this study came to teacher education with a predisposition towards culturally responsive teaching, yet they still struggled to fully understand the theory and incorporate it into their talk and practice. What about the preservice teachers who are not receptive to diversity issues? What about those whose privileged position impedes their understanding of the need for cultural responsiveness? The insights gained from this study suggest some work that we must do in teacher education to help all students develop a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways and skills to begin to enact cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

Being Explicit

What came from interviews and observations of the participants and follow-up conversations with the team leader was the realization that despite teaching in very constructivist ways and using the term constructivism, the preservice teachers came to a limited understanding of what constructivism is, why it is important to engage students in the construction of knowledge, and how constructivist teaching is culturally responsive. None of the participants used the term constructivism and only two understood it to be more than simply using hands-on, engaging activities with students. Dr. Fire realized that perhaps she needed to make the theory of constructivism more explicit in her instruction and help students make the connection between constructivist teaching and being culturally responsive.

Unlike the participants' failure to use the term constructivism, they readily incorporated the term culturally responsive teaching and tenets of this theory into their talk about teaching. I believe this is due to Dr. Fire's introduction of the term and theory

294

in the first semester of teacher education, continued use of the language from this discourse throughout course work and seminar, and continuous attention to developing pedagogical knowledge of best practices and teaching strategies to ensure learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Such efforts coupled with an explicit connection between diversity issues and culturally responsive teaching made during their senior seminar created a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways among the team. A majority of the team worked to author their teaching selves as culturally responsive in class discussions and spoke knowledgeably about the theory and practice.

However, simply identifying oneself as a culturally responsive teacher does not make one culturally responsive (Gee, 2001). Karissa and Maria, for example, identified as culturally responsive but their cultural responsiveness in the classroom looked much different than Victoria's. Maria struggled to identify instances of being culturally responsive in the classroom and to explain how a social studies unit, designed to be culturally responsive, was in fact culturally responsive. Karissa understood the importance of teaching in culturally responsive ways for her students and could articulate them, but her lessons were more superficial attempts to incorporate culture and typically focused on exposing students to diversity (also at a more superficial level) rather than draw on students' cultural knowledge or accommodate different learning styles.

Teacher educators need to examine whether they are being explicit enough when teaching theories such as constructivism and culturally responsive teaching as well as ensuring students make connections between them. They may also need to ask students to be explicit in examining the ways in which they understand and are learning to practice

the theories in the classroom. More direct conversations with Karissa and Maria about their knowledge of these theories and how they were enacting them in the classroom might have moved their understandings to deeper levels and helped them incorporate these deeper understandings into their teaching practice.

Developing Experiences with Cultural Diversity

If a goal of teacher education is to develop teachers who can teach in culturally diverse settings, it is vital that students are provided opportunities to work with diverse students (Bennett, 1995; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005; Talbert-Johnson, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). These experiences give preservice teachers opportunities to get to know students who have different world views than themselves, try out strategies and practices learned in course work, and begin to enact cultural responsiveness with diverse students. The internship at Clayburn Elementary was influential in deepening the participants' understandings of how to work with diverse students, extending their understandings of culturally responsive teaching, and allowing them to enact possible teaching selves that were culturally responsive.

"One of the most difficult tasks as human beings is communicating meaning across our individual differences, a task confounded immeasurably as we attempt to communicate across social lines, ethnic lines, cultural lines, or lines of unequal power" (Delpit, 1995, p. 66). How do preservice teachers learn to communicate effectively with diverse students unless they have an opportunity to work with diverse students? Likewise, how do preservice teachers develop cultural knowledge, an empathic disposition, and caring relationships with culturally diverse students without actually

interacting with diverse students? How do they learn to plan and teach lessons in ways that assure diverse students can learn without diverse students to teach? Such work during teacher education offers support for their efforts from teacher educators and cooperating teachers, opportunity to reflect formally and informally on their work, and the chance to engage in dialogue with peers experiencing similar work.

"Preservice teachers must have authentic experiences in culturally diverse schools and communities over an extended period of time" (Bennett, 1995, 260). The participants in this study were deeply affected by the school, the cooperating teachers and administration, and most notably, the students. They learned much from their time at Clayburn Elementary and credited it as influencing their future. Karissa, Maria, and Victoria in terms of the type of school in which they desired to teach, Natasha in terms of continuing her education to become an ESL teacher, and each in terms of coming to identify as a culturally responsive teacher.

It is the responsibility of teacher education to create opportunities for preservice teachers to intern in culturally diverse schools (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Howard, 1999; Potthoff et al., 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Such experiences provide the opportunity for preservice teachers to expand their understanding of culture and cultural competence, practice acceptance and respect for diversity, enact culturally responsive teaching strategies, and develop dispositions that allow them to enter diverse schools willing to challenge the existing inequalities and change the status quo.

Encouraging Meaningful Dialogue

Simply interning in a culturally diverse school, in and of itself, will not ensure the development of dispositions toward culturally responsive teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Evident in some members of the team, it is possible to intern at a school like Clayburn Elementary and remain rooted in the hegemonic discourse of privilege (Gay, 2000; Hollins & Torres-Guzman, 2005). Even the discourse of Maria and Victoria, at times, reflected this sense of privilege despite their commitment to being anti-racist and culturally responsive. That is why, in teacher education, it is so important to provide opportunities for students to engage in dialogue about diversity issues and their intern experiences (Gay, 2000; Gere et al., 2009; Milner, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a). Seminar provided such opportunity for the participants in this study. They were allowed to explore diversity issues on both a personal and professional level, examining their beliefs and assumptions about such issues as race, ethnicity, class, language acquisition, gender, and religion and how these beliefs and assumptions would influence their teaching. They had opportunities to talk about their experiences at Clayburn Elementary and with diverse students.

The participants also had opportunities to talk, both formally and informally, about diversity issues, learning to teach, and theories and practices of teaching in culturally responsive ways. Such conversations not only allowed them to examine themselves, they also acted as spaces of authorship (Alsup, 2006; Rogers et al., 2006; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Through such dialogue, the participants were able to identify possible teaching selves that they either wished to enact or totally rejected --

when Karissa longed to have the seemingly innate knowledge of students that her cooperating teacher possessed, when Maria expressed that she would never intentionally make a child cry or when she explained her more constructivist approach to a science lesson. These conversations gave the participants a chance to voice the kind of teacher they wanted to be and author their identity as such.

Being an observer of the dialogue among the participants, it was interesting to note that during seminar the use of the term culturally responsive teacher or teaching was used often with an assumption that everyone understood it to mean the same thing. However, by the second year together, the participants came to see themselves and their understanding of what it meant to teach in culturally responsive ways to be different than some members of the team. For example, Maria and Natasha chose to share certain events, conversations, or experiences from internship with only people they felt were like-minded. Their frustration with the team member's comments about her "Three little Black boys" and the "Mexican students" taking the English proficiency tests was voiced only with those they felt would share or at least understand their position and frustration. They chose not to directly challenge their peers' racist views of students or their discourse of privilege but rather shared their frustration of such experiences with Dr. Fire, myself, or peers whom they knew held similar beliefs about diversity or teaching. After data collection, when asked about not challenging peers, Natasha explained that such challenge would not be wise since she had to maintain collegial relationships during teacher education. Despite Dr. Fire's efforts to create an environment that was open to dialogue about challenging issues, the participants did not take on an anti-racist role to

the degree that they felt comfortable challenging a peer's views or comments, nor did they all appropriate culturally responsive teaching to the degree Dr. Fire might have hoped.

Deeper discussion about race and the tensions that emerge from issues of race must be part of teacher education because such tensions come with attempts to be culturally responsive (Gere et al., 2009; Milner, 2003). Such discussions offer preservice teachers the opportunity "to examine *how* race shapes their thinking and *why* race presents the challenges it does" (Gere et al., 2009, p. 841). These deeper discussions can also help create spaces for a more complex and diverse understandings of culturally responsive teaching rather than an assumption that everyone is operating from the same understanding as the teacher educator.

Engaging in Identity Work

Teacher education is filled with talk about the transformation from preservice teacher to practicing or beginning teacher. This process is sometimes seen as a stage-model process conceptualizing the preservice teacher's transformation as continuous and sequential (McDermott, 2002; Paccione, 2000). This study found that the developing teacher identity trajectories of the participants was not linear but rather filled with starts and stops as participants gained deeper insights or understandings, learned new teaching theories or strategies, relied on old beliefs and assumptions, or struggled to enact possible teaching selves.

Taking part in this study gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on and discuss their understandings of culturally responsive teaching and their journeys toward

300

becoming a teacher. Their developing teacher identities were a focus of interviews and discussions drawing attention to the type of teacher they wanted to become, the teacher they saw themselves to be, and the teacher their cooperating teacher and students perceived them to be. They had opportunities to articulate possible teaching selves that they had identified from either course work or observation as well as to examine their ability or inability to enact such identities in the classroom. The participants were also asked to talk about their understandings of culturally responsive teaching, the ways in which they saw cooperating teachers being culturally responsive, and the ways they enacted cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

Such explicit conversation about their teacher identities and culturally responsive teaching was helpful in appropriating the language of culturally responsive teaching into their talk about teaching as well as coming to identify as culturally responsive teachers. It likewise pointed to the need for deeper conversations in teacher education about negotiating their positions as student teachers and guests in another teacher's classroom. Preservice teachers can feel constrained from enacting all possible teaching selves because of perceived expectations or beliefs of the cooperating teacher (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001). It is important to help students negotiate such constraints so they can try on possible teaching selves during student teaching rather than wait until they have classrooms of their own.

Knowing Preservice Teachers

This study allowed me to have both formal and informal conversations with the participants about diversity, culture, their life histories, learning to teach, their emerging

301

teacher identities, and their experiences during teacher education. It also created an opportunity to observe them for longer, more in depth periods of time during internship both in formal teaching and informal interactions with students and peers. Having such conversations and observations allowed me to know them at a deeper level than is typically possible for supervisors in teacher education and to gain a deeper understanding of how they understood culturally responsive teaching and their emerging teacher identities.

Such relationships and understandings are not possible in large programs where supervision loads require teacher educators to spend brief and limited time in the classroom observing preservice teachers. Smaller supervision loads would aid in the opportunity for longer observations of preservice teachers and deeper conversations about teaching in culturally responsive ways, their enactment of theories discussed in course work, and their development as teachers. Smaller loads would give teacher educators the opportunity to get to know their students on a deeper level, helping them know, for example, where a student might be experiencing cognitive dissonance between knowledge gained in teacher education and personal beliefs, assumptions, or understandings or when they are negotiating differences in authoritative discourses of teaching between course work and internship. Such knowledge is important for teacher educators as they strive to develop beginning teachers who understand that their world view may be dramatically different from the world view of their diverse students, who have an appreciation and respect for cultural diversity, and who are ultimately able to teaching in culturally responsive ways.

Implications for Research

The process of becoming a teacher is complex and highly personal. Recognizing how the preservice teachers in this study came to understand culturally responsive teaching and assimilate it into their own talk and developing teacher identities took two years of ongoing conversations, observations, and analysis. Such research must be ethnographic and longitudinal as beliefs, assumptions, and understandings as well as identities change over time and with experience and dialogue. Because there is such limited research in the understandings that preservice teachers come to about culturally responsive teaching (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007) or how they incorporate these understandings into their developing teacher identities, it is important to repeat studies like this one with new groups of preservice teachers.

This study followed four preservice teachers who came to teacher education interested in cultural issues, with experiences examining their own cultural identities, and with a predisposition to be open to the theory and practice of culturally responsive teaching. They also interned at a culturally and linguistically diverse school giving them greater opportunity to enact possible culturally responsive teaching selves during their student teaching experience. It is important to examine the experiences of preservice teachers from different cultural backgrounds and those interning in both culturally diverse as well as more homogeneous schools. This would allow for deeper understandings of the influence of lived histories, cultural backgrounds, and the internship setting on how preservice teachers come to understand culturally responsive teaching. Also including participants who are more closed to diversity issues would be

helpful to better understand the ways in which preservice teachers take up, modify, or reject the discourse of culturally responsive teaching.

Because student teaching is done while a guest in a practicing teacher's classroom, it is important to consider the ways in which the setting as well as the influence and expectations of cooperating teachers work to constrain or enable them to enact possible teaching selves. What enables or constrains preservice teachers from enacting certain practices within their internship? How do they negotiate those instances of constraint? Likewise, the influence and expectations of Dr. Fire highlighted the importance of learning to teach in culturally responsive ways, her discourse within course work and seminar offered the participants the language as well as opportunities to author themselves as culturally responsive teachers. What happens when the team leader does not have an internally persuasive discourse of culturally responsive teaching? What happens when opportunities for meaningful dialogue are not part of their teacher education? This study was limited to examining the participants' discourse during senior seminar. What about the authoritative discourses of teaching they encountered in other course work? How was culturally responsive teaching introduced, discussed, modeled, or perhaps neglected in other courses? In what ways did the participants author their possible teaching selves in other courses?

While preservice teachers can gain a vision for teaching in culturally responsive ways during teacher education, the real test is when they get a classroom of their own and are able to enact teaching methods and strategies without the constraints of being a guest in another teacher's classroom. Also, because culturally responsive teaching exists on a

continuum with greater responsiveness coming with years of practice and experience it is important to follow preservice teachers not only through teacher education but into the field. The stresses associated with the first years of teaching often cause beginning teachers to revert back to teaching in more traditional ways, in ways that they themselves were taught or that cooperating teachers modeled; meaning efforts in teacher education to develop innovative, progressive teaching methods and nurture cultural responsiveness may not translate into culturally responsive practice in the classroom.

Longitudinal studies are needed that trace the developing understandings of culturally responsive teaching among preservice teachers as they move through teacher education and then out into the field. What experiences or factors cause change in their understandings? What experiences or factors keep them from deeper understandings? Does strong identification as a culturally responsive teacher during teacher education translate into a teacher who practices cultural responsiveness in the classroom? What experiences and factors continue to influence their growth as culturally responsive teachers as they enter the classroom? Plans to follow the participants in this study, as they enter their own classrooms in the future, have been made. It will be important to see how their culturally responsive teacher identities continue to develop. What are the student and faculty demographics of the schools in which they teach? To what extent are they able to enact cultural responsiveness in their own classroom? Do they continue to use methods and best practices from their course work such as morning meeting, constructivism, guided reading, and writer's workshop?

This study focused solely on the preservice teachers' understandings and their developing teacher identities as culturally responsive. What about the students they taught? Did they perceive the participants to be responsive to their individual needs? Did they feel the curriculum was relevant to them? Most research on culturally responsiveness focuses on ethnographical research on culturally responsive classrooms (Lasdon-Billings, 1994, 2001; Irvine, 2003; Nieto, 1999) or research on dispositional beliefs of teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2000; Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Cross, 2003; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Pennington, 2007; Solomon et. al., 2005; Talbert-Johnson, 2006). The study and observation of teachers practicing culturally responsive teaching could be enhanced if paired with studies of how elementary students experience this pedagogy as well; including research to elicit elementary students' perceptions of their teachers, the activities and curriculum, and the relevance to their lives.

Preservice teachers' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and developing teacher identities are impacted by the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they develop while in teacher education. As such, pairing research like that done in this study, with work on dispositional research might offer even more insight into the connections between their prior beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions and those developed during teacher education. It could also provide insight into how to advance the introduction and development of cultural responsiveness in preservice teachers.

Final Thoughts

Learning to teach in culturally responsive ways is very complex and must be treated as such in both teacher education and educational research. The participants, in this study, constructed very personal understandings of culturally responsive teaching influenced by what they brought with them to teacher education in terms of life histories, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences. Their understandings were further influenced by their personal journeys through course work and internship. They each authored themselves as culturally responsive teachers in both their talk and enactment of possible teaching selves in very personal and unique ways, taking different paths to arrive at different points on the continuum.

Their experiences do not translate into a mechanical step-by-step method for helping preservice teachers develop deep understandings of culturally responsive teaching or teacher identities as culturally responsive. They do, however, suggest implications for those of us in teacher education committed to developing teachers who will be transformed and lead the charge in transforming our public schools into institutions where *all* students can be successful. The importance of being explicit in our teaching of theory and methods or strategies and assisting preservice teachers in making connections between educational theories and the practice of culturally responsive teaching is one such implication. We must develop experiences for our preservice teachers to enact cultural responsiveness with culturally diverse students and then engage in meaningful dialogue about such experiences. We cannot shy away from identity work with our students which means making opportunities to know them at deeper levels.

Although research examining preservice teachers' beliefs about and dispositions toward diversity has been going on for over a decade (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2000; Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Cross, 2003; Dee & Henkin, 2002; Mahlios & Maxson, 1995; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Pohan, 1996; Solomon et. al., 2005; Talbert-Johnson, 2006), studies such as this one, examining how preservice teachers understand culturally responsive teaching, are fairly new and quite limited (Gere et al., 2009; Lazar, 2004; Seidl, 2007). Only one recent study suggests a link between preservice teachers' understandings of culturally responsive teaching and their developing teacher identities (Gere et. al., 2009). This work adds to this limited research base and offers suggestions for furthering research in this area. There is much to be learned about the ways in which preservice teachers come to understand culturally responsive teaching and then either reject it, modify it, or assimilate it into their professional teacher identities.

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317

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Appendix A

Interview Protocols for Participants

Interview Protocol for fall 2007

1. What does *diversity* mean to you?

2. What was your childhood like in terms of diversity?   Probe: Did you know anyone racial and ethnic different from you? Linguistically different? From a different class?

3. Tell me a little bit about your family?

4. How would you define your religious affiliation? Follow-up: Would you describe your religious denomination as liberal, rather conservative, or fundamentalist?

5. How does your faith/religion shape your beliefs about diversity? Probe specific areas (race, immigrants, gays/lesbians, mixed race couples, etc.)

6. How would you describe the student body at your grade school? Middle? High school?
   Probe: What was the racial/ethnic make-up? What was the socio economic background of students? Did you have students at your school(s) who didn't speak English? Did you have students that identified as LGBT?

7. Have you ever had a friendship/relationship with someone of a different race? Ethnicity? Who didn't speak English well? Who was gay/lesbian? Who was of a different religion?

8. Have you ever been to another country? If yes, explore that experience.

9. Do you know another language? Follow-up: How did you learn that language? Would you consider yourself fluent in that language?

10. Do you think people should be bilingual?

11. What do you think America's immigration policy should be like? Why?

12. Have you ever experienced racism or sexism toward yourself or someone else? Follow-up: Talk about that experience. How has that experience shaped your beliefs?

13. Should a teacher have the same expectations for a student with a disability (wheelchair bound, epilepsy, ADD, dyslexia) as they do for other students?

14. What kind of school do you want to work at when you graduate? Why?

15. When you think about inner city schools (like Chicago, New York, L.A.) what do you imagine them to be like? Follow-up: Would you want to work in a school like that? Why/why not?

16. How should parents be involved in their child's education? Follow-up: Are there right and wrong ways for parents to be involved? What would you think if a parent didn't show up for a conference?

17. Is there anything else you would like to talk about in terms of diversity?

Interview Protocol for spring 2008

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

2. What are your goals as a teacher?

3. What is your vision for teaching?

4. Describe your development as an elementary teacher to this point.

5. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

6. What have you learned about becoming a teacher of ethnically and linguistically diverse students?

7. How would you describe culturally responsive teaching?

8. What experiences have impacted you so far in the program?

9. How have you created an identity as a teacher?

Interview Protocol for fall 2008

1. How would you describe Culturally Responsive Teaching?

2. How has being at Siler City Elementary influenced your understanding of Culturally Responsive Teaching?

3. Are there other events or experiences that you feel have contributed to your understanding of Culturally Responsive Teaching?

4. Can you give me an example of Culturally Responsive Teaching that you have seen in your internship?   *Probe: or in your course work at UNCG?*

5. What have you learned about being a teacher of culturally diverse students?

6. What should parental involvement look like in elementary school?
   Probe: How would you involve parents in your classroom?

7. Tell me about the students you are working with this semester.

8. Are you making connections between what you're learning at UNCG (methods & foundation courses and seminar) and what you experience in your internship?

9. Have you had any instances where what you've learned in teacher education have conflicted with what's happening in your internship?

10. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
   Probe: What kind of teacher are you? How might your students describe you?

11. What are your goals or vision as a teacher?

12. When you think about next year, where do you see yourself working? Where would you like to teach?

13. Describe your development as an elementary teacher to this point.

14. Is there anything that concerns you about Student Teaching?

15. Do you feel prepared to Student Teach?
   Probe: what has helped them feel prepared, what areas do they feel unprepared in?

16. What are you looking forward to in your Student Teaching?

Interview Protocol for spring 2009

1. Tell me about your student teaching experience.

2. How has being at Siler City Elementary influenced your teaching?

3. Tell me about your students.

4. When you look back at your teacher education at UNCG and your internships, what experiences or knowledge helped you the most during your student teaching?

5. How would you describe yourself as a teacher at this point? What kind of teacher are you?

6. At this point, do you feel prepared to go into a classroom of your own next year?
   Probe: What excites you about having your own classroom next year? What concerns you?

7. What are your goals for next year? Where do you want to teach?

8. Do you feel like you are prepared to teaching in culturally responsive ways?
   Probe: What has helped you with this? Are there areas you need more information about or experiences to help you in being culturally responsive?

9. How would you describe culturally responsive teaching now?

10. Can you give me an example of a time you were culturally responsive during your student teaching?

11. Were there any times you felt tension between what you learned in teacher education at UNCG and what you experienced at Siler City Elementary?

12. Were there times you felt what you experienced at SCE meshed with or reinforced what you learned in teacher education?

13. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your experience of becoming an elementary teacher over the past two years?

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Team Leader

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher? a teacher educator?

2. What are your goals as a teacher educator?

3. How would you describe your educational philosophy?

4. What does good teaching and learning mean to you? What does it look like?

5. What draws you to the work you do at Siler City Elementary?

6. When you think about cultural diversity in America and our schools what concerns do you have? What excites you about it?

7. How do you define culturally responsive teaching? What does it look like in the classroom?

8. What do beginning teachers need to know to teach in culturally responsive ways?

9. What types of activities do you do with your students to develop these things?

10. With the current team you are working with, describe some of the activities and projects you have done with them and why.

11. Do you think there are dispositions that make a teacher/preservice teacher culturally responsive?

12. How do you know whether a preservice teacher is culturally aware or sensitive and has dispositions that will help them be culturally responsive?

Appendix C

Transcription Conventions

.   pause in speech up to 1 second

..   2 second pause in speech

…   3 second pause in speech
                  (. added for each additional second of pause time)

--   interrupted speech (- placed at the point of interruption)

[[ ]]   overlapping speech

CAPS   emphatic or great emphasis

(?)   uncertain or undecipherable speech

[ ]   researcher's comments (i.e., [whispered], [waving arms], [coughs], etc.)