

Copyright

by

Elizabeth Jane Greer

2019

**The Dissertation Committee for Elizabeth Jane Greer Certifies that this is the approved version of the following Dissertation:**

**#Instawoke: A case study of pre-service teachers' experiences with critical consciousness raising via social media**

**Committee:**

Cinthia S. Salinas, Supervisor

Deborah K. Palmer

Noah De Lissovoy

Daniel G. Krutka

Patricia Abril-Gonzalez

**#Instawoke: A case study of pre-service teachers' experiences with critical  
consciousness raising via social media**

**by**

**Elizabeth Jane Greer**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2019**

## **Dedication**

To the construction of a more humanizing world for all

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation is not only my own but also belongs to

Those who came before me - thank you for lending me your lenses, arguments, and ideas to make sense of my own

Those who will come after me - build upon, challenge, extend, and critique my words to do more and better work for students and society

My family, friends, and academic community that supported me along the way  
And my God who equipped me with talents and gifts to share with the world.

To my committee: Drs. Salinas, Palmer, Abril Gonzalez, De Lissovoy, and Krutka. Thank you for your insights on my work and your support throughout this process. And thank you for the work that you do for teachers, students, schools, and society. Especially to my chair, Dr. Salinas, and to my former advisor, Dr. Palmer, thank you both for letting me be me. Thank you for creating spaces for laughter, care, and personal relationships in academia and for being models of what it means to be critical scholars and educators.

To my participants, a cohort that exuded compassion, community, and care for one another and for your students. Thank you for your honesty and vulnerability. You helped me grow as an educator and a person.

To all of my former students around the world. Thank you for all of the laughs and the love. You humbled me and brought me so much joy.

To Molly and Lo. I am so grateful to have gained two lifelong friends, two incredible women who inspire me, challenge me, and care for me like no other. Thank you for everything.

To David. Five years together! From texts everyday to mass every week, what a blessing it has been to be able to lean on each other. You are BRILLIANT and I am so proud to know you and call you friend.

To Rosalyn, Randy, and Mitch. It has been the ultimate pleasure to work with you, think with you, laugh with you, and cry with you. Thank you for being amazing colleagues and great friends. Q viva nuestro group text para siempre!

To my larger communities in BBE, at UT, and in Austin, especially - Maureen, Nathaly, Desi, Anne, Maggie, Dr. R, Lucy, Nayelli, Dr. Callahan, Dr. Horwitz, Mohit, Dori, Lakeya, Christine, Mr. Overton, and Allie – thank you for being so caring and supportive of me and thank you for all of the work you do to make this world a better place.

To my family, friends, and colleagues in Paraguay. Gracias x enseñarme lo q es ser bilingüe y cuidar un idioma como parte de la corazon. En mis sueños estamos sentaditos tomando un tereré roysaiterei con menta'i mba'e. Los llevo conmigo siempre. Ahata aju.

To my mom, dad, sister Emily, and brothers Will and Brian. Your unconditional love will always be one of life's greatest gifts. Thank you for instilling in me a spirit of adventure, an unending sense of humor, and a supreme appreciation for humanity.

To my best friend Katie. You are the truest example of friendship, and this degree is partially yours. Thank you for 20+ years of life's ups and downs. Here's to amazing things in the next 20.

To Tolu, ife mi. My biggest and brightest blessing. Thank you for your unwavering support. Your ambition and eternal optimism inspire me. I love you.

To myself. Thank you for growing your mind, heart, and strength.

Lord rain down on me so I can move on water  
Like children at the altar, like God inside my house  
I love you, I love you, you looking holy like Mama  
You made a church out of feathers  
So when she fly to the Father  
She know the choir gon' follow and all the offering paid  
She gave my name away to your holy house  
She like my blessings in disguise  
She like her Jesus mountain high  
So he can watch her lonely child  
I know my God  
I know my God seen his breaks and his edges  
A jacket for giving that painted his city in gold  
Like everything is everything  
Like all them days he prayed with me  
Like emptiness was tamed in me  
And all that was left was his love  
And all that was left was his love  
And all that was left was his love..

- noname

Philippians 1:6

## **Abstract**

### **#Instawoke: A case study of pre-service teachers' experiences with critical consciousness raising via social media**

Elizabeth Jane Greer, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

Supervisor: Cinthia S. Salinas

Concerns for educational equity for an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse K-12 student population has drawn attention to the preparation of future teachers' multilingual, multicultural, and social justice-oriented capacities. This qualitative case study explored the pedagogical use of social justice-oriented social media in teacher education to develop critical consciousness and political and ideological clarity amongst a cohort of 22 elementary ESL-certified pre-service teachers. As part of their teacher education coursework, participants were asked to engage with a social justice-oriented Instagram account and submit ten written reflections responding to ten Instagram posts of their choice. These reflections were triangulated with participants' autobiographical data and questionnaire results to draw conclusions about the ways in which they interpreted the content on the account particularly in light of their sociocultural backgrounds, their development as critically conscious educators, and their existing digital practices. Findings indicated that participants were on a trajectory towards critical consciousness and were strategically drawing on their emotions, text-to connections, their experiences with their students, and larger societal discourses to understand social and political issues.

Additionally, pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds, particularly in terms of race, gender, and religion, played strong roles in their interpretations of social justice issues. As the use of social media for the purposes of critical consciousness development was an engaging tool, recommendations for social media use and social justice-oriented teacher education are provided.



## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	xiv
List of Figures .....	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Diverse K-12 student population .....	3
Teacher preparation programs .....	8
Social media in teacher education .....	11
The Study.....	13
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	16
Background.....	16
Ideological and social reproduction in schools .....	16
Marginalized knowledges .....	18
Teacher Education .....	20
Experiences of white pre-service teachers.....	22
Experiences of pre-service teachers of color .....	25
Whiteness in teacher education.....	29
Pedagogical approaches .....	31
Social Media in Teacher Education.....	33
Theoretical underpinnings .....	33
Empirical literature .....	38
Theoretical Framework.....	42

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	49
Introduction.....	49
Overview of the study.....	50
Research Paradigm .....	53
Qualitative Research.....	54
Case Study .....	55
Context.....	56
The @undocumedia and @polibeats_ Instagram accounts .....	56
The teacher education program.....	63
The ESL Methods course.....	64
Participants.....	65
Data Collection .....	69
Data Analysis.....	72
Trustworthiness.....	76
Crystallization.....	77
Limitations .....	78
Positionality .....	80
CHAPTER FOUR: ENTERING CRISIS: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ APPROACHES, STRATEGIES, AND PRACTICES .....	81
Introduction.....	81
Responding with Emotional Reactions.....	83
Finding joy, pride, inspiration, and hope.....	83
Feeling sadness .....	90
Expressing anger.....	96

Making “Text to” Connections .....	104
Text-to-self connections .....	105
Text-to-text connections .....	112
Text-to-world connections .....	118
Connections to larger social and political discourses .....	118
References to popular culture .....	124
References to Students and Teaching .....	130
Considering the diverse experiences of their students .....	130
Teaching students about social justice, human rights, and activism .....	134
“Teaching against the grain” and being an activist educator .....	138
Disagreement, Non-examples, and Critiques .....	144
Conclusion .....	149
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CUSTOM INSTAGRAM FILTERS: GENDER, RACE, AND RELIGION IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ BACKGROUNDS.....</b>	<b>151</b>
Introduction.....	151
Participants as Women.....	152
Women empowerment.....	153
Women’s issues, rights, and politics.....	155
Lack of gendered analysis.....	161
Dabbling in notions of intersectionality.....	165
Participants as Racial Beings .....	170
Centering the experiences of pre-service teachers of color .....	171
Awareness of race, racism, and white privilege .....	175
Participants’ Religious Backgrounds .....	182

Isabel: Focal Participant #1.....	189
Growing up in Spanglish on the Texas-Mexico border.....	189
Isabel’s engagement with @polibeats_.....	190
Savannah: Focal Participant #2.....	197
Growing up in rural, small town Texas.....	197
Savannah’s engagement with @polibeats_.....	198
<b>CHAPTER SIX: INSTAGRAM, PROBLEM-POSING, AND TEACHER EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>208</b>
Introduction.....	208
Pre-Questionnaire Results.....	208
Post-Questionnaire Results.....	211
Increased awareness of diverse perspectives and of social/political issues	211
Affirmed voice.....	213
Affordances of social media.....	215
Possibilities and Challenges of Social Media in Teacher Education.....	221
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>228</b>
Introduction.....	228
Finding 1: Pre-service Teachers are Entering into Crisis.....	231
Implications and recommendations.....	234
Anticipating, embracing, and using emotions to develop critical consciousness.....	235
Draw on diverse bodies of knowledge to co-construct meaning of social justice issues.....	240
Finding 2: Past and Present Backgrounds are Equally Important.....	243
Implications and recommendations.....	245

White pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers of color relate to race differently .....	245
Further incorporation of gender into teacher education could be beneficial.....	247
Engaging religion in teacher education is imperative.....	249
Finding 3: Social Media as an Engaging Tool.....	251
Building on participants’ digital literacy practices .....	252
Social media as popular culture .....	253
Social media in achieving political and ideological clarity .....	254
Implications and recommendations .....	256
Limitations and Directions for Future Research.....	261
Conclusion .....	263
Appendices.....	267
Appendix A.....	267
Appendix B .....	268
Appendix C .....	269
Appendix D.....	271
Appendix E .....	272
References.....	280

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Data matrix .....	52
Table 2: Social media account examples .....	59
Table 3: Information of participants' sociocultural backgrounds .....	68

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Model for social media pedagogy (Krutka, et al., 2017).....	36
Figure 2: Theoretical Framework .....	44
Figure 3: @polibeats_ Instagram profile, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	62
Figure 4: @polibeats_ example #1, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	85
Figure 5: @polibeats_ example #2, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	87
Figure 6: @polibeats_ example #3, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	89
Figure 7: @polibeats_ example #4, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	95
Figure 8: @polibeats example #5, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	98
Figure 9: @polibeats_ example #6, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	102
Figure 10: @polibeats_ example #7, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	106
Figure 11: @polibeats_ example #8, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	115
Figure 12: @polibeats_ example #9, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	120
Figure 13: @polibeats_ example #10, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	126
Figure 14: @polibeats_ example #11, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	132
Figure 15: @polibeats_ example #12, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	142
Figure 16: @polibeats_ example #13, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	145
Figure 17: @polibeats_ example #14, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	147
Figure 18: @polibeats_ example #15, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	148
Figure 19: @polibeats_ example #16, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	154
Figure 20: @polibeats_ example #17, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	156
Figure 21: @polibeats_ example #18, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	159
Figure 22: @polibeats_ example #19, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	162
Figure 23: @polibeats_ example #20, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	164
Figure 24: @polibeats_ example #21, (Polibeats, n.d.).....	168

Figure 25: @polibeats_ example #22, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	174
Figure 26: @polibeats_ example #23, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	179
Figure 27: @polibeats_ example #24, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	180
Figure 28: @polibeats_ example #25, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	185
Figure 29: @polibeats_ example #26, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	187
Figure 30: @polibeats_ example #27, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	191
Figure 31: @polibeats_ example #28, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	192
Figure 32: @polibeats_ example #29, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	205
Figure 33: @polibeats_ example #30, (Polibeats, n.d.) .....	220



## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout the history of the United States, as schooling has evolved, so has the institution of teacher preparation (Fraser, 2007). From brave African American teachers instructing secretly during times of slavery (Gundaker, 2007) to the fierce commitment of Chicana activist educators (Urrieta, 2007) to concerns for the cultural and linguistic mismatch of today's predominantly white English-speaking teaching corps serving a diverse student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), individuals' career choices and commitment to their communities as educators have also constituted a collective sociopolitical phenomenon of the field of teacher education which undoubtedly shapes the learning experiences of America's youth.

Currently, a key concern in contemporary teacher education is the inequitable learning conditions of K-12 students of color (Andrews, Richmond, & Stroupe, 2017; Banks, et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) alongside the trend of a cultural mismatch between the backgrounds of teachers and their students (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2006; Gay & Howard, 2005; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Today's teaching corps is described as predominantly white, middle-class, and female which contrasts greatly with the U.S.'s increasingly diverse K-12 student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). White teachers' ability to effectively and

holistically teach students of color has long been questioned (Woodson, 1933); therefore, this mismatch raises concern for the wellbeing and success of students of color.

Furthermore, low numbers of teachers of color, constituting less than 20% of the teaching corps, and subsequent efforts to diversify the teaching force draw the attention of many scholars (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Haddix, 2017; Jackson, 2015; Sleeter, La Vonne, & Kumashiro, 2014). While teaching has historically been positioned as women's work (Schwager, 1987), the divergent trends in racial representation have not always existed. For example, the subset of African American teachers was formerly thriving during the decades leading up to the Civil Rights era, representing a group of professionals with high expectations and dedication to the wellbeing of their communities (Siddle-Walker, 2000). However, the movement for the integration of schools after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 resulted in the firing of black teachers and the securing of white teachers in their place (Fairclough, 2004). Examples such as these illuminate the larger issues of power impacting the historical and sociopolitical situation of the teaching profession. In light of the current clashing portrayal of white teachers and teachers of color, questions abound for the larger factors, structures, and histories in and outside the institution of teacher education resulting in such discrepant representations of different backgrounds (K. Brown, 2014).

In some teacher education programs, young teachers are encouraged to “teach against the grain” (Cochran-Smith, 1991) in which they learn to envision and enact dual roles as both educators and activists. As the K-12 student population grows increasingly

linguistically and culturally diverse, an activist stance of this type requires teachers to work to facilitate language acquisition and maintenance, celebrate and foster multiculturalism, and act as agents of social justice and change (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Goodwin, 2017; Palmer & Martinez, 2013; Villegas, Ciotoli, & Lucas, 2017; Zeichner, 2009). In response, some institutions of teacher education have integrated coursework that attends to multicultural and multilingual learners and instructs pre-service teachers to consider the pedagogical and methodological implications of linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom (Agarwal, et al., 2010; Gorski, 2009; Kapustka, et al., 2009; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Seidl & Conley, 2009; Whipp, 2013). However, an essential yet often underemphasized component for teacher preparation in these circumstances is the element of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and commitment to educational equity and social change (Cochran-Smith, 2004; 2010; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Zeichner, 2009). A growing body of literature is directing attention towards the social justice-oriented capacities of teacher candidates and acknowledging the responsibility of teacher education programs in this endeavor (Conklin, 2008; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Lucas et al., 2008; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

### **Diverse K-12 student population**

Despite a longstanding history of cultural and linguistic diversity in the United States, popular and academic discourses surround the shifting demographics of the K-12

student population. For example, the National Center for Educational Statistics reveals projections of a diminishing racial majority of white students (NCES, 2016). In fact, the beginning of the 2014 school year marked a significant turning point in history in which students of color outnumbered white students in U.S. public school enrollment (Maxwell, 2014).

Shifting immigration trends into the United States contribute to these demographics, with more diverse waves of immigrants from varying regions who are also settling in new regions such as the Midwest and Southeast rather than solely traditional states such as New York, California, and Texas (Hamann & Harklau, 2010; Pew Research Center, 2015). Additionally, bilingual students, both immigrant and native-born, comprise a growing percentage of the U.S. population with one in five (22%) K-12 students qualifying as bilingual (Ryan, 2013), and U.S. Census data records over 350 languages spoken in U.S. homes (Pew Research Center, 2015). Moreover, great diversity and heterogeneity lie within each of these groups, encompassing “multiple national origins, numerous unique languages, a diversity of cultural traditions and histories, highly different immigration pathways intersected by equally different push-pull factors, and also evidence uneven levels of education, English language proficiency, economic status, skill-levels, and so on” (Goodwin, 2017, p. 437). Needless to say, the current and future K-12 student population represents an enormous range of backgrounds and experiences.

Imbued in the attention towards student diversity in public schools are concerns for equality and equity often noted by the discrepant levels of student performance on standardized test measures with increased pressure from educational legislation such as

No Child Left Behind, ESSA, and Race to the Top. These legislative iterations, critiqued by neoliberal motives, were and are aimed at holding teachers and schools accountable for high performance and academic growth across student subgroups, for example considering race, English Learner (EL) status, or ability (Levine & Levine, 2012; McGuinn, 2012). Popular and academic scrutiny of the lower performance levels of students of color or holding other markers such as an English Language Learner label in comparison to their white or mainstream peers on standardized test measures has garnered the term “achievement gap,” becoming an area of focus for many educational stakeholders. However, critical scholars such as Ladson-Billings (2006) and Valencia (2012) have turned the attention away from this deficit focus, instead bringing attention to an opportunity gap and problems in public education, rather than placing the onus on individual students. This holistic view exposes systemic gaps in the social, economic, and political factors of schooling for students based on their racial and cultural backgrounds. Their analyses of the cumulative privileges and debts of both white and students of color respectively accounts for the complex sociopolitical and sociocultural context of a diverse student population.

Both empirical and practical scholars are concerned with equipping teachers for the demands of effective and holistic teaching for a linguistically and culturally diverse student population (i.e. Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Zeichner, 2009). As expressed by Goodwin (2017), “in light of shifting immigration trends and demographics, teacher preparation must undoubtedly be rethought to ensure culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, transformative curriculum, and socially just

classroom practice” (p. 434). Therefore, efforts to improve academic performance must also be matched by critiques and disruptions to the existing social order that produces and sustains educational inequality.

For example, preparation for teaching diverse learners often centers around language with particular attention towards students who are learning English. As the U.S. student population grows increasingly diverse, it has become more commonplace for teachers to have bilingual and English learner students in their classrooms. Teachers’ responsibility to facilitate both content and language learning in the classroom as both a legal and pedagogical challenge is increasingly recognized in the field of teacher education (Bunch, 2013; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Lucas, et al. 2008; Valdes et al., 2005; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000) and practitioner literature (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2012; Herell & Jordan, 2015). As described by Crawford (2004), “programs for English learners must make school comprehensible, enabling students to do academic work appropriate to their age and grade while they acquire a second language” (p. 16). Teachers are expected to demonstrate an understanding of content knowledge, not only of the core subjects they teach but also of the key features of the English language, considering syntactic, phonological, and semantic structures (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Additionally, teaching bilingual students requires pedagogical knowledge, within which strategies such as the use of gestures, graphic organizers, or visuals are listed as teaching methods that will facilitate language and content acquisition in the classroom (Herell & Jordan, 2015). As an extension and synthesis of the two, Bunch (2013) suggests pedagogical language knowledge, which equips teachers to create opportunities

for language development across the broad curriculum while adhering to the principles of both second language acquisition and content mastery. Both empirical and practical literature in this field illustrate methods, strategies, approaches, and interventions that teachers could use in their classroom with English learners.

However, this body of literature, despite its good intentions, can be critiqued for its incompleteness and ineffectiveness to the realities of bilingual learners. The English as a Second Language (ESL) “methods fetish” (Bartolomé, 1994) is problematically framed in gap discourse (McCarty, 2005) and focuses on the ‘needs’ of bilingual learners (Palmer & Martinez, 2013), both operating from a deficit perspective. Additionally, many traditional approaches to linguistic diversity in the classroom are based upon monolingual and English-dominant perspectives (Palmer & Martinez, 2013; 2016). Beyond discursive issues in this literature, an exceeding emphasis on proven interventions and tried practical approaches creates a “methods fetish” (Bartolomé, 1994), an over-dependence and obsession with teaching strategies as solutions to the “problem” of linguistic diversity in the classroom. Bartolomé (1994) argues that oftentimes wide-scale reproduction of pedagogical methods and programs leads to an abandonment of their theoretical foundations and moves further from the ideological clarity and humanizing perspectives that are necessary in teaching, especially for marginalized student populations. Furthermore, as language often serves as a proxy for race and culture (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Stuart, 2006), the focus on linguistic diversity obscures attention towards other representations of diversity in teaching and learning and limits teachers’ abilities to holistically address the realities of the learners in their classroom. Awareness of the

connections of language to identity, culture, family, community, history, politics, power, and oppression is necessary for teachers to holistically serve the linguistic and cultural diversity in their classroom.

### **Teacher preparation programs**

In efforts to prepare future teachers for the diversity of the K-12 student population, some teacher education programs have put emphasis on issues of equity and diversity. Of particular concern to this endeavor is the mismatch between the diverse student population and a teaching population that has been noted as predominantly racially, linguistically, culturally, and economically homogeneous. The current teaching corps consists mostly of white, English-speaking, middle class females (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and the cultural gap between a diverse student population and their teachers has grown since 2011 (Boser, 2014). Simultaneously, concerns exist for the dismal numbers of entry and sustenance of teachers of color in the profession, and efforts at recruitment and retention of teachers of color is a priority for the field (K. Brown, 2014; Haddix, 2017). Additionally, the institutional processes of teacher education are critiqued for their role in the creation and continuation of these discrepant numbers (Sleeter, 2017), and questions abound for the impact this mismatch has on diverse K-12 learners. Teachers who share the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students tend to demonstrate strengths in their abilities to comprehend the unique experiences of diverse learners and leverage their students' linguistic and cultural assets in the classroom (Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Howard, 2010; Irizarry & Raible, 2015); however,



teachers who do not share the same background as their students also have the potential to demonstrate the cultural competence necessary to provide an equitable and affirming education for diverse learners (Clayton & Brisk, 2011; Fránquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998).

Many teacher preparation programs have infused elements of multicultural education and social justice into their coursework (Agarwal, et al., 2010; Kapustka, et al., 2009; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Whipp, 2013), and attention to the demands of teaching bi/multilingual learners has become a national and political imperative (Bunch, 2013; Crawford, 2004; Garcia, 2008). Many programs require coursework or field placement that attempts to address issues of cultural and linguistic diversity (Gorski, 2009; Seidl & Conley, 2009; Smith 2009), pushing a predominantly white and monolingual teaching corps to grasp and confront the nuances of the experiences, practices, values, and histories of communities possibly different than their own. Furthermore, these courses attempt to connect their content to practice, exploring the pedagogical and curricular implications of student diversity and equipping teacher candidates with practical toolkits.

Teacher education programs' attention towards issues of equity and diversity are well-founded. Students from oppressed communities have long experienced treacherous and damaging schooling conditions and outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 2006), and teacher educators are taking up the responsibility of preparing teachers to disrupt these institutional and practical cycles of oppression (i.e. Kumashiro, 2000a; Kumashiro,

2000b). By training pre-service teachers with orientations towards social justice that respond to diversity by centering and elevating marginalized perspectives, challenging hegemonic norms and harnessing the skills and assets of a diverse student population, the field of teacher education has the potential to transform the future generation of teachers subsequently effecting educational equity for all.

Many teacher educators take this call seriously and work tirelessly to improve their practice in this endeavor; however, some pedagogical approaches used by teacher educators to examine issues of diversity with prospective teachers have had limited success. The task of autobiographical inquiry and reflection often is used as both an assignment and a bedrock of teacher education programs, asking teacher candidates to interrogate their own experiences and how they inform their understandings of schooling (Britzman, 1986; Genor & Goodwin, 2005; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007). In some programs, white pre-service teachers are pushed to consider implications of race in schooling and society (i.e. Fasching-Varner, 2012); however, emotional and ideological resistance often impedes or slows their development of critical consciousness (Picower, 2009). Meanwhile, many prospective teachers of color express disdain for the tactics used by teacher educators, describing how their development as a growing professional and their experiences as a person of color are often obscured by the presence of whiteness in teacher education and the programs' focus on white pre-service teachers (Amos, 2010; C. Gist, 2017; Haddix, 2012; Juárez & Hayes, 2015).

### **Social media in teacher education**

The pedagogical approaches of the field of teacher education to raise critical consciousness amongst prospective teachers are constantly developing. However, despite teacher education programs' efforts to transform teacher candidates' perceptions of issues of power in society and schools particularly along the lines of race, class, and language, problematic ideologies and practices that adhere to white supremacist, hegemonic discourses can prevail. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs have been critiqued for their inability to provide equitable opportunities and learning experiences for pre-service teachers themselves of diverse backgrounds due to the pervasive presence of whiteness (K. Brown, 2014). As the field continues to explore pedagogical tactics and their impacts on teacher candidates' knowledge and development, I call for attention to turn to the possibilities for critical consciousness raising that are found in the context of social media.

Before beginning, I find it important to explain that I, similarly to Carpenter and Krutka (2015) will primarily be using the term "social media" as opposed to digital media, Web 2.0, social networking services (SNS), or other terms. The particular app that is used in this study - Instagram - is a combination of multi-modal digital media featuring pictures or videos with accompanying space for captions, "likes," and comments. The Instagram community is largely interactive; for example, members can follow, message, and block one another's accounts. While it is a space of content consumption and production, it is inherently social, as described by Carpenter and Krutka (2015), stating "social media goes beyond just allowing content creation as it affords spaces for

multidirectional interactions with people and communities that might not have otherwise been possible” (p. 28). I contend that the Instagram app can be conceptualized simultaneously as a space, a tool, a context, an extension of our world, or a world of its own, and throughout this study, when I use the term social media or refer to the Instagram app, I am acknowledging each of these iterations but giving the most weight to the social functions of the app.

Social media apps such as Instagram offer new, often overlooked, areas of learning, community, and civic life (Dede, 2016). However, while social media, in theory, holds the potential for democratic participation and use by all, it has also been critiqued for continuing if not amplifying cycles of oppression (Noble, 2018) within a profit-driven technological atmosphere (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). These digital applications are used daily by many but particularly as staples in the lives of young people and are constantly evolving, shaping societal methods and perceptions of knowledge production and communication.

The use of social media as a practical tool in K-12 and teacher education is still nascent, despite its potential affordances for vast and innovative technological experiences. Apps such as Twitter have primarily been used to increase collaboration and communication between teacher candidates themselves and with the larger teaching community (i.e. Krutka, Nowell, & Whitlock, 2017); however, the use of social media as a tool for encountering critical issues of equity and diversity with pre-service teachers has been neglected.

## **THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to explore pre-service teachers' experiences with ideological clarity and critical consciousness raising in the context of social media. Due to the potential for collaborative and democratic participation in social media, many perspectives, particularly those that have been traditionally marginalized in mainstream media outlets, can be expressed, shifting the sources of knowledge that members of society can consume. I contend that in preparation for teaching for social justice and to a diverse student population, it is imperative that prospective teachers and their teaching are informed by the histories, narratives, values, and issues that are shared by diverse communities, and with intentionality, the world of social media presents an opportune terrain for them to access and learn from these perspectives in innovative ways.

This qualitative case study took place in a university teacher preparation program and worked with teacher candidates within their coursework using social media. This study examined how pre-service teachers interpreted the political, historical, and sociocultural conversations of this social media account with particular considerations of 1) their backgrounds and past experiences and 2) implications in their preparation as teachers.

During their student teaching semester while enrolled in an ESL Methods course, prospective teachers studying to be elementary ESL-generalists submitted course assignments which constituted the primary data sources for this study. As part of the course, pre-service teachers were asked to follow and/or regularly visit one featured social-justice oriented Instagram account which consistently shares timely and insightful

posts demonstrating experiences and issues of oppressed groups. In preparation for each class meeting, pre-service teachers were asked to write ten brief responses regarding the content of ten posts of their choice found on the account. These written responses were used in combination with autobiographical, questionnaire, and group interview data to answer the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with issues of social justice through interactive social media?
2. How do the pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media?
3. What possibilities and challenges exist in the use of social media for preparing social justice-oriented educators?

A professor of color of mine who was also an instructor of prospective teachers in the featured teacher education program was once reflecting on the challenges he had faced in the bold task of addressing critical issues with his students in one of his university courses. He was accounting for the vast range of discrepant prior knowledge primarily between white students and students of color in their awareness and understanding of the histories, politics, and lived experiences imbued in the dynamics of power and oppression in U.S. society. He was describing the pedagogical challenges of differentiating the content of this course in ways that did not reify the dominant perspective. In this anecdote, he mentioned how one of the students of color was at first engaged with the content and was excited to see these critical issues centered in the course. However, his participation and excitement waned over the semester until he

finally out of frustration exclaimed that “he had learned all of this stuff years ago on Twitter.” The irony of this anecdote demonstrates the power of social media and the potential of this project. Social media can afford the space, community, and audience for counternarratives that challenge dominant hegemonic perspectives and often garner widespread attention, possibly resulting in political and social action. The potential for pre-service teachers becoming #instawoke, that is, experiencing critically conscious ideological transformation stimulated by the context of social media, has been under-explored. For teacher educators concerned with educational equity, this project takes an innovative approach and aims to extend our abilities to prepare conscious teachers that will be agents of social change for the next generation.

In the following chapters, I will describe the theoretical, empirical, and methodological underpinnings of this study. Chapter 2 entails a review of the literature on multicultural knowledges, teacher education, and social media as pedagogy concluding with the theoretical framework I used throughout this project. Then I follow with Chapter 3, detailing the methodological choices I made in approaching this investigation. Chapter 4 answers Research Question #1, describing ways that participants interpreted the social justice-oriented content on social media. Chapter 5 responds to Research Question #2 by considering participants’ sociocultural backgrounds in relation to their understandings of social justice. Chapter 6 addresses Research Question #3, sharing insights for the use of social media in teacher education. Finally, Chapter 7 outlines the findings, implications, and recommendations from this study for the field of teacher education.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In this chapter, I describe my approach to this study by reviewing relevant literature primarily in the field of teacher education. I begin by outlining the inequitable conditions of K-12 schooling, creating the background of this study, through a discussion of ideology, hegemony, and knowledge production. I then transition to the literature of teacher education considering how teachers are prepared to address these challenges in K-12 schools but also paying particular attention to the discrepant experiences of pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programs based on their racial backgrounds. I review the pedagogical approaches being used in teacher education to facilitate teacher candidates' examination of issues of social justice and diversity in their teaching and suggest the use of social media as a powerful tool in this endeavor. I then review the literature demonstrating how social media has been used in teacher education thus far and conclude with a discussion the theoretical framework that informed this study.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Ideological and social reproduction in schools**

Schools are social microcosms and have been identified as places where social stratification and accompanying dominant ideologies are reified, reproduced, and resisted (Apple, 2004). They have been described as “embedded in larger social structures [and are] prime contributors to ideological hegemony” (Howard and Aleman, 2008, p. 166). Therefore, the institution of education in the United States is inherently complex, representing dominant societal ideals intertwined with notions of politics, money, and



power (Oakes et al., 2013), and schools have been sites of ideological manifestation and manipulation (Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970; Woodson, 1933).

Historically, U.S. schools have functioned with multiple and at times conflicting purposes, with aims of securing democracy, national security, social and economic advancement, and cultural preservation; yet the institution of schooling and its principles have been built upon hierarchies of racial and social stratification (Oakes et al., 2013). They have been described as places representing “the reproduction of asymmetrical relations of power between groups with different languages and different forms of cultural capital” (Martin-Jones, 2000, p. 7). Macedo, et al. (2003) further argue,

schools are sites of struggle and contestation that reproduce the dominant culture and ideology, as well as what is perceived as legitimate language/knowledge, make use of their institutional power to either affirm or deny a learner’s language, and thus his or her lived experiences and culture. (p. 40)

These harrowing claims are exemplified in compulsory schooling’s function in facilitating assimilation and acculturation for example in Native American boarding schools where students were expected to learn English and adopt other cultural customs and practices in place of their Native American heritage (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006), or in the language shift towards English that many immigrant children experience while attending U.S. schools (Rumbaut, 2009), or in the regulation and policing of Black students’ behavior, dress, and even hair (Morris, 2016).

Fasheh (1990) states “hegemonic education produces intellectuals who have lost their power base in their own culture and society and who have been provided with a

foreign culture and ideology, but without a power base in the hegemonic society” (p. 25). These school practices speak loudly as examples of devaluing students’ home cultures and replacing them with dominant ideals but furthermore are power-laden and serve to further oppress and subordinate as part of a hegemonic educational agenda. In this sense, hegemonic schooling functions to facilitate cultural and ideological assimilation rather than liberation. It does not serve to challenge the power dynamics of social stratification but rather to maintain them, reifying and reproducing the demons of inequality and oppression in society.

### **Marginalized knowledges**

The reproduction of this cultural, linguistic, and ideological regulation is an aiding catalyst not only in the sustenance of social hegemony and status quo but also serves as an active agent in the establishment and production of hegemonic knowledge, epistemology, and curriculum. King (2004) argues that all knowledge is culture-centered and never neutral, and the partiality and bias of knowledge production in school curricula has been an enduring concern. The limited nature of school curriculum has been critiqued as heavily reflecting dominant perspectives of history, values, and knowledge creation, marginalizing, invisibilizing, and violating the contributions, lived experiences, and epistemological foundations of non-dominant groups (A. Brown & Au, 2014; De Lissovoy, 2012; King, 2004; Tuck, 2011; Yosso, 2002). Traditional, “neutral,” whitestream curriculum (Urrieta, 2004) representing white, male, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, middle class, English-speaking monolingual standpoints do not

honor, reinforce, or harness the knowledges, experiences, and assets of non-dominant groups, greatly limiting possible strengths of diversity in society. Located against a backdrop of racial stratification, ideological reproduction, and hegemonic curriculum are the ways in which marginalized students' lived experiences and knowledges are undermined in schooling. Sociocultural theories of learning such as culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2014), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) argue for the incorporation of students' lived experiences as valid knowledge in the educational curriculum.

Cultural and linguistic diversity have always existed in the United States; however, power dynamics creating systems of institutionalized white supremacy have obscured this reality. Furthermore, a de facto language policy privileging English has misled many to associate American identity with white and monolingual ideals and to believe in the nation's fundamental principles as neutral and just with English as its reigning language and policies and practices that go unquestioned (Crawford, 2004; Shannon, 1995). This discord creates a challenging terrain for schools, particularly as they face a linguistic and cultural mismatch of an increasingly diverse student population and a predominantly white English-speaking teaching corps (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). As schools act not only as social microcosms but also as agents of social and ideological reproduction (McLaren, 2016), concerns abound in these contexts for the ways in which diverse students' rich linguistic and cultural practices, powerful histories, and cognitive abilities are not being fully

maximized (Darder, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Yosso, 2005), possibly further erasing the precious truth of diversity that has outlined the nation's past and present and limiting its future. Therefore, the establishment of the value of experiential knowledge becomes necessary to "create the conditions of intellectual autonomy that are requisite for cultural and racial democracy and human freedom" (King, 2004, p. 372).

### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

The role of hegemonic ideological and knowledge production in K-12 education along with other social factors has been applied to describe the discrepant and inequitable schooling experiences for K-12 children of different backgrounds. This body of work informs the field of teacher education in two important ways with respect to teacher candidates as both 1) current students and 2) future professionals.

Currently, contemporary teacher education is defined by concerns for the cultural mismatch of today's predominantly white middle-class female teaching corps with the U.S.'s increasingly diverse K-12 student population (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012) and for the ways in which current institutional practices consistently marginalize non-dominant knowledges (K. Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2017). The combined conditions of a K-12 student population with such vast diversity yet stark inequality within the microcosmic experience of schooling require insightful and intentional practice on the part of teachers. One facet of this endeavor is the responsibility held by teacher preparation programs to develop teacher candidates' capacities to teach for equity and social justice in these contexts. Therefore, an essential component for teacher preparation in these conditions is

the element of critical consciousness (Gay & Kirkland, 2003), multicultural awareness (Cochran-Smith, 2004), and commitment to social change (Zeichner, 2009), and a growing body of literature is directing attention towards the social justice-oriented capacities of teacher candidates (Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Goodwin, 2017; Lucas & Grinberg, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Additionally, the application of critical theories to the inequitable conditions of K-12 education also can be used to approach teacher education (i.e. Cheruvu, et al., 2015), uncovering the same phenomenon for pre-service teachers and noting the ways that their teacher preparation experiences are shaped by their classifications along the lines of diversity such as race, class, language, and immigration status. Research such as that of Cheruvu et al. (2015) shows that pre-service teachers of color similarly experience marginalization of their knowledges and practices as well as withstand an institution laden with functions of institutionalized white supremacy.

In this section, I describe the existing literature on the teacher education experiences of white prospective teachers and pre-service teachers of color in their preparation as social justice-oriented teachers of a diverse student population. While I acknowledge that racial classification can promote an essentialist and binary view of diversity, I found these terms helpful in locating and reviewing the teacher education literature concerning teacher candidates' experiences. Additionally, Critical Race Theorists suggest race as an adequate element used to describe discrepant educational experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT upholds that white students and their counterparts of color experience distinct benefits, consequences, and discrepancies in

their schooling based on their race and in interaction with the property of whiteness. I use this framework to consider the divergent experiences of pre-service teachers of color as compared to their white counterparts particularly in their preparation for the inequitable realities of K-12 schooling. Furthermore, I consider the property of whiteness as it pervades teacher education (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Sleeter, 2017). I adhere to Leonardo & Broderick's (2011) definition of whiteness as an ideological system, "an articulation of disparate elements – some racial, some not – in order to build a racial cosmology that benefits Whites in absolute ways and minority groups relative to only another" (p. 2209). In this project, I consider whiteness as a hegemonic, disembodied norm that privileges dominant narratives, ideologies, and practices in teacher education (K. Brown, 2014), and as a powerful entity that greatly limits teacher candidates' preparation to learn and teach with an orientation towards social justice.

### **Experiences of white pre-service teachers**

In light of concerns about the cultural mismatch between a predominantly white female teaching corps and a heterogeneous student population, scholars in teacher education programs are directing attention towards issues of diversity, race, and social justice in their coursework (Agarwal, et al., 2010; Gorski, 2009; Kapustka, et al., 2009; Lucas, et al., 2008; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Seidl & Conley, 2009; Whipp, 2013), demonstrating the teacher preparation program's significant role as an institutional mediator of white teacher identity (Philip & Benin, 2014). The following range of literature focuses on white pre-service teachers' experiences and reactions to the topics of

race and whiteness, sharing descriptions of the student teachers' responses and critiquing how these perceptions, ideologies, and identities shape the necessary work of teacher education.

Many white prospective teachers were described as having a lack of awareness about race. Fasching-Varner (2012) conducted testimonial interviews with 10 white teacher candidates and found that they demonstrated a lack of awareness as well as a lack of language to maneuver conversations about race. He connected these behaviors to both a white racial identity and a naïve, underdeveloped professional identity. Similar to Fasching-Varner, Marx (2004; 2006) also acknowledged the difficulty in developing white pre-service teachers' willingness and ability to discuss notions of race. In a study conducted with 6 early childhood prospective teachers using participant observations, interviews, and journal entries she found that, despite their good intentions, values of whiteness and covertly racist opinions flooded their reflections and judgments of their students in their field placement settings.

In some studies, concern for teacher candidates' racial awareness was directly related to their teaching of students of color. In a seminal piece, Washington (1977) investigated white prospective teachers' dispositions and perceptions of suburban and inner-city schools, identifying negative judgments of urban schools where they were likely to teach. Tettegah (1996) also examined pre-service teachers' perceptions of students' teachability along racial and ethnic lines highlighting similar disturbing findings. Bloom et al. (2015), Hampton, Peng, and Ann (2008), and Wiggins, Follo, and Eberly (2007) additionally reported on prospective teachers' concerning perceptions of

the students in their field placements while Wang, Castro, and Cunningham (2014) assessed pre-service teachers' ascription to different values associated with whiteness such as individualism or perfectionism and found them to predict lower cultural diversity awareness.

Some literature has paid particular attention to emotionality in the learning experiences of white teacher candidates about race and critical issues in education. The analyses document white pre-service teachers' feelings of disgust for the "other" masked by pity and caring (Matias & Zembylas, 2014), emotional disinvestment and white guilt (Matias, et al. 2014), and denial (Matias, 2016a), with concern for how these emotions would manifest when teaching students of diverse backgrounds. Picower (2009) also expressed concern for white prospective teachers' resistance to critical race issues; however, she argued that rather than simply resisting, these emotions and ideologies were aimed at protecting and preserving the existing racial social structures.

Adair (2008), however, investigated the participation of white pre-service teachers in what she termed a "de-privileged space": a multicultural teacher preparation program composed of predominantly Latinx students. She provided various examples of how, in this setting, the students' whiteness was a handicap. She stated:

Once their operating assumptions failed and they realized they didn't necessarily know how to behave, they turned to the students of color in their cohort for new tools and directions in how to appropriately think and talk about multiculturalism, bilingualism, and teaching diverse sets of children. The process of having assumptions, watching them fail, and having to access peers and colleagues of



different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be successful is the basis for de-privileging whiteness. (p. 192)

In this de-privileged space, white students' understanding of power, cultural capital, and legitimate knowledge was challenged and rewritten, at least for the duration of the course. Similarly, Abdullah, Llanes, and Henry (2015) argued that white pre-service teachers' experiences of racial isolation were a disadvantage for them when teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, specifically shaping their misunderstandings of African American student culture and behavior. The authors shared how white pre-service teachers' "invisible knapsack" of white privilege (McIntosh, 1988) limited and influenced their perceptions of communities, of others, and their own visions of themselves. These are significant examples of how white teacher candidates' privilege and ways of seeing and being in the world can serve as a disadvantage, especially as multilingual and multicultural abilities become more powerful (Callahan & Gándara, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014).

### **Experiences of pre-service teachers of color**

Research, however, depicts pre-service teachers of color's experiences in teacher preparation programs alternatively to that of white pre-service teachers. While white teacher candidates are facing the struggle of unpacking issues of race, diversity, and white privilege for possibly the first time, teacher candidates of color demonstrate many strengths in this area. However, they are often struggling in and resisting the continued

presence of racism and the practice of marginalizing non-dominant knowledges and experiences embedded in their teacher education programs.

In the face of cultural mismatch and as part of the demographic imperative, the recruitment and retention of teachers of color is a priority (K. Brown, 2014; Haddix, 2017; Jackson, 2015; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). In response to this call for more teachers of color, K. Brown (2014) conducted a review of the research in 80 articles on pre-service teachers of color, exploring the notion of race in teacher education. In the literature, concerns for the recruitment and retention of teachers of color were driven by an awareness of the homogeneity of the current teaching corps as well as concerns for the academic success of all K-12 students, many of whom are of color (King, 1993; Quirocho & Rios, 2000; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). The possibility of racial and cultural match between teachers of color and their students was of overwhelming importance and was a primary reason for the recruitment and retention of teachers of color (Achinstein et al. 2010; Guyton, Saxton & Wesche, 1996; King, 1993; Quirocho & Rios, 2000; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). The literature revealed that teachers of color can serve as role models for their students, both of color and not (Au & Blake, 2003; Guyton, Saxton & Wesche, 1996; Milner & Howard, 2004; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). However, in the experiences and backgrounds they share with students of color, they can often “understand and respect the cultural knowledge students possess and ... use this knowledge as a foundation for their teaching practices” (Sleeter & Milner, 2011, p. 83), possibly facilitating academic success for their students.

Pre-service teachers of color also were described as often having strong commitments to their communities and hopes of serving as agents of social change. Their professional identities were greatly tied to their racial and ethnic identities and their motivations for teaching were often connected to their own experiences (Au & Blake, 2003; Nguyen, 2008; Quioco & Rios, 2000). The African American prospective teachers in Guyton et al.'s (1996) study and Agee's (2004) study saw their roles as future teachers as an opportunity to give back to their community and work towards social justice. Téllez (1999) found similar missions in the goals of Mexican American pre-service teachers featured in his study. Quioco & Rios (2000) stated that "many minority group teachers, in comparison with their European-American counterparts, are more likely to bring a critical, social justice orientation and consciousness that stems from their real, lived experiences with inequality" (p. 522). In this sense, the racial and cultural experiential knowledge of teacher candidates of color can facilitate their critical consciousness and engage their commitment particularly to the success of students of color. As described in the aforementioned literature, teacher candidates of color were often more open to address issues of multiculturalism, educational inequities, and social justice, diverging greatly from the struggle of critical consciousness development experienced by white pre-service teachers (i.e. Fasching-Varner, 2012).

While prospective teachers of color bring sets of knowledge, practices, and perspectives that can be instrumental in student success and social justice orientations, they often feel that these were not positioned as strengths in traditional teacher education programs. Pre-service teachers of color critique their programs as being un-inviting and

described them as unable and unwilling to adequately incorporate their cultural, linguistic, and lived knowledge into the preparation program (Amos, 2010; Gomez et al. 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Sheets & Chew, 2002). They expressed their own sense of cultural mismatch with the faculty in their program (Gomez, Rodriguez, & Agosto, 2008; Nguyen, 2008) and felt pressures to abandon or stifle aspects of their cultural identities and histories (Meacham, 2000). Furthermore, pre-service teachers of color perceived the curriculum and practices of their program to be designed for white students rather than for diverse teacher candidates (Sheets & Chew, 2002) and often felt isolation, alienation, and racism (Frank, 2003; Gomez et al., 2008).

In response to this environment, pre-service teachers of color often demonstrated resistance and agency and were strategic in finding ways to endure the program even in these conditions. For example, two Latino teacher candidates in Salinas and Castro's (2010) study found that the official social studies curriculum of their field placements failed to address important issues of race and inequity. They drew on their personal experiences and knowledges to disrupt the standard curriculum and center issues of power and oppression in their lessons.

In another example, McDevitt and Kurihara's (2017) describe how Miyuki, a Japanese early childhood pre-service teacher, exerted agency in the development of her teacher identity during her practicum experience. From using her own cultural and personal funds of knowledge to inquiring about and infusing students' funds of knowledge in her teaching, she used an array of approaches to position lived experiences and issues of transnational experiences, linguistic and cultural diversity as valuable

knowledge in her field placement. Examples such as these of teacher candidates of color's agency and resistance provide essential counterexamples for the field.

### **Whiteness in teacher education**

It is also important to explore the body of literature that recognized and critiqued “the dominant, (dis)embodied and normalized culture of Whiteness, White privilege and White hegemony [that] pervades contemporary teacher education” (K. Brown, 2014, p. 326). This type of racism extends beyond the thoughts and actions of individuals and rather notices the ideologies, practices, hierarchies, and norms that are embedded in teacher education that produce racial violence and inequity. The following literature notices the ways that whiteness interacts with the learning and preparation of prospective teachers and limits the potential of teacher education programs to graduate educators oriented towards critical consciousness and social justice.

In the call for more teachers of color, K. Brown (2014) recognizes an interest convergence (Bell, 1980) in the discourse, implying that the recruitment and retention of teachers of color offers “a promising solution to solving the problem of hard-to-staff schools” (Achinstein et al., 2010, p. 81) which host large numbers of students of color from low income backgrounds. K. Brown (2014) argues that “teachers of color get enclosed in a frame that defines them as necessary role models for K-12 students of color, but not as potentially effective pedagogues for all students” (p. 338), limiting the richness of their intellectual, social, and professional strengths.

Additionally, Sleeter (2017) argues that the whiteness embedded in teacher education programs maintains a predominantly white teaching corps. With mostly white faculty (Milner & Howard, 2013) and curriculum primarily designed for white pre-service teachers (Sleeter, 2001), the potential to support and integrate teacher candidates of color along with their knowledges and skills is limited. Sleeter (2017) also describes how the programming and structures that appear to be neutral or colorblind inadvertently reproduce a predominantly white teaching corps and specifically notes how university teacher education programs, certification tests, and alternatives such as Teach for America target, benefit, and privilege white teachers.

Within teacher education programs, whiteness influences curriculum and pedagogy. Sociocultural knowledge and issues are often presented in one class rather than across the coursework (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014; Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 2008) and at times reify notions of other-ing or drive-by multiculturalism rather than commitments to critical consciousness and disrupting the status quo (K. Brown, 2013). Furthermore, whiteness, both disembodied and enacted, affects the ways that teacher educators and teacher candidates interact in the classroom. For example, Sleeter (2017), in a review of counterstories of pre-service teachers of color, described how they were often silenced in their teacher education classrooms by the dominance of white pre-service teachers and were hesitant to share their perspectives or opinions.

Teacher educators also face similar challenges. Evans-Winters and Twyman Hoff (2011) noticed the ways that white prospective teachers resisted and retaliated against counter-hegemonic teaching strategies particularly through the end-of-course evaluations.

The authors provided a critique of higher educational practices that allow students to complete evaluations, in this case, white students of a Black woman professor, without assessment or pushback of their racist and sexist biases. Juarez and Hayes (2015) also gave two examples of teacher educators' experiences confronting and challenging whiteness in teacher education. In describing their experiences in a multicultural education teacher preparation program, the use of terms such as "white racial domination," "domestic terrorism," and "academic lynching" highlighted the tumultuous and dangerous implications of whiteness in teacher education, affecting even the teacher educators themselves.

### **Pedagogical approaches**

While teacher education programs are attempting to integrate multicultural and social justice-oriented perspectives into their coursework, pedagogical approaches are still being developed and investigated. Some studies shared the authors' observations while teaching a course in which race or whiteness was a topic of study. In these pieces, scholars shared their pedagogical method as well as some of the biases and implications expressed by pre-service teachers through different course assignments (Bersh, 2009; Christian & Zippay, 2012; Laughter, 2011; Matias & Grosland, 2016; Matias & Mackey, 2016). Christian & Zippay (2012) used an online forum to analyze their students' discussions while Matias and Grosland (2016) used a longitudinal series of digital storytelling assignments throughout teacher candidates' coursework to engage in critical self-reflection. Additionally, Matias & Mackey (2016) described a pedagogical strategy

of self-interrogation of whiteness that they encouraged teacher educators to employ to facilitate learning in teacher preparation programs. Hill-Jackson (2007) presented the *ICCP Model for white Pre-service Teachers* to delineate stages of racial consciousness development that pre-service teachers might go through. She argued that this trajectory might help prospective teachers and their teacher educators to know what to expect and better converse about their developing understandings. Collectively, these studies describe some of the pedagogical approaches used to address race and whiteness with white pre-service teachers.

However, little research demonstrates the use of these same pedagogical approaches with prospective teachers of color. Rather, teacher candidates of color's expertise and preparedness to teach with political and ideological clarity appears to result from their *own lived experiences* rather than the pedagogy of their teacher education programs. Pedagogical approaches in teacher education that reposition marginalized knowledges and lived experiences as assets in the development of critical consciousness for all are still lacking. Pre-service teachers of color are still experiencing marginalization and silencing of their communities' experiences, histories, and assets while pedagogical approaches used with white pre-service teachers are often resisted and experiencing limited success. Thus, the need for innovative approaches to critical consciousness development in teacher education remains imperative.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

### **Theoretical underpinnings**

The use of social media is gaining traction as a method, context, and space in educational arenas. In the past decade, social media apps and services have greatly evolved and expanded, redefining societal understandings of knowledge, learning, communication, and social connections. Particularly, popular social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are integral to the daily experiences of many young people, including college students. Dede (2016) describes how the field of education is expanding its conceptualizations of learning through social media:

The use of social media for learning purposes is based on fundamental beliefs about learning, knowledge, and expertise that are quite different from the foundational assumptions underlying the structure and practices of traditional educational institutions (schools, colleges). An increasing proportion of people in all age groups are using social media as the dominant means of informal learning, developing strengths and preferences in how they create and share knowledge and in what types of authority they accept as certifying its accuracy. As more students enter schools and colleges with beliefs and preferences about learning and knowledge they have developed through using social media, these institutions will face pressures to acknowledge types of learning and knowing discrepant with classic models of instruction, authority, and epistemology. (p. 95)

The medium of social media is creating a shift in people's understandings of knowledge, authority, communication, interaction, and power, creating an intriguing terrain for the

query of the development of critical consciousness, the validity and the re-centering marginalized knowledges, and the quest for political and ideological clarity amongst teacher candidates. Of additional significance is the ways that future teachers are prepared in light of the influences of social media in their lives as well as in that of the students and society of their future teaching.

The growth of participatory media such as Web 2.0 sites and social networking platforms has inevitably changed the production of knowledge and information in society. In contrast to traditional sources of media and information such as newspaper, television, and radio, social media, as technological tools that are economical, accessible, and easy to use, has allowed “the people formerly known as the audience” (Rosen, 2012, p. 13) to participate in knowledge construction traditionally reserved for the elite (Krutka, 2015).

Social media has evolved from a diversion to a central part of personal, social, civic, economic, and political lives. Krutka and Carpenter (2016) describe that many people use social media platforms “for keeping up with families and friends but also [have] leverage[d] these new media in protest movements, democratic revolutions, charity fundraising, and disaster relief” (p. 7). Additionally, the social media presence of advertising, breaking news, and multiple daily tweets from the current President of the United States himself demonstrate how interwoven the economic and political sectors are with one’s personal use of these platforms (Donald J. Trump, n.d.; Ott, 2017).

Additionally, education scholars argue that social media is reshaping the epistemological landscape of informal learning and knowledge construction (Dede, 2016;

Jenlink, 2014; Krutka, 2015; Krutka & Carpenter, 2016). In participatory social media spaces, traditional principles of learning such as dichotomies of teacher and student or limitations of time and place are reduced, opening up a virtual learning space where participants can co-create, analyze, and critique user-generated content (Jenlink, 2014). The details of who, what, where, why, and how are expanded by these digital places and communities, and as Krutka (2015) states, “participatory cultures within informal learning spaces offer glimpses into the possibilities for education to return power to the interests and needs of people even in the face of hierarchical systems” (p. 43). These can be spaces of collective intelligence, collaboration, and reciprocal relationships (Krutka, 2015) representative of an outgrowing of traditional foundations of knowledge creation to a world of dynamic and democratic re-creation of knowledge (Jenlink, 2014).

Unfortunately, the use of social media technologies is often banned or discouraged in schools due to safety and security concerns; however, Krutka and Carpenter (2016) argue that issues of digital responsibility are the exact reasons why pre-service teachers must be prepared adequately in their use. Jenlink (2014) states “our responsibility, as teacher educators, is to engage our preservice students in learning experiences that prepare them for the reality of the neomillennial youth today and the classrooms and schools they will enter as teachers” (p. 510). This perspective requires that teacher education be situated appropriately within the evolving world of digital and social media.

In response to this call, many scholars and teacher educators have explored social media use in the lives of prospective teachers in their unique roles as both learners and

emerging professionals. This body of empirical work accounts for the nuanced implications of its findings at multiple levels in the fields of teacher education, K-12 classrooms, and, at times, society as a whole.

The integration of social media as a pedagogical tool, method, and space is a nascent and evolving endeavor. Using both findings from their study as well as Dewey’s (1938) theory of experience, Krutka, et al. (2017) propose a social media pedagogy (Figure 1), considering students’ past experiences and current conditions to inform and promote their growth and future use. These factors are important, especially since while many pre-service teachers are digital natives, a common set of social media skills, experiences, and preferences cannot be assumed (Krutka & Carpenter, 2016).

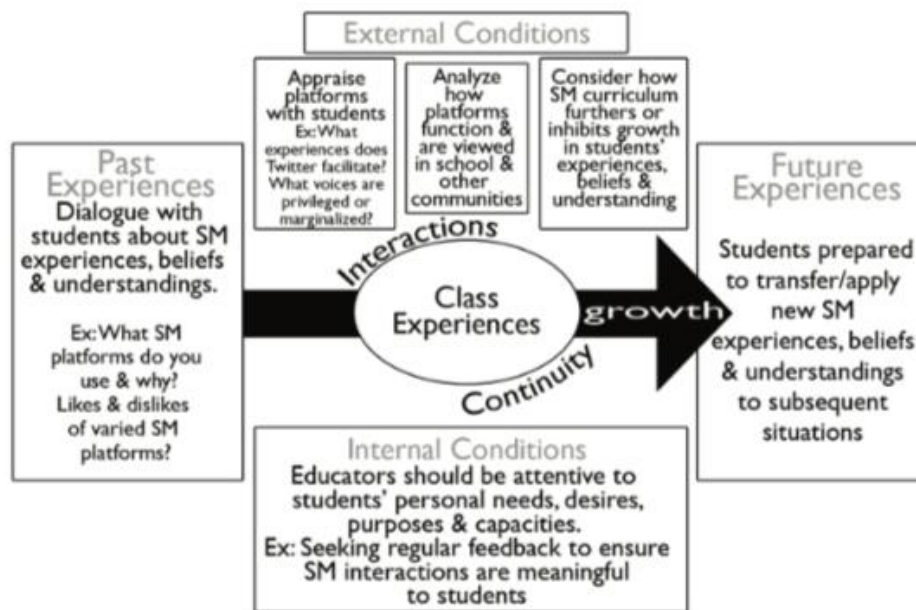


Figure 1: Model for social media pedagogy (Krutka, et al., 2017)

Hughes, et al. (2015) position prospective teachers' familiarity and skills with social media within a framework of new literacies, which suggests the necessity of complex, multiple, multi-modal literacy skills to function in a technologically-advancing society. Hughes, et al. (2015) contend that it is necessary for pre-service teachers to "learn new technologies in order that they can design technology-infused learning experiences for PK-12 students when such inclusion advances or transforms pedagogy, learning, and/or curriculum" (p. 209). They suggest a sequenced model for teacher education courses to expose teacher candidates to the possibilities of social media as new literacies to be used and developing in their future teaching. The model depicts three stages: 1) facilitating a teacher-led learning experience integrating a closed social media network into a course, 2) leading analysis of cases of K-12 teachers integrating social media into their teaching, and 3) designing student-centered opportunities guided by the curriculum to provide pre-service teachers an opportunity to participate in an open social media network. The ideas of Hughes, et al. (2015) and Krutka, et al. (2017) are essential in framing the pedagogical use of social media in teacher education classrooms.

Some empirical work provides descriptions of prospective teachers' use of social media. For example, from 2008 to 2012, Hughes et al. (2015) conducted a 4-year study surveying 206 pre-service teachers exploring their use of social networking services (SNS) in their teacher preparation and future teaching. Results demonstrated that although almost all pre-service teachers engaged with a general SNS such as Facebook for personal uses, they engaged less with other sites such as blogs, wikis, or Twitter and

less for professional purposes. Additionally, they tended to prefer consuming rather than producing content and were characterized as putting a lot of restrictions on their accounts.

Similarly, Wickramanayake & Jike (2018) examined the technological tendencies of 242 teacher candidates in Nigeria, finding that they primarily used their phones for social media with these platforms serving purposes of entertainment, communication, and education. However, social media was not always perceived as a positive or even neutral phenomenon; Huang (2017) found that teacher candidates' reading practices were conversely affected due to increased use of social media, and Andersson et al. (2014) found social media to be distracting to both teachers and students.

### **Empirical literature**

In addition to the aforementioned descriptive studies, the following literature demonstrates how many scholars conducted investigation of the use of social media as a pedagogical tool in their teacher education courses. Serving dual roles as both teachers and investigators, many scholars assigned social media use as a component of their class and evaluated the pre-service teachers' perceptions and use of the app.

The most common assignment was the use of Twitter. Teacher educators required students' use of Twitter while leading courses in English education (Benko et al., 2016), educational technology (Greenhalgh, Rosenberg, & Wolf, 2016), and social studies (Gomez & Journell, 2017) and during student teaching (Carpenter, 2015; Wright, 2010) as well as in international locations such as Spain (Carpenter, Tur, & Marin, 2016; Tur & Marin, 2015) and Australia (Lemon, 2014). Pre-service teachers expressed positive

perceptions of their experience using Twitter in their learning (Carpenter, et al., 2016; Tur & Marin, 2015). Some prospective teachers used Twitter for reflection (Benko et al., 2016), sharing information with classmates (Carpenter, 2015; Greenhalgh, et al., 2016), and in building a sense of community within the course (Krutka et al., 2017). In consideration of their role as teacher candidates, they enjoyed the access to a wider network of people and resources (Benko et al., 2016; Carpenter, 2015; Carpenter, et al., 2016; Gomez & Journell, 2017; Lemon, 2014) and explored their current and future participation in the community of practicing educators through their engagement on Twitter (Greenhalgh, et al., 2016; Krutka, et al., 2017). However, pre-service teachers expressed hesitation regarding the possible use of social media in their future classrooms (Carpenter, et al., 2016; Krutka, et al., 2017). Furthermore, Nagle (2018) warned against the dangers of cyber violence against women and people of color particularly on Twitter and stressed the need for critical social media pedagogy in teacher education that considers the repercussions of integrating Twitter into coursework.

A few studies utilized social media sites other than Twitter in their teacher education courses. For example, Krutka, et al. (2014) used Edmodo, a closed educational network similar to Facebook, as a medium for reflection for teacher candidates. Additionally, Vlieghe, Vandermeersche, and Soetaert (2016) explored the reading practices and reflections of pre-service teachers in Belgium using the site GoodReads, a virtual library with space to rate, recommend, and discuss books. Anderson and Justice (2015) required student teachers to create interactive blogs with intentions of disrupting their perceptions of participatory learning.

In one study, students' use of social media as part of the class occurred organically (Cox & Nickson, 2014). When the instructor in a literacy methods course was faced with health concerns and was unable to serve as instructor of the course, other professors and doctoral students filled in, creating an unsettling experience for the students themselves. The students then organized an unofficial course Facebook page to serve them throughout the class. When Cox & Nickson requested to access it afterwards, they found how the pre-service teachers had used the page to share ideas and resources, clarify details about the course, organize events, and encourage one another, maintaining morale and resiliency during a difficult time. This example is unique in that it provides a window into how students use social media not as a requirement but on their own for their own purposes, practices of which teacher educators across the digital divide might not always be aware.

While much of the literature described ways that social media was integrated as a pedagogical tool in teacher preparation courses, the implications for students' use of these tools in future classrooms was often vaguely implied. Jensen's (2012) study was different, in that it centered theatre teacher candidates' use of digital and multi-modal media in their teaching rather than in their learning. Students were asked to create multi-modal texts and images, podcasts, and pedagogical experiences in both their participation in the class as a learner as well as in their field placements as teachers. Despite initial hesitation, the pre-service teachers described these digital media literacies in favorable terms, describing how they led to deeper engagement with content. They imagined the pedagogical possibilities of integrating digital media into their future classrooms, and 16



out of 18 expressed comfort and commitment in including digital media literacy in their future teaching.

Despite the possibilities that social media affords to cross cultural, racial, linguistic, and contextual lines, very few studies involved an experience in which pre-service teachers explicitly engaged with people of different backgrounds or lived experiences. Furthermore, very few articles addressed issues of power, particularly along historical, sociopolitical, and cultural lines, both in the context of the study and in the social media assignment itself. Critiques of how social media permits and promotes “affinity spaces,” where like-minded individuals commune digitally (boyd, 2014), and of how teacher educators have missed opportunities to connect their students with people of different backgrounds (Krutka & Carpenter, 2016) were affirmed in the scant literature considering issues of power, diversity, and social justice in social media.

In one example, Stewart and Gachago (2016) described an educational project entitled “Being Human Today” that connected university students from a South African and a U.S. classroom. Using collaborative digital storytelling through a closed Facebook group, students were able to create humanizing perspectives and understandings of one another, disrupting notions of otherness across these different contexts. This project was made possible by the affordances of social media to transcend time and space as well as to create multi-modal stories as a process of self-expression.

In a similar example, Carano (2009) encouraged the development of cross-cultural awareness and global literacy through an educational project involving digital media. Involving 23 master’s students in social science education as well as 5 “cultural

consultants” who had diverse cultural backgrounds, the teacher educator used social networking sites to establish a class blog. Through interactive participation on the blog as well as online global resources, students were able to learn and unlearn about people with different lived experiences than themselves and grow in the process of developing cross-cultural awareness and critical consciousness.

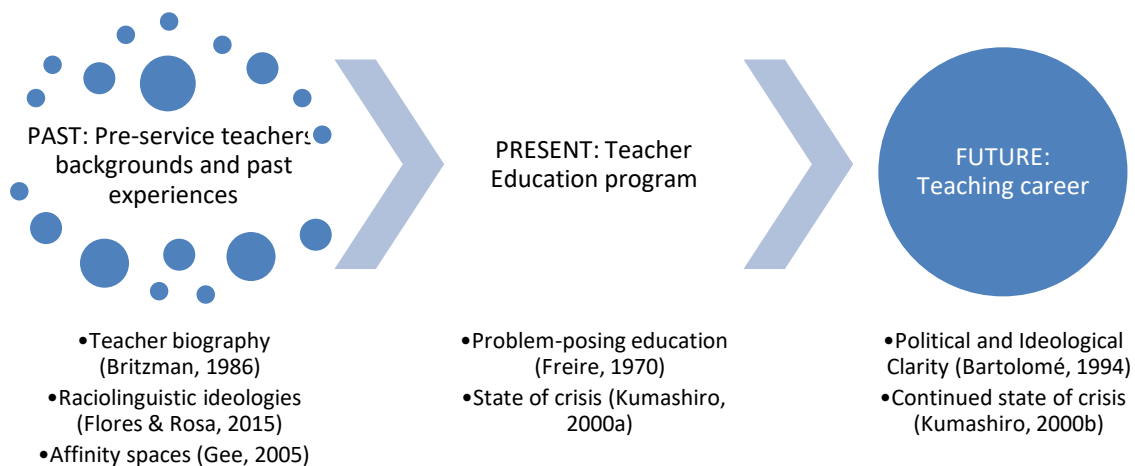
Hentges (2016) describes how she integrates social media into her women’s studies course as a platform for information, storytelling, and social activism, stating that “social media is a primary realm of feminist interaction, expansion, and activism today” (p. 231). She trusts in social media to expose her students to new communities, different lived experiences, and social activism activities “in ways that traditional media -- and traditional classrooms -- cannot” (p. 231). Social media, as a vibrant, current, democratic source of news, information, and storytelling has a powerful way of repositioning those whose experiences are typically marginalized; however, its use as a tool in disrupting dominant curriculum or in the project of critical consciousness development is widely undocumented. Further research is necessary to explore the possibilities of social media as a tool in humanizing pedagogy.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The use of social media in the present study aimed to explore pre-service teachers’ interpretations of social issues facing oppressed communities, representing the experiences and realities of their future students. This study employed social media as a tool to act upon prospective teachers’ existing ideologies about the intersections of race,

language, power, oppression, and schooling, ideologies which have likely been informed by their own backgrounds and past experiences. As a part of their teacher preparation coursework, this project joined the program of study’s mission to align the future teaching corps to commitments of social justice, better serving K-12 students whose strengths, histories, and knowledges have often been undermined.

To generate a conceptual understanding of how this study worked within pre-service teachers’ journeys towards becoming social justice-oriented educators, I draw on theories of teacher identity and humanizing pedagogy. This framework considers teacher candidates’ arrival at the teacher education program holding ideologies which were informed by varying experiences and backgrounds. This framework poses a possible approach for ideological transformation within the teacher education program and beyond, enhancing future teachers’ abilities to serve traditionally marginalized students and to challenge oppression in society.



## Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

An important element of teacher education is the recognition of the teacher's past, the accumulation of collective experiences that informs their understanding of schooling, teaching, and the social world. Britzman (1986) argues that "critical consideration must be given to what happens when the student teacher's biography, or cumulative social experience, becomes part of the implicit context of teacher education" (p. 443). This study looked to pre-service teachers' pasts to comprehend how their socialization experiences both in and out of school informed their ideological dispositions and understandings of oppression, power, race, language, and social justice as it related to their teaching. While notions such as race or gender can be essentializing in nature and purport a homogenizing understanding of one's experiences, this study paid particular attention to prospective teachers' race and language backgrounds due to their likely mismatch with those of their students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) and explored how these backgrounds affected their ideologies and interpretations of social issues. However, additional sociocultural markers such as religion also were important elements of participants' backgrounds.

Ideology can be described as "some sort of 'system' of ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitments, or values about social reality" (Apple, 2004, p. 18). However, ideologies are understood to be dynamic, with the potential to change, evolve, contradict, and oppose themselves. They also are power-laden and influenced by one's relation to power, privilege, and oppression (Apple, 2004). This becomes important as this study considered the role of sociocultural markers such as race in the pre-service teachers' understandings

of social issues, contending that based on their backgrounds, the prospective teachers' ideologies were likely informed by their own experiences with power and oppression.

With continued high levels of segregation in schools and cities (Orfield, et al., 2016), it can be assumed that many teacher candidates arrive at a teacher education program having spent much of their social experience in racial isolation, and moreover, in affinity spaces both physical (Gee, 2005) and digital (boyd, 2014). Affinity spaces can be defined as a social dimension in which people can reach an audience likely to have similar interests and shared experiences, and boyd (2014) argues that most peoples' online lives are spent in affinity spaces. However, Gee (2005) posits that this space is more substantial than simply sharing similarities, but rather involves an intertwined development of identity, moral and values, and membership in a community. Therefore, in considering pre-service teachers' biographies (Britzman, 1986), it becomes important to question and possibly challenge the ideologies that have been formed in their past experiences, which possibly occurred in segregated, homogeneous, affinity spaces.

With this context in mind, and in awareness of the limited abilities of most prospective teachers to thoroughly comprehend and critique issues of oppression and social justice, the responsibility of teacher education programs to act upon the existing ideologies held by pre-service teachers becomes imperative. In this study, the use of humanizing pedagogy through a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) via social media intended to aid in teacher candidates' arrival at political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) to better educate traditionally underserved K-12 students, challenge

oppressive societal ideologies and systems, and with hopes to restore the humanization of all.

Paulo Freire, among the first and most impactful thinkers in this realm, described humanization as the process of becoming social, historical, critical, creative thinkers who participate in and with the world, summarized by Salazar (2013). This process entails envisioning a new world and requires transformation and liberation of the oppressed. Freire's (1970) humanizing pedagogy, involves a problem-posing education in which students and teachers are engaged in dialogue as coinvestigators of social issues. The end goal is the development of critical consciousness or "conscientizacao" (Freire, 1970, p. 26) in which participants learn to "perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 17). Humanizing pedagogy intentionally aims to challenge the powers of hegemony and social reproduction in light of a more socially just world.

Bartolomé (1994) argues that humanizing pedagogy "builds on the sociocultural realities of students' lives, examines the sociohistorical and political dimensions of education, and casts students as critically engaged, active participants in the co-construction of knowledge" (Salazar, 2013, p. 128). Bartolomé's work extends Freire's humanizing pedagogy to practical application, and beyond his calls for problem-posing, she situates the re-centering of marginalized sociocultural knowledges as part of the humanization and liberation process. She states that a humanizing pedagogy "values the students' background knowledge, culture, and life experiences, and creates learning where power is shared by students and teachers" (Bartolomé, 1994, p. 248). This element

is of particular importance for the U.S. educational institution in which marginalized students' knowledges and experiences are widely devalued. Furthermore, Bartolomé (1994) stresses the need for teachers' interrogation of their own beliefs, values, and experiences in order to arrive at an ideologically and politically clear approach to teach students from subordinated background in a humanistic way. Teachers' "ideological clarity" involves examining their own understandings of the inequitable structures of society and their "political clarity" requires a deeper understanding of the macro-level sociopolitical and economic dimensions that affect the micro-level of their classroom (Bartolomé, 2004).

Therefore, the use of social justice-oriented social media in this study intended to push pre-service teachers into an area of "crisis" (Kumashiro, 2000a) in which they interrogated and possibly transformed their existing ideologies and understandings of issues of oppression in society and schools. Kumashiro (2000a) argues that

education (especially the process of learning something that tells us that *the very ways in which we think and do things* is not only wrong but also harmful) can be a very discomfoting process. Hence the notion that learning takes place 'only through crisis.' (p. 7)

He encourages teacher educators to anticipate their students entering into crisis and to be prepared to accompany them through the learning experience. However, he also argues that this journey of learning is continuous and never complete (Kumashiro, 2000b).

Therefore, this study's use of social media in teacher education was but one effort at disrupting problematic ideologies and increasing understanding of oppression and social

justice; even at this study's completion, this work remains unfinished. But, perhaps, this study's introduction to social media for the purposes of social justice presented the potential of the ever-evolving world of social media as an ongoing space for pre-service teachers' continued "crisis" throughout their careers.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I argue that social media provides a compelling terrain to unearth and challenge pre-service teachers' understanding of their students and their teaching and to work towards the political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) necessary to center and build upon the lived experiences and knowledges of marginalized students. Furthermore, by engaging in the use of social media in teacher preparation, this study illuminated the possibilities and challenges of social media in teacher candidates' learning.

The purpose of this study was to explore the raising of critical consciousness in prospective teachers through social media. This study examined how pre-service teachers understood and interacted with the political, historical, and sociocultural content of one featured social media account oriented towards social justice with particular considerations of 1) their backgrounds and past experiences and 2) implications in their preparation as teachers.

This chapter will describe the research design that I used to answer the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with issues of social justice through interactive social media?
2. How do the pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media?
3. What possibilities and challenges exist in the use of social media for preparing social justice-oriented educators?

Due to this study's focus on the participants' nuanced understandings, this project identifies as an interpretivist, qualitative, case study (Crotty, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2015). In this chapter, I will outline a number of methodological aspects as they pertain to this study. First, I will begin by providing a basic overview of the study. Then I share the research paradigm, research type, and methodology that informed this study. I will then provide a description of the selected social media account, the context, and the participants involved in the study. I will follow by delineating the data collection and analysis processes that was used and conclude with notes on the limitations of the study and my own positionality.

### **Overview of the study**

This study aimed to investigate the ways that pre-service teachers interpreted and engaged with issues of social justice via social media. As the field of teacher education faces challenging terrain in the preparation of social justice-oriented teachers, social media offers an opportunity to expose teacher candidates to current conversations around social justice and potentially serve as a tool for interrogating, challenging, or transforming their ideological dispositions.

Four cohorts of pre-service elementary teachers at one university were invited to participate in the study; however, only the data from one cohort was selected for this manuscript. As part of their assignments for their last semester of coursework, they were asked to follow a specified social media account that is oriented towards social justice. Before each class meeting, they selected one post they found on the account's page and

completed a written response in which they reflected on the meaning and implications of the content in the post. These written reflections served as the primary data source for this study. Additionally, teacher candidates created an autobiographical, digital presentation as another course assignment. These digital artifacts were used in conjunction with the collection of written responses as secondary data sources that shed light on the pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds. Lastly, prospective teachers were asked to complete pre- and post-questionnaires in which they provided insights regarding their use of social media both inside and outside this study. An outline of the data sources in connection to the research questions is provided below.

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theoretical Foundation</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Participants</b>
#1: How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with issues of social justice through interactive social media?	<p>Problem-posing education (Freire, 1970)</p> <p>State of crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a)</p>	<p><u>Written Reflections</u> Course assignment: Written response to post found on the social media account (see Appendix A)</p> <p>Submitted at each class meeting</p> <p>N~ 10 posts and 10 written reflections per participant Total N~ 220 total reflections across the cohort</p>	All participants
How do the pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media?	<p>Teacher biography (Britzman, 1986)</p> <p>Affinity spaces (Gee, 2005)</p>	<p><u>Digital Artifacts</u> Course assignment: Linguistic history</p> <p>A digital presentation sharing pre-service teachers' reflections on their own language journey (See Appendix B)</p> <p>N~ one presentation per participant Total N~ 22 presentations</p>	All participants

Table 1: Data matrix

#3: What possibilities exist in the use of social media for preparing social justice-oriented educators?	Political and Ideological Clarity (Bartolomé, 2004)  Continued state of crisis (Kumashiro, 2000b)	<u>Pre and post-questionnaires</u>  Conducted upon beginning and after completion of the course to gain further insight of the experiences of pre-service teachers in the use of social media (see Appendix C & D)	All participants
--	---	--	------------------

Table 1 continued

**RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Crotty (1998) outlines Western research paradigms and theoretical perspectives used in social research, namely: post/positivism, constructionism, interpretivism, critical inquiry, and postmodernism, each with its own understandings of epistemology, methodology, ontology, and axiology. Of particular alignment to my worldview as a researcher and as necessitated by its research questions, this study was interpretivist in nature but situated in the critical paradigm. As opposed to the value-free, absolute approach of positivism, interpretivism, as defined by Crotty (1998), “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (p. 67).

Interpretivism operates under the assumptions that there are multiple ways of interpreting an event, and therefore, multiple truths, and adheres that an individual constructs her own reality. Interpretivism prioritizes understanding and interpretation rather than proof of one truth. The purpose of this project was to understand the pre-service teachers’ experiences and hear how they interpreted as well as constructed themselves and their

experiences in this assignment of the teacher education program (Crotty, 1998) which can best be captured through rich, descriptive research of a qualitative nature (Mertens, 2015).

However, as I mentioned, this project was interpretivist in nature but distinctly and intentionally situated in the critical paradigm, as its purpose was “to critique, challenge, transform, and empower” (Merriam, 2009, p. 10). Crotty (1998) delineates the distinct essence of critical inquiry from interpretivism, describing it as:

a contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and research that challenges... between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression... between a research that accepts the status quo and a research that seeks to bring about change. (p. 113)

The critical research paradigm allowed me to interpret prospective teachers’ understanding of issues of social justice in light of their own backgrounds and experiences but also required that I challenge and critique issues of power that informed their thinking. I took this responsibility seriously and see great potential of critical research to contribute to the transformation of education and society.

## **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that “in its broadest sense, research is a systematic process by which we know more about something than we did before engaging in this process” (p. 5). In the structured process of research, knowledge is

thought to be constructed, exposed, or challenged, building understanding and information around a given topic. In particular, qualitative research is “interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to those experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Qualitative research seeks rich, thick description that helps to understand the realities of the world as perceived and constructed by participants, assuming that there is no single observable reality. It takes place in the natural world, is constantly evolving, and uses multiple methods honoring the humanity of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

### **CASE STUDY**

Case study is a methodology within qualitative research that provides “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). For the reader, they construct a “contextualized deep understanding” (Blanco Ramírez, 2016, p. 19) using rich and thick description of a specific situation or phenomenon under study that is bounded and defined. Case studies are unique; they are not intended for generalization but rather for a “three-dimensional view” of the particularity and complexity of the given case (Thomas, 2016, p. 5).

This study is best described as an instrumental case study, in which the case study was acting as a tool to expose and teach about something else (Thomas, 2016). The case becomes of secondary interest but plays a role in facilitating our understanding of another issue. In this study, the pre-service teacher’s understandings of the social media’s content

served as the bounded system, but this case supported interpretations of the clarity of pre-service teachers' ideological capabilities and preparation to serve a culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

Case study is often misunderstood (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Thomas (2016) asserts, “the case study is not a method in itself. Rather, it is a focus and the focus is on one thing, looked at in depth and from many angles” (p. 9). Similarly, Stake states (2005):

Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied...

By whatever methods, we choose to study *the case*. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods - but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case. (p. 443)

Thus, case study serves almost as a framework through which inquiry is conducted. The researcher's decision to conduct a case study acknowledges her responsibility to identify an appropriate case that through rich, deep exploration will provide insight to the questions being asked.

## **CONTEXT**

### **The @undocumedia and @polibeats\_ Instagram accounts**

As outlined previously, social media sites and apps are greatly transforming widespread understandings and productions of knowledge, communication, and democracy. By offering spaces for instant, informal, and interactive construction and sharing of information, traditional notions of authority over and parameters of knowledge



are disrupted and participation in knowledge production is then diffused amongst the masses in a democratic reconfiguration. This is of compelling significance for marginalized communities whose experiences, truths, and ways of being have been routinely silenced and belittled. Social media now provides a digital context in which non-dominant perspectives have a stage and play a role in societal knowledge production, in community, social, and political activism, and in interpersonal relationships and understandings.

It is in this vein that the Instagram accounts @undocumedia, @polibeats\_, and others like it are instrumental. Instagram, a world of multimodal composition, is an app where users hold accounts and can post pictures with accompanying captions that others are then able to comment on, share, or like. @undocumedia was a public account founded and managed by two Latino immigrant men, based in California. According to the account's webpage, "the purpose of UndocuMedia [was] to disseminate information, through various forms of media, which pertains to legislation that addresses the undocumented community." The account's posts tended to hold general themes of cultural celebration, social activism, community empowerment, and solidarity with other populations. Many posts featured culturally affirmative jokes, images, stories, and artwork challenging deficit narratives of immigrant and Latino families. Often the account shared calls for activism to organize fundraising, protests, and political action. For example, at one point in time, the account was linked to a fundraising site to pull together money for the attorney fees and bail bond of an undocumented woman being held in a detention center. Additionally, there were posts declaring proclamations of

solidarity with other oppressed communities, aligning themselves such as through the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter or posting pro-LGBTQ perspectives during Pride Week celebrations. This lens demonstrated not only solidarity with other oppressed groups but also intersectionality, acknowledging the multiple and layered identities, communities, and alliances of the undocumented population and their followers.

This account, in its content, community, and mission, embodied the tenets of LatCrit Theory as described by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001). Below I list the following five themes in a CRT and LatCrit framework (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) and provide an example of how the @undocumedia account depicted each one.

1. The centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination



2. The challenge to dominant ideology



undocumedia



Allie Wen  
@alliewen21



The Holocaust was legal.  
Slavery was legal.  
Segregation was legal.  
Legality is not a guide for morality.



Table 2: Social media account examples

### 3. The commitment to social justice

 undocumedia



5,407 likes

undocumedia "You Can't Deport A Movement" •••

 @janiceginger1

### 4. The centrality of experiential knowledge

 undocumedia



g-funk  
@gra1ciela

children of immigrants are so protective of their parents and are so nurturing. our parents get ridiculed for their accents or lack of English, get talked down to at their jobs, get side eyed in white spaces. I'll fight anyone on behalf of my parents.

7/18/18, 4:35 PM

1,692 Retweets 3,593 Likes



Table 2 continued

## 5. The interdisciplinary perspective



undocumedia



Bree Newsome   
@BreeNewsome



This nation was not founded by immigrants. Europeans squatting on already-occupied land with the goal of producing raw goods for the wealth of England is COLONIZATION, not immigration. Please stop rewriting history to fit a convenient modern political narrative



Table 2 continued

This account, informed by LatCrit theory, created a narrative from and for its users and served as an agentic space, both of which are of particular importance in the current political era. These endeavors were furthered by the medium of Instagram and the context of social media which are disrupting notions of authority of knowledge and information.

@undocumedia had been the Instagram account that inspired this study; I, the researcher, had been following it for years and considered its content to align with theoretical foundations of LatCrit theory (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) and Freire's (1970) problem-posing education to achieve humanization of all. However, shortly after the proposal for this study was approved, the @undocumedia account was shut down. Accusations of mistreatment of women colleagues as well as anti-blackness were aimed at one of the account's founders, Ivan Ceja, who was removed from the

@undocumedia team. Subsequently, the other founder, Justino Mora, was advised to close the account, and ultimately, the @undocumedia platform dissolved right before data collection was to begin for this study.

At the time, I found that Justino Mora was running a different Instagram account, @polibeats\_, and after reviewing some of its content, determined that it would be an adequate replacement for the @undocumedia account for the purposes of this study. The @polibeats\_ account also represented the tenets of LatCrit theory (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) but with an added focus on civic engagement, often speaking back to President Donald Trump and his dehumanizing policies. Furthermore, the posts on @polibeats\_ appeared to align with the endeavors of political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004), sharing oppressed groups' experiences and perspectives within larger social and political structures. The account's profile is featured in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: @polibeats\_ Instagram profile, (Polibeats, n.d.)

The medium of Instagram affords the possibility of widespread yield and impact of counternarratives on individuals and institutions as well as legitimizes their value in the proliferation of likes and shares within the digital community. Because social media

allows for the recentering of knowers and knowledges that are often marginalized and silenced, it provides an opportunity for informal learning that could be potentially transformational especially for future teachers in their responsibility as agents of change.

### **The teacher education program**

This study took place in the context of a 3-semester elementary teacher education program at a large public university in Texas. Each year the program graduated around 100 students as Early Childhood-6<sup>th</sup> Grade English as a Second Language Generalists. These teacher candidates were prepared throughout their coursework and field placements with, according to the program's website, the "foundations of teaching" with a particular focus on diverse learners and students whose first or only language was not English.

In an effort to direct attention towards linguistic diversity in teaching and learning, university students in this program were required to take two courses centered around language issues in the classroom. These courses sandwiched the prospective teachers' time in the program, with one course on Language Acquisition required prior to entering the 3-semester teacher preparation program and one course of ESL Methods paired with student teaching in their last semester. Both of these courses addressed linguistic diversity from an additive and appreciative standpoint and encouraged students to consider issues of power embedded in discussions of language both in schools and society. Additionally, instructors of other courses and supervisors of field placements had been encouraged by the Teacher Education committee of the department to integrate

considerations of linguistically diverse learners throughout the program's sequence; however, the success of these efforts was uncertain.

### **The ESL Methods course**

Four elementary cohorts of about 20 pre-service teachers each participated in the study during their last university course; however, only the data of one cohort was included in this manuscript. The course which hosted this study was entitled ESL Methods, and I, the researcher, had served as an instructor of this course each semester for the past 3 years resulting in great familiarity with its structure. At this university, the ESL Methods course met during the students' last semester alongside their student teaching and was a class in which pre-service teachers explored theoretical and practical perspectives for teaching linguistically diverse student populations. The course typically required practical assignments such as lesson plan design and conducting a case study of one bilingual student in their field placement (see sample syllabus – Appendix E); however, in alignment with Palmer and Martinez's (2013) call for more robust understandings of language and the need for political and ideological clarity in place of a "methods fetish" (Bartolomé, 1994), this study focused on the assignments that deeply explored the implications of language in relation to identities, histories, communities, politics, and power.

All teacher candidates in the selected ESL Generalist cohort (n~22 pre-service teachers) were required to complete the associated assignments for the course and were all invited to participate in the study, and only the work of those who consented was



included in the study. Pre-service teachers enrolled in ESL Methods were required to follow or visit the specified social media account, in this study: the @polibeats\_ Instagram account, before each class meeting and craft a response to one post that caught their attention. The assignment's description in the syllabus stated, "Your response should be interactive, and it might ask questions, pose critiques, celebrate, connect or disagree with the post," and the simple completion of the written responses earned the students full credit for this assignment. Prospective teachers were invited to share their opinions and reactions to the content they were seeing on the Instagram account, and these written reflections were the primary data source for this study. The participants' reflections were then triangulated with another autobiographical, digital assignment from the course in which students shared their linguistic histories as well as with pre- and post-questionnaires about their use of social media.

### **Participants**

Participants for this study were elementary, ESL generalist pre-service teachers in their last semester of a teacher preparation program at a large public university in Texas. Four cohorts, typically hosting around 20 students each, were invited to participate, resulting in around 80 potential participants. However, upon initial review, the data from one cohort was much more robust and complete in comparison to the other cohorts, a cohort of 22 students who I had previously taught in a reading course the year before. This could be related to a number of factors, for example, the instructor's commitment to authentically incorporating the @polibeats\_ assignments into the course's syllabus or my

familiarity with the students that led to their buy-in or their comfort in being vulnerable and open in their assignments due to our instructor-student relationships. Furthermore, having taught this cohort in another course, I was familiar with their backgrounds and personalities, permitting a deeper read of the data and understandings of the triangulation between sources that could not be performed with the other cohorts' data. All of these circumstances led to my decision to solely include the data of this cohort for analysis in this study.

Generally, elementary ESL generalist cohorts at this university tended to be primarily female with students who mostly are from Texas. The cohorts were estimated to be around 65% white, demonstrating a demographic nuance differing from typical reports of an 80+% white teaching corps (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In my experience, each cohort tended to host a few international students from Asia, mostly Korea, who lived transnational lives and often had future goals of teaching in both the United States and in their home countries. Each ESL generalist cohort also usually had a few Latinx students, often of Mexican descent. While this university also had a bilingual elementary teacher education program whose participants were predominantly Latinx, these few pre-service teachers, some of whom were bilingual, elected to participate in the ESL generalist program for reasons which were not investigated in this study.

Information regarding the participants' sociocultural background was important to this study and was gathered through their linguistic histories. The participants in the cohort selected for this study, all of whom consented to participate, represented these demographics rather closely. All participants were women, and only 2 of the 22 were

predominantly raised outside of Texas. One participant in this cohort was in her late 40's, pursuing a second career in teaching, but all other participants were in their early 20's. Six were pre-service teachers of color, two of which were Mexican/Latina and two of which were Asian American who were both first-generation immigrants. One participant identified as an African American queer woman, and one described herself as biracial, black and Latina. This specific cohort was 73% white, and all were predominantly English-speaking. While all of the participants described in their linguistic histories having minimal knowledge of a language other than English, seven of them shared that they had a strong background in another language. A chart including the participants' names (all names are pseudonyms) and important information or details about their sociocultural background is included below (Table, 3). This table is not meant to reduce their histories to these markers but rather to provide a quick reference chart for the reader.

Ashley	White Christian English-speaking woman from Texas
Claire	White Christian (Catholic) English-speaking woman from Massachusetts A second-career pre-service teacher in her 40's
Laila	Asian Christian multilingual woman who immigrated to Texas as a child from Indonesia
Abigail	White Christian English-speaking woman from Texas
Katherine	White English-speaking woman from Texas
Isabel	Mexican Christian (Catholic) bilingual woman from a border town in Texas
Jenna	White English-speaking woman from Texas
Autumn	White English-speaking woman from Texas
Michelle	Korean Christian bilingual woman who immigrated to Texas as a child from Korea
Zariah	Black queer English-speaking woman from Texas, strong background in Spanish
Marley	White English-speaking woman from Texas, strong background in Spanish
Tori	White English-speaking Christian woman from Texas
Ariana	Biracial Black and Latina bilingual woman from Texas
Sofia	Mexican bilingual woman from Texas
Mackenzie	White English-speaking Christian woman from Texas
Savannah	White English-speaking Christian woman from rural Texas
Chloe	White English-speaking woman from Texas
Kirsten	White English-speaking woman from Texas, lived abroad in multiple other countries as a child
Melissa	White English-speaking Christian woman from Texas
Jessie	White English-speaking Christian woman from California
Christina	White English-speaking woman from Texas, strong background in Spanish
Parker	White English-speaking woman from Texas

Table 3: Information of participants' sociocultural backgrounds

The racial and linguistic diversity within these cohorts was significant as it demonstrated a departure from previous and stereotypical notions of a predominantly white teaching corps and polarizing cultural mismatch between teachers and students which had dominated the field of teacher education. While teacher education programs had typically been designed to prepare white teachers for a culturally and linguistically

diverse student population, the diversity in the ESL generalist cohorts at hand presented the pedagogical question of social justice-oriented teacher preparation for students with an array of sociocultural backgrounds, past experiences, and ideological dispositions. It was unclear whether the diversity in the cohorts at this university was representative of the demographics of teacher education programs across the country; however, it was noteworthy for the intentions of this study.

The classwork of all teacher candidates in this cohort was included as data in this study. All of their written responses and their linguistic histories were collected and analyzed. Additionally, all participants were asked to complete a pre- and post-questionnaire about their uses of social media, providing four robust data sources for each participant.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

As case study research does not require specific research methodologies (Thomas, 2016), the researcher is able to employ multiple approaches and data sources that adequately explore a case and serve the research questions. Creswell (2013) explains:

The investigator explores a bounded system (*a case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case *description* and case-based themes. (p. 97)

Therefore, a compilation of various methods of inquiry are necessary to gain a deep understanding of the case at hand from many angles. To explore the pre-service teachers' understanding and interaction with the Instagram account content, I used digital artifacts, written documents, open-ended questionnaires, and unstructured interviews as data sources, each of which I will detail below.

In the course serving as the context of this study, pre-service teachers created digital artifacts that served as data points in this project. They were asked to share their “linguistic history,” an autobiographical account of their language use and its role in their lives (Appendix B). This story was often told orally as a presentation while using digital media such as a PowerPoint and images to accompany it. The digital storytelling of the teacher candidates was used as both an artifact and an event that was observed and audio-recorded. Marshall and Rossman (2016) describe digital storytelling as a humanizing, empowering experience which captures the stories of ordinary people with voice, image, and sound. “The production of the story is under the control of the storyteller” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 158), allowing the participants to share within their own level of comfort and creativity. Teachers' histories and lived experiences greatly inform and influence their teaching (Britzman, 1986); thus, the information and perspective provided by the digital storytelling was instrumental in further understanding the pre-service teachers' interpretation of the Instagram account.

As participants in this study, prospective teachers were asked as part of their coursework to follow or visit a specific Instagram account, @polibeats\_, and submit daily written responses in which they reflect on one post from the account (Appendix A). They

inserted an image of the post at the top of their assignment, and then they wrote open-endedly about their thoughts, reactions, critiques, and questions. This activity provided written personal documents that served as primary data sources in this project. Written personal documents have the rich potential to share values, beliefs, and attitudes of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), highlighting “what the author thinks is important, that is, their personal perspective” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 166). They served as artifacts of the pre-service teachers’ experiences as a learner in their coursework and in their Instagram activity, creating a portfolio over time which contributed to the thickness of the case description. Additionally, written documents provide an opportunity for non-obtrusive data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and for this particular study, provide ease in the formatting of the pre-service teachers’ written reflections alongside the Instagram post they were discussing.

One drawback to the use of written documents is that, as Marshall and Rossman (2016) state, “the inferential span is long... the meaning of the documents is never transparent” (p. 165). They suggest the corroboration of written documents with other methods to unearth their embedded meanings and include the participants in the process. Thus, a set of two questionnaires was administered to participants to gauge their social media practices and perceptions of the assignment, a data collection method that can be used in case studies to question many participants (Thomas, 2016). The questionnaires included closed and open-ended questions about the participants’ use of Instagram prior to, during, and beyond their participation in the study and their perspectives as users of social media in social justice-oriented teacher education. The first questionnaire

(Appendix C) provided insights to teacher candidates' existing digital practices to understand how they were already using Instagram. The second questionnaire (Appendix D) gained perspective of participants' interpretations of the @polibeats\_ account in relation to their teaching and of their experiences using social media in this way.

Upon completion of the second questionnaire at the end of the study, a group interview organically began in which pre-service teachers were sharing with the class their perspectives using @polibeats\_ in this study. This conversation informed my understanding of the participants' written reflections, questionnaire responses, and engagement with the social media account throughout the course. Interviews serve as a guided conversation between researcher and participants to gather information of a specific type (Merriam, 2009) and are considered a primary, sometimes key, method of case study research (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, unstructured group interviews such as the one that occurred are socially oriented and natural especially between a group of classmates; however, power dynamics of the group should also be considered when analyzing data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Between the written reflections, digital storytelling, open-ended questionnaires, and unstructured group interview, interpretations of the participants' ideologies and understandings were built, facilitated by the tool of Instagram and informed by their lived experiences.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Merriam (2009) defines data analysis as “the process of making sense out of the data” (p. 175), stating that it involves consolidating, interpreting, and condensing to make



meaning of all that has been gathered during the data collection process. Thomas (2016) agrees, strongly suggesting that data analysis in case study be framed by a holistic perspective. Merriam (2009) also argues that the process of qualitative research requires simultaneous data collection and analysis. In this study, data analysis was constantly framed by the research questions and the purpose of the investigation and informed ongoing data collection.

While case study necessitates rich and thick descriptions, the researcher's analysis should avoid descriptive excess but rather focus on illuminating patterns and drawing conclusions from the data (Thomas, 2016). I initially approached the data using the inductive process of open coding moving from large, broad categories to more specific ones. I structured my analysis using the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) to elucidate themes. The constant comparative method involves identification of initial themes and then constantly revisiting the data to augment, complement, or challenge the initial themes. These approaches to coding allowed for analysis of the data that was both structured and exploratory.

I began with Research Question #1 which investigated the ways in which participants interpreted the content of the social media account and used the participants' written reflections as its primary data source. I first read through each participants' collection of 10 reflections, making anecdotal notes for each individual participant of my own reactions, thoughts, and noticings and thinking of the uniqueness of them as an individual. I then reread all of the reflections a second time, creating general categories of themes of the ways that participants interpreted the @polibeats\_ content, and read the

data multiple more times to create smaller subcategories and groupings. As the participants were only one cohort of 22 pre-service teachers and therefore relatively small, I valued all of their responses and included in my coding all approaches or interpretations of the social media account, even if they were only shared by one person.

I also made a frequency chart to track which posts were selected by participants. In their 220 total written reflections, they selected 134 different posts, some of which were popular and chosen by more than one participant. This chart served as both an organizational and thought-provoking record as it allowed me to keep track of the numerous posts but also consider what types of issues they selected, which posts were chosen by more than one participant, and which post was most commonly featured. This became a reference for creating the background for Research Question #1.

Research Question #2 asked that participants' sociocultural backgrounds be considered in relation to their interpretations of the @polibeats\_ social media content. As this was my second time working with these prospective teachers, and for some, the third time, my reading of their written reflections during the analysis of Research Question #1 was already shaped by my awareness of their backgrounds from our existing teacher-student relationships, which could be seen as both a strength and a limitation of this study. However, in efforts to gain deeper and more formal insight into their biographies, I included a data source, their digital linguistic history presentations.

I audio-recorded participants' linguistic history presentations during class, which were later transcribed, while taking my own anecdotal notes during each pre-service teacher's presentation. Additionally, I also had continued access to participants'

PowerPoint presentations as they were submitted as part of their coursework. Research Question #2 did not call for analysis of the linguistic history presentations themselves but rather an examination of the insights these autobiographical artifacts could provide to the primary data source, the written reflections responding to the @polibeats\_ Instagram account. These presentations were staggered throughout the course so the analysis of Research Question #2 occurred on a rolling basis; when a participant conducted their linguistic history presentation, I would then return to their set of written reflections with the stories of their linguistic history in mind, making anecdotal notes and drawing conclusions about them as individual participants but also finding trends across the group. Originally, Research Question #2 intended to concentrate on a handful of focal participants, however, large similarities across the participant group emerged during analysis, leading to the decision to respond to this question using general themes across the cohort.

Lastly, Research Question #3 addressed the possibilities and challenges of social media use in social justice-oriented teacher education. The first questionnaire involving both closed and open questions providing descriptive data of the practices, uses, and purposes of participants' engagement with Instagram was administered before beginning this study. The open-ended questions were coded using the constant comparative method while the closed questions provided descriptive numerical data. The second questionnaire, which asked about pre-service teachers' perspectives of the @polibeats\_ account and its use in the course, was analyzed in the same way. The completion of these questionnaires led into a class discussion, a group interview, about social media and its

use in this study. This conversation was audio-recorded, transcribed, and then coded along with field notes taken by the researcher during this class discussion.

While completing data analysis for these three research questions, the constant comparative method (Glaser, 1965) was used. Data analysis was fluid and dynamic; codes were expanded, collapsed, and eliminated throughout the process, and the researcher jumped between research questions and data sources constantly. The researcher's bias was not only inherent but also welcome throughout this data collection and analysis process and thus was present in the research study's findings and conclusions.

### **Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument through which the data is filtered both in collection and analysis. She takes on a personal role and participates in the process of knowledge construction with her participants and the data. Her responsibility is to "study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). However, she recognizes the influence of her own biases and interpretations on each aspect of the study and its participants, accepting the transactional nature of qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

For this reason, qualitative researchers aim to increase the trustworthiness of their study, working towards findings that can be seen as valid, reliable, and authentic (Erlandson, et al., 1993). Qualitative researchers use a number of strategies to increase

trustworthiness. Prolonged engagement with the site and participants as well as the use of multiple sources strengthened the data collection in this study. Additionally, peer debriefing and member checking increased the credibility of the findings that aimed to closely represent the participants' interpretations and perspectives.

### **Crystallization**

Together the compilation of varying methods of data collection and analysis form part of the crystallization process (Ellingson, 2009) in which a truth is portrayed as dazzling in its complexity and nuance (Ellingson, 2014). Ellingson (2009) defines crystallization, saying:

Crystallization combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (p. 4)

Crystallization, she adheres, is not another form of triangulation but rather a framework for comprehending and depicting the subtleties and intricacies of a truth being constructed through the qualitative research study, the researcher, and the participants, replete with biases and problematic assumptions.

Furthermore, crystallization formed an important component of this study as it values an aesthetic approach to illustrate the data. This creative representation greatly fit

this study's use of multimodal Instagram posts and digital storytelling projects, and a crystallization framework brought excitement to the ways that I could possibly represent the data in my study.

Additionally, Ellingson (2014) posits that crystallization serves relationship research, stating it “is ideal for constructing portraits of everyday relating because it brings together vivid, intimate details of people’s lives shared via storytelling and art with the broader relational patterns and structures identified through social scientific analyses” (p. 443). This adequately describes the social world of Instagram in itself; however, my study contained additional layers of multidirectional, relational perspectives between the prospective teachers, their students, their instructors, and the people in and behind the @polibeats\_ account. Crystallization, in its aesthetic, interpretative, and possibly controversial nature, served as an important framework to capture the complexity and vulnerability of my qualitative study.

### **Limitations**

This study and its approaches to methodology, data collection, and analysis indubitably have limitations. As in all qualitative studies, the researcher was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and her biases were not only present but influential in every facet of the study (Merriam, 2009). The researcher made efforts to increase the trustworthiness of this study through the aforementioned strategies of prolonged engagement, multiple data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing.

However, the framework of crystallization not only acknowledges but explores and problematizes the bias and influence inherent in the subjectivity of qualitative research. This approach rejects the possibility of one discoverable truth and rather embraces the co-construction of knowledge and a truth in the collaborative and participatory research process involving both the researcher and participants (Ellingson, 2014).

Additionally, this case study was limited in its ability to collect deep, rich data over a long period of time due to the timeline of the course and the range of participating pre-service teachers. In the College of Education, this course is typically frontloaded and held within a short time period lasting from two weeks to two months rather than an entire semester. Originally, the participants were invited from a number of different sections of the course meeting at the same time, meaning that the researcher was unable to attend and observe each participant during class time nor exert strong control over the production of the data sources (written reflections, linguistic histories, completion of questionnaires) by the participants. Ultimately, the decision was made to focus on the cohort that had been taught by the researcher herself in order to gather rich, complete data from participants with whom the researcher already had a working relationship. Furthermore, this existing relationship with these participants undoubtedly created biases on the data collection and analysis from this course, leading to the decision to not include the data from other cohorts as the same level of depth and insight could not possibly be achieved.

## **POSITIONALITY**

As a white teacher educator, I feel very strongly about the need for teachers both white and of color to resist dominant narratives, hegemonic ideologies and practices, and the reproduction of hierarchies in schooling. I myself experienced transformation in my undergraduate teacher education program where I learned about critical issues including but not limited to institutional racism, sociopolitical history of schooling, and premises of multicultural education, and since have worked diligently to continue developing my own awareness and consciousness of the world. While graduate school has deeply informed my understandings of issues of power and oppression in our society and schools, my knowledge has also been greatly furthered by informal means such as personal relationships with people of different backgrounds and the role of social media.

Particularly, Instagram and Twitter have served instrumental roles in facilitating my grasp of the lived experiences and perspectives of oppressed and marginalized peoples. I view social media as a fundamental tool to consume and interpret public counternarratives first-hand while respectfully not intruding on the safe spaces, both digital and physical, needed for oppressed groups to build their/our own communities. I have experienced social media as a means of self-education of an informal, current, constant, instantaneous nature that affords substantial ideological shift and deeper learning than in a traditional classroom. I acknowledge that my own experiences and beliefs have influenced the implementation of this study; however, I committed to diligent research methods to produce a trustworthy study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: ENTERING CRISIS: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' APPROACHES, STRATEGIES, AND PRACTICES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to push pre-service teachers into “crisis” (Kumashiro, 2000a), asking that they learn and unlearn about social issues in the world through the use of the social media app, Instagram. This chapter examines the approaches, strategies, and practices used by teacher candidates to make meaning of the content on the @polibeats\_ Instagram account.

Research Question #1 asked, How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with issues of social justice through interactive social media? The participants' written responses served as the primary data source for this question. Participants were asked to select 10 different posts from the @polibeats\_ account and write short reflections demonstrating their thinking about the post's content. These responses were part of their elementary teacher education coursework, serving as an assignment in their ESL Methods course under the premise that considering issues of social justice and how they affect different communities is an essential element of teaching a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Thematic coding was used to analyze the participants' written reflections, noticing different ways in which they engaged with notions of social justice as portrayed by the @polibeats\_ social media account and negotiated spaces of crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a).

As there were no guidelines dictating which posts the participants were to select, a wide range of issues was represented in the posts chosen across the cohort. In a total of

220 written reflections, the pre-service teachers' selections included 134 different posts related to, but not limited to, topics of race, politics, gender, LGBTQ+, gun violence and control, concern for the environment, immigration, and children. Notwithstanding, it is important to also acknowledge the inevitably wide range of social justice issues embedded in the posts that were not selected by participants. Especially due to the live and constant nature of Instagram and the high level of activity from the @polibeats\_ account posting up to 5 times a day, it was difficult to gather the posts that were not selected by the participants and even more difficult to pinpoint the reasons for it. This indubitably left a mark on the bias of the data; however, in light of this study's alliance with frameworks of crystallization (Ellingson, 2009; 2014), this partiality inherent in the subjectivity of qualitative research and particularly in this study was acknowledged and embraced.

As the teacher candidates consumed the content of the @polibeats\_ account, they interpreted and engaged with the social justice issues represented in its posts in four predominant ways. 1) The participants had emotional reactions to the posts, expressing hope, sadness, and anger as they interpreted the @polibeats\_ content. 2) They made text-to connections, considering the social justice issues in the posts through text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. 3) They interpreted the posts in relation to their students and to teaching, often with a social justice orientation. 4) They provided critiques, non-examples, and challenges to the arguments made in the @polibeats\_ posts as a means of disagreement. Within each major theme came subthemes which will be described in detail in each of the following sections.

## **RESPONDING WITH EMOTIONAL REACTIONS**

In response to many of the @polibeats\_ posts, pre-service teachers experienced an emotional reaction, sharing feelings that they both named and expressed in their reflections. Learning about critical issues in social justice-oriented teacher education programs has been described as an emotional experience for prospective teachers and for teacher educators (Matias, 2016a; Matias, et al., 2017; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Picower, 2009). Specifically, white pre-service teachers have been documented as highly emotional when engaging with topics of race in their teacher education programs, expressing feelings of guilt, anger, sadness, denial, and resistance (Matias, 2016a; Matias, et al., 2014; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Picower, 2009). Correspondingly, Kumashiro (2000a) argues that crisis as a part of anti-oppressive education necessitates a “very discomfoting process” (p. 7). He describes that in crisis, students are confronting their own emotions and life experiences, learning about the dynamics of oppression while unlearning what they believed to be the norm. Therefore, the representation of many emotions in the participants’ reflections, particularly those that are discomfoting, was anticipated and furthermore welcomed as a manifestation of crisis as part of their learning and unlearning process.

### **Finding joy, pride, inspiration, and hope**

Despite the anticipation of discomfoting emotions in this study, the most commonly expressed emotion (n~24 instances) by the pre-service teachers in fact was a positive and sentimental combination of joy, pride, inspiration, and hope. The participants made statements such as, “I got really sentimental/emotional/proud when I

came across this post.” and “AH! This makes me feel so proud”, demonstrating how they were inspired by the actions, personas, and perspectives of various individuals and communities represented on the @polibeats\_ account.

For example, in response to a post showing Syrian refugee restaurant owners serving unpaid federal workers during the government shutdown, Tori wrote, “Seeing this on my Instagram feed made me smile... Feeding others and treating them the way they want to be treated... is what I aspire to be like.” Her comments demonstrated that she drew not only inspiration but also joy from the kind and compassionate actions that were featured in this post.

The participants also described their physical responses to some of the sentimental posts saying, “it makes me teary eyed”, “it gave me chills” or even as one participant wrote “THIS LITERALLY MADE ME CRY”. This notes the ways that some of the posts even evoked a compelling physical reaction from pre-service teachers as they engaged with emotions of pride, hope, joy, and inspiration as prompted by the @polibeats\_ account.

Three different participants chose to respond to the following post (Figure 4), and each demonstrated similar emotions of awe and inspiration.



ian bremmer ✓  
@ianbremmer

India on the first day of 2019: 5 million women create a 300-mile long human chain, stretching from the northern to southern tip of Kerala, to protest sexism and oppression.



Figure 4: @polibeats\_ example #1, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Abigail expressed astonishment saying, “I found the 300-mile long chain of woman to protest sexism and oppression to be absolutely unbelievable. It is crazy to think there were 5 MILLION woman standing in a line all protesting.” Similarly, Ashley stated, “When I read this post it gave me chills. I love that these women came together to stand against the injustice of sexism.” Laila echoed their responses, writing, “It makes me teary thinking about the millions of women coming together to stand strong in the midst of oppression... A peaceful protest that speaks volumes. That is amazing.” They expressed wonder at the quantity of women who united in this peaceful protest against sexism and oppression, systems that they too likely suffered from as women. The tears and chills that

they experienced implied a sense of awe-filled pride and hope inspired by the bold and brave actions of the Indian women featured in this post.

Five different participants wrote about hope and inspiration in relation to posts about specific activist and political figures, namely Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), Ayanna Pressley, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., all people, and mostly women, of color. The posts featured quotes by or paid homage to these specific political players; an example (Figure 5) has been included below.



Figure 5: @polibeats\_ example #2, (Polibeats, n.d.)

The pre-service teachers described feeling “proud”, “energized”, “hopeful”, “inspired”, and “optimistic” by these figures’ roles and examples. The participants gushed over AOC and Ilhan Omar, writing:

Laila: YES. I love this. I love love this. Ilhan Omar is making strides that any woman, person of color or not, can look to and be proud of.

Autumn: AH! This post makes me feel just proud to be an American. I feel proud to be a woman too but more so just proud of the country that I live in when looking at this... I see some slivers of hope from moments like these. I am looking forward to following [AOC's] trials and successes... I think that I also feel some sense of "connection" because she is so young and closer to my age.

Claire: Sigh. I love love love Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. I'm so proud of her, and I love her strength, her voice. I'm also so proud and energized, optimistic about all the younger people in the House, all the women, all the diversity and minorities.

Each of these comments captured a sense of optimism and pride inspired by Ilhan Omar and Ocasio-Cortez, both young women of color politicians recently elected to Congress and known for advocating for the advancement of issues affecting communities of color. The joy and hope that the participants felt towards these women conveyed an appreciation for their successes and their character but also suggested support of their progressive political agendas. The @polibeats\_ posts featuring activists of color and their missions prompted emotional reactions of hope, pride, and inspiration for some pre-service teachers.

One prospective teacher of color, Isabel, had an enormously emotional reaction to this post (Figure 6).





Figure 6: @polibeats\_ example #3, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote,

THIS LITERALLY MADE ME CRY. Right away it reminded me that NOT all white people are racist..this post filled my heart with love and joy because of how much joy this man had receiving the book. The fact too that this man put himself on a waitlist to read this book. He could have seen how long the wait was and could have said forget it. I have not had a chance to read it, but I personally think Michelle Obama is amazing and all that she does is from the heart. How her and Barack continue to still do for communities even though they are [not] in the white house. They care. I just feel it says A LOT that an elderly white man is crying that his family bought him a book that was written by an African American Lady. It reminds me that change is possible. It gives me hope.

The layers of emotions in this particular response demonstrated a number of ideas, and the emotional journey that she endured led her to a hopeful outlook. Isabel's initial reaction was one of tears, and the immediate argument that "NOT all white people are racist" showed a perspective that possibly challenged her personal, everyday experiences with white people as a woman of color. She was arriving emotionally at this post as a hopeful example that provided a rebuttal of the dismal space and realities of racism. The post then filled her with "love and joy" as she expressed compassion and admiration for the actions of this elderly white man as well as for Michelle and Barack Obama. She concluded that "change is possible", implying that countering racism can happen within an individual or a generation, and left her with a hopeful outlook on the future of race and racism in society.

These different examples demonstrated the ways in which some of the @polibeats\_ posts invoked emotions of hope, joy, pride, and inspiration amongst participants. These pre-service teachers were inspired by the acts of social justice that were highlighted by the @polibeats\_ account, and they found motivation, optimism, and hope in these posts.

### **Feeling sadness**

At other times, participants felt sadness. In their reflections, they described feeling "sad", "upset", and "heartbroken". One participant even stated, "I WANT TO CRY". This sadness was often evoked in recognition of the disheartening realities of injustices that were represented in @polibeats\_ posts.

Laila demonstrated sadness through empathy and compassion for others' experiences. One example of her empathy occurred in response to a post concerning the death of children at the border. She wrote,

The more I think about it, the sadder it gets: that those children didn't get a chance to say goodbye to their parents. That they were all alone. That they came to America looking for hope and instead was sentenced to their death.

Her reflection demonstrated her practice of empathy as she physically imagined being in the shoes of the children who died, envisioning each fear and heartbreak that they faced in the end of their lives. In this example, Laila explicitly engaged with her sadness, rather than running from it, and as she thought more and more about this post, she allowed herself to feel the depth of her emotions and the empathetic sadness that she felt for these children. However, while empathy might be "a precursor to the potential development of critical consciousness" (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012, p. 17), it has also been critiqued as a potentially self-serving display to demonstrate moral superiority (Taylor, 2007) and often not tied to substantial action (Boler, 1999). From the data in this study, it was inconclusive how Laila's empathy served in connection to her reflection *and action* as elements of the development of her critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

In many occasions, participants expressed sadness as almost an example of disdain or defeat in relation to the existing circumstances of the world. Chloe expressed extreme sadness to multiple posts about the decline of the environment, stating, "When I read the post my heart instantly shattered." She continued to say, "Our natural world is vanishing quickly, but yet we are still worried about building a giant wall that will

contribute to the depletion of our environment?” She felt heartbroken by the current state of our environment and expressed disgust for political agendas that did not concern themselves with environmental wellbeing.

In response to another post about a rhinoceros population that recently went extinct, Christina wrote, “I felt sad because...this was not world news.” Her sadness stemmed from her perception that environmental concerns and issues of animal rights and protection were not being featured on traditional media outlets because they were perceived as unimportant or unpopular news stories. However, her sadness, as well as that of Chloe, showed the value that they both held towards care for the environment and for animals. As future educators charged with the responsibilities of educating children to protect the environment (Esa, 2010), these teacher candidates’ concern for issues that were both environmental and political was important, as it demonstrated one aspect of their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970).

Some participants also expressed sadness regarding the racial realities of contemporary society. In response to a post about a racial and homophobic attack on a black, gay, male, Ariana, a biracial woman, wrote, “When I read this news, I was saddened but also not surprised. Hate crimes like these have been going on for so long and I don’t think they will ever stop unfortunately.” She described how common these events were in “local communities” and went on to express her fear for the safety of her future children. Ariana’s sadness over the continued occurrence of hate crimes was coupled with a touch of realism or even pessimism, likely due to her awareness and experiences as a woman of color. She was “not surprised” to read about a racially driven

hate crime because in her family and community, hate crimes, and how to protect herself from them, were likely common topics of discussion.

Savannah, however, a white woman, also expressed sadness in response to a post concerning past and present racism which showed white men tormenting people of color in both the 1950's and in 2019. She responded stating, "It's sad to look back over history and see that racism is still happening. We would've thought we would be better by now." While Savannah too expressed sadness over the racial circumstances of society, her emotion was tied to a sense of disbelief or an attitude of "say it ain't so", as if the persistence of racism could not possibly be real, a very different mindset than that of Ariana. While Savannah was recognizing the existence and implications of racism over time, her incredulous sadness could be perceived as a manifestation of denial (Matias, 2016b), an emotion that white pre-service teachers often express when learning about race. Or furthermore, and especially in consideration of her reflection in which she described the white men in the post as "hateful", wrong, and "thinking they are better than other people because they are white", Savannah might have understood racism as "bad men doing bad things" (A. Brown & K. Brown, 2010), rather than a large structural system that would be overwhelmingly difficult to dissolve. While both participants felt sadness and even hopelessness around the racial circumstances of both past and current society, the ways that their sadness manifested were divergent likely due to their own racial backgrounds.

Two participants even expressed feelings of disgust and sickness. In both responses, the current systems, practices, and realities tying incidents of violence with

white male privilege disgusted the participants, leaving them sickened. In response to a post about mass shootings featuring the picture of a white male suspect, Kirsten wrote,

This makes me sick. I'm ashamed at mass shooters, and I wonder why such a high percentage of them are white males? What happened to them in their upbringing? Are people just born with hate in their heart or is this a product of their environment?

She was sickened by the topic of mass shootings and began to pose questions about the relationships between gun violence, white privilege, and toxic masculinity (Kimmel, 2013).

In another example, Mackenzie originally described this post (Figure 7) as “so funny”, demonstrating support of the woman’s comment.



Figure 7: @polibeats\_ example #4, (Polibeats, n.d.)

However, later, when discussing the event featured in the post, she wrote, “the only reason he wasn’t punished is because of his race. How can someone be allowed to rape someone and get away with it? It’s sickening.” She found it disgusting that his privilege as a white male had excused his violent actions. However, she found the woman’s comment, also insinuating violence that would be excused by her white privilege, to be “funny”, likely due to their shared experience as women who as a group suffer as victims

of gender oppression and sexual violence. In both of these examples, the intersections of violence, race, and gender pushed the pre-service teachers past feelings of sadness to a place of disgust as they found the content to be truly vile.

Throughout these examples, the participants felt saddened by the posts they saw on @polibeats\_ that documented injustices in the world. Their sadness was prompted by feelings of empathy, concern, defeat, and disgust and often were accompanied by a physical reaction.

### **Expressing anger**

In addition to sadness, in many instances, prospective teachers expressed anger. They directly mentioned being “pissed off”, “annoyed”, or “frustrated”, and comments such as “Ahhh so frustrating” and “it just makes me so angry. I can’t stand it” flooded their pages. Sometimes, this anger sided with the argument of the @polibeats\_ post; other times, it sided against it, expressing offense.

While notions of anger are often vilified or exiled in educational spaces, Zembylas (2007b) argues that a politicized anger in education is inevitable and also desirable. He describes,

an important aspect that distinguishes moral anger from other kinds of anger is the notion of someone becoming angry as a witness of gross violations of justice, humanity and dignity; in other words, moral anger is what motivates someone to oppose injustice (p. 16)



Moral anger (Boler, 1999) manifests as a response to a perceived injustice and, Zembylas (2007b) argues, should be expressed and explored in educational settings because it can lead to action and change.

In the collection of angry responses that supported @polibeats\_'s arguments, participants were "outraged" by examples of racism, xenophobia, sexism, and injustice, illustrating moral anger (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2007b). For instance, in response to a post about homelessness, Ariana wrote, "knowing that so many people in this world suffer because of their socioeconomic status, makes me so angry." In a post about the firing of a racist wrestling referee who forced a black wrestler to cut off his dreadlocks before a match, Laila wrote, "repercussions needed to be taken against this referee and I'm glad that he was fired. This just makes me angry." Michelle wrote, in response to a picture of a white student population taunting a black basketball player, "this picture honestly pissed me off and I'm frustrated that that young black basketball player and to go through what he did because racism does exist and white boys are excused from every action." These pre-service teachers were infuriated by the different acts of injustice represented in the @polibeats\_ posts. Not only were they angry that people had to endure suffering, mistreatment, and oppression, but they were also mad that these actions and processes were upheld by structures of white supremacy and capitalism. Laila and Michelle also directed their anger at specific individuals such as the referee and the "white boys", demonstrating their awareness of racism as not only a nebulous, passive ideological system that pervades institutions and society but also as a structure that can be

actively enacted by individuals. These aspects of their reflections illustrated a developed understanding of racial injustice, the reality of which angered them.

Like Ariana, Laila, and Michelle, Claire also expressed moral anger in agreement with the arguments made by @polibeats\_. She engaged strongly with the following post (Figure 8) which critiqued common xenophobic and ignorant rhetoric aimed toward refugees.



Figure 8: @polibeats example #5, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote,

How can people not have sympathy, empathy for these folks? How can we not open our arms, welcome and support them, help them get their footing for a new life? For freaks sake, THIS is how America came to be. People fleeing religious persecution, danger, trying to find a new home for their families. Just because these people were white, and European, that makes them OK, but the new immigrants in America, not? I can't stand it. I get so angry.

Aligning with the argument made by @polibeats\_, Claire's written reflection demonstrated her own alliance with and welcoming of recent immigrants and refugees into the U.S. She positioned the post's message within historical contexts, noting the migration of white, European families to America during the colonial period, and contrasted the discrepant perception of their actions to those of refugees in modern day times. Like Laila and Michelle, her anger was directed towards larger social discourses, particularly the intersections of xenophobia, racism, and nationalism that enable people's nonacceptance of refugees. She also directed her anger at individuals, the people that she perceived did not have sympathy or empathy towards refugees and were not welcoming and supporting them in the creation of their new lives in the U.S. In this reflection, Claire's moral anger was directed at both the ideologies and individuals that worked against refugees.

Two participants expressed frustration prompted by two different @polibeats\_ stories of the criminalization of well-intended actions aimed towards providing human rights for others. In one post, a superintendent was charged with fraud after using her own health insurance to provide medical services for one of her students. Autumn reacted by saying,

I normally don't get too worked up about stuff like this that I see on the news or the internet. But, for some reason, this really made me mad. I think I was so angry reading into this because I was comparing it to far more worse things that people should be scrutinized for, but not this.

Similarly, a @polibeats\_ post showed a sign with a warning of legal action against people who were leaving out water jugs in the Southwestern U.S. desert for immigrants crossing the border on foot and walking long distances before arriving at their destinations. In response, Claire wrote,

This news absolutely outraged me. But then again, humanitarians, saints, good people have been doing things they know were illegal for thousands of years.

Sometimes you deliberately do what you know is “wrong” for the right reasons, and when you know it is right.

In both posts, individuals were taking action to care for others, but their attempts to help others were criminalized and prosecuted. In their reflections, Autumn and Claire sided with these efforts to provide human rights to others by doing the “right” thing and were enraged by how these actions had been perceived as “wrong” in society. Their anger was directed at how these acts of compassion were demonized and interrupted.

In other instances, some participants expressed anger in offense of posts by @polibeats\_, what Boler (1999) calls defensive anger. Defensive anger (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2007b) is distinct from moral anger; moral anger activates when someone perceives an injustice while defensive anger occurs when someone perceives to be threatened themselves. Zembylas (2007b) writes, “defensive anger can be described as a protection of one’s beliefs, values and sense of identity; thus fear of losing those is a fundamental feature of defensive anger” (p. 18). The following pieces of data demonstrates a few participants’ demonstration of defensive anger.

A common approach used by @polibeats\_ was pointing out contradictions in people's beliefs, practices, and agendas using humor, particularly by using memes. A meme is a comedic social media post involving words and images to create a punchline. These are used frequently on Instagram and have been used by @polibeats\_ to point out what they see as contradictions. In each of the instances in which participants expressed defensive anger, the @polibeats\_ post involved a joke or meme directed at a group that the participant belonged to. This adheres with Zembylas' (2007b) description of defensive anger as a perceived threat on one's identity, values, or beliefs.

For example, Melissa, who identified as a Christian as indicated in her reflections and linguistic history, described extreme frustration with a post directed at contradictions that are, according to @polibeats\_, embodied by Christians. She went on to say that this post frustrated her so greatly that she lost interest in the account and that it lacked credibility. Her defensive anger and the perceived threat on her person led her to disengage entirely from the assignment.

In another example, Ashley, a white woman, responded to a post which critiques white people's awareness of others using humor. She wrote "this made me kind of angry at first because he was generalizing and stereotyping white people... just frustrated because not every white person is racist." Her anger was driven by her resistance to herself, and likely her family, friends, and colleagues, being grouped with other white people and stereotyped as racist. She wanted to defend her stance as "not racist" and reacted with anger at a threat to this part of her identity.

In a different post aimed at Republicans featured below (Figure 9), Laila wrote, “My first reaction is dang, that’s annoying because I believe in the pro-life movement and I think that this whole post is a generalization.”



Figure 9: @polibeats\_ example #6, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Similarly to Ashley, Laila’s sense of being “annoyed” was aimed at the threat to her values as a supporter of the pro-life movement. She argued that the post was a “generalization”, implying that she, while a supporter of the pro-life movement, also

cared about the children dying at the border and did not wish to be perceived otherwise. She wanted to protect her values and demonstrated defensive anger in this reflection.

In each of these instances, these participants expressed defensive anger at posts that made generalizations and pointed out contradictions about groups of people. This frustration was perceived as defensive anger (Boler, 1999) and manifested in relation to their own membership in some of the groups that were targeted. They found incongruence between their own beliefs and the statements made by @polibeats\_ and enacted defensive anger in response to what they perceived as a threat on their own identities, beliefs, and values. Further consideration of these specific posts and participants' own backgrounds in relation to their interpretation of the @polibeats\_ content will be further explored later in Chapter 5 in connection to Research Question #2.

Engaging with social justice issues in education can be an uncomfortable and emotional process for pre-service teachers (Matias, 2016a; Matias, et al., 2017; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Picower, 2009). In this study, many participants demonstrated emotional reactions to the content found on @polibeats\_' account and described their feelings in their reflections. From positive emotions such as pride and hope to discomfoting emotions such as anger and sadness, prospective teachers entertained a range of sentiments that were dynamic, contradictory, and justified in their reflections. As demonstrated in the data, these emotional reactions played a large role in how the teacher candidates interpreted and engaged with the content of the @polibeats\_ account.

## **MAKING “TEXT TO” CONNECTIONS**

The second major theme of how pre-service teachers interpreted the content on the @polibeats\_ account was through the meaning-making literacy strategy of making “text to” connections (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). As the literature in multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996) and new literacies (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011) has expanded to encompass digital literacies, Freebody and Luke (2003) argue that “to be literate is to be an everyday participant in literate ‘societies’, themselves composed of a vast range of sites, locations, and events that entail print, visual, digital, and analogue media” (p. 53). Therefore, a multimodal post on Instagram including an image, text, caption, likes, and comments can be conceptualized as a text that was created by an author and read by its audience, creating a transaction between the two (Rosenblatt, 1978).

In this transactional process, Rosenblatt (1978) argues that both the author and the reader bring to the reading event “their own knowledge, beliefs and experiences with texts and the world more broadly” (Mantei & Fahy, 2018, p. 41). Keene and Zimmerman (1997) have described the strategic application of this prior knowledge as “text to” connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world) and argue that this reading strategy improves student comprehension. As described by Mantei and Fahy (2018), text-to-self connections occur when a student connects the text to their own personal experiences; text-to-text connections are when a student connects the text to another text they have read or seen, and text-to-world connections occur when students connect the text to larger world around them. In this study, the prospective teachers brought their own



background knowledge consisting of their own experiences, those of their friends and families, their learning in their coursework, and their awareness of larger societal discourses and cultures to construct meaning of the @polibeats\_ posts. Through “text to” connections, they interpreted and engaged with the content on @polibeats\_.

### **Text-to-self connections**

One large way that pre-service teachers interpreted the @polibeats\_ posts was by connecting it to personal experiences that they themselves or their friends and family had endured. Many participants, when describing a post they agreed with, would relate it to an example they had that confirmed its accuracy. They used text-to-self connections to apply @polibeats\_ ‘s logic to personal experiences they had endured and witnessed in order to both comprehend its meaning but also to affirm its argument.

For example, in three different posts calling out the workings of racism and white privilege, three participants described connections they had that aligned with @polibeats\_ arguments. Zariah wrote, “it’s something I connect with because I have seen it”, demonstrating her personal experiences witnessing acts of racism and white privilege. Mackenzie stated, “this post really stuck out to me because it reminded me of my high school”, and similarly, Kirsten also described how she saw racism in the social media accounts of people she grew up with. In both cases, Mackenzie and Kirsten, both white women, were describing how they had observed the people that they grew up with exhibiting racism and white privilege. In these three comments, teacher candidates made

a text-to-self connection providing evidence from their own life to affirm the existence of white privilege and racism as described by @polibeats\_.

One participant also made a text-to-self connection to the experience of someone in her family benefiting from white privilege. Mackenzie stated that the following post (Figure 10) “jumped out to [her] due to a recent incident” concerning her sister-in-law.



Figure 10: @polibeats\_ example #7, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She described how her “fiancé’s pretty blonde-haired blue-eyed nineteen-year-old sister” got a ticket for having weed in her car and was complaining endlessly, “acting like it was the end of the world and how dare she get a ticket.” Mackenzie recounted how disengaged she became from the entire conversation because she “kept thinking that if the same police officer had pulled over a person of color or a minority it would not have had the same ending.” While she did not relate directly to the experiences of the man in the post, she was able to draw an adverse text-to-self connection to the argument with an awareness of how she and her family would have benefited from privilege in the same circumstances. In this reflection, she was demonstrating a critical, introspective consciousness, acknowledging how racial bias benefited her and her family while causing others to suffer.

In multiple examples, pre-service teachers understood posts about racism and injustice by making connections to the personal experiences of people of color that they knew and noting how these experiences then changed their level of awareness. This increased awareness aligns with Allport’s (1954) theory of inter-group contact, which argued that cross-group direct contact and cross-group friendships and relationships could promote the reduction of prejudice. As summarized by Hewstone and Swart (2011) in their review of the research, direct contact between groups both reduces negative affect such as inter-group anxiety or fear and increases positive affect such as empathy. However, Hewstone and Swart (2011) also describe that cross-group contact tends to benefit members of the dominant group in a more positive way than members of the non-dominant group.

In the following examples, pre-service teachers drew on their cross-group contact experiences to make text-to-self connections that were personal and facilitated their interpretation of the @polibeats\_ posts. In their reflections, Savannah told a story about her cousin's fiancé who was undocumented, and Jessie wrote about another prospective teacher in the cohort who did not have a car, both of these examples demonstrating their understanding of others' experiences through a personal relationship. In each of these examples, Savannah and Jessie were thinking of the difficulties, discrimination, or injustices that someone they were close to experienced and displaying both empathy for their experiences and comprehension of the issues presented in the @polibeats\_ posts through the personal relationships that they had with them.

In their reflections, a few participants described learning about certain injustices through their cross-group contact and personal relationships with people of different backgrounds. For example, Kirsten, a white woman, responded to a post about diversity, describing how she originally perceived the university student population to be a "pretty diverse mix of students". However, in talking with her friends of color and her boyfriend who was black, they told her that "there really is still a significantly higher portion of white people" and that "ever since then [she had] noticed it so much more." Her viewpoint as a white person skewed her perception of diversity at the university, and through her relationships with people of color, she was able to see the reality through their lens.

Laila also wrote about her friends in response to a post about Muslims, saying, "when I think of my middle eastern friends and the stories they jokingly tell of the being

searched at the airport, it's funny. But then I think: well, that's unfair, isn't it?" While she at first laughed with her friends as they described their experiences with racial discrimination, it was interrupted by her concern for the unfairness of this practice.

Parker described how critiques about this type of airport security only became impactful to her when it happened to someone she knew. She wrote,

when I see these stories on the television about people of middle eastern descent getting stopped and interrogated before they are allowed to fly, to me, the people are just names with unfortunate stories. However, it wasn't until my friend's father was stopped at airport security that I realized just how stereotypical and unfair these actions are.

In both of these examples, Laila and Parker expressed sympathy for the unjust incidents that their friends have had to endure. However, through Parker's contact with her friend and his father, she moved from seeing this discriminatory airport security practice as not only unfortunate but furthermore unfair.

In these pieces of data, while the pre-service teachers themselves might not have suffered from racism, they were able to see how it plays out through the experiences of their friends or people they knew. These participants engaged sympathy for the injustices that people they knew had to endure, demonstrating a level of ethnocultural empathy (Wang, et al., 2003) in which these pre-service teachers were able to direct empathy towards people from racial and cultural backgrounds different than their own. While these empathetic text-to-self connections facilitated their application and understanding of the @polibeats\_ posts, none of the participants acknowledged "their *inability* to fully

identify with other human beings in sociohistorical contexts different from their own” (Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012, p. 19), a reality that both Taylor (2007) and Boler (1999) argue is necessary for students to come to terms with.

Furthermore, and especially in the reflection provided by Parker, the question of whether or not teacher candidates’ empathy and understanding stretched beyond direct contact into realms of indirect contact (Hewstone & Swart, 2011), in which cross-group contact could be extended or imagined, is undetermined. Parker described only deeply recognizing the unfairness of discriminatory airport searches once it happened to someone she was in direct contact with, representing a limited application of ethnocultural empathy that was dependent on direct contact. She was unable to evoke the same concern for the injustices when she saw them on TV; rather they were merely “unfortunate.” In this example, she could not extend or imagine contact or relationships with the Middle Eastern people she saw on the TV, limiting her empathy and opposition to injustice purely to those she had direct contact with. As many pre-service teachers grow up in racial isolation (Orfield, et al., 2016) with minimal direct contact with those of diverse backgrounds, opportunities for cross-group contact are limited and unlikely, leaving reliance on direct contact to develop empathy to be concerning.

As evidenced in these examples, teacher candidates made text-to-self connections to their relationships in direct contact with people of diverse backgrounds, demonstrating a strategy that they used to engage with the @polibeats\_ account. However, if the text-to-self connections facilitated pre-service teachers’ understanding of @polibeats\_ posts by means of the experiences of people of diverse backgrounds with whom they had direct

contact, they could be perceived as examples of extended or imagined contact (Hewstone & Swart, 2011). It could be argued that they related to the injustices displayed by @polibeats as an exemplification of the extension of their direct contact relationships with others to the stories and experiences of the people represented in the @polibeats\_ posts.

In one of her reflections, Melissa advocated for extended and imagined contact, writing,

there is great value in viewing political issues with personal stories in mind—when we see the world on a micro level—putting names and faces and stories to scenarios—our perspectives are shaped by *relationships* rather than news stories and stereotypes, which is what the macro view might suggest.

In this analysis, she was arguing for the application of personal connections and imagined contact to political issues as a way to interpret them from a humanizing lens. She argued that by extending contact, in what she described as “putting names and faces and stories to scenarios”, people could be able to resist stereotypes and news stories that are dehumanizing. This perspective and these practices demonstrate efforts and possible progress towards achieving the political and ideological clarity needed especially to humanistically teach marginalized students (Bartolomé, 2004).

In these examples, personal experiences of their own and of their friends and family were used by prospective teachers to make text-to-self connections to interpret some of the arguments about social justice that were being made by @polibeats\_. This

demonstrates a strategy that they used in this reading event that engaged their own knowledge and experiences in order to make meaning with the text they were consuming.

### **Text-to-text connections**

Another way that many participants interpreted @polibeats\_ posts was by making text-to-text connections, particularly by applying their knowledge gained in their teacher education coursework to the content presented on the account. Text-to-text connections involve making a connection to another text (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997), in this case, articles, books, discussions, and assignments that were a part of their teacher education coursework which have been stored as an “inner text” (Spivey, 1997; Pearson & Tierney, 1984). As described by Lenski (1998), “this inner text becomes the temporary lens through which the reader views input from a current text” (p. 74). In this sense, pre-service teachers consumed content from the @polibeats\_ account through the lens of other knowledge they had constructed in their teacher education coursework.

Many participants made connections to their experiences in the university teacher education program, describing things they had learned since enrolling. They wrote often about race, racism, and white privilege and attributed learning in their teacher education program coursework as shaping their understanding of these topics. For example, two participants named reading *The Hate U Give* in their Reading Methods class as a way to connect to posts about race and police brutality. The texts of *The Hate U Give*, their Reading Methods coursework, and the @polibeats\_ posts all converged to facilitate the construction of meaning for these prospective teachers.



Three specific class topics that were addressed in different courses across the teacher education program were taken up widely by pre-service teachers. One was in response to a post about the biases of history and history curriculum, which has long been documented in existing literature (A. Brown & K. Brown, 2010; Duplass, 2007; Loewen, 1995; Marino, 2011). A few teacher candidates drew from their social studies methods course and a pre-requisite course on the sociocultural foundations of education, stating that in these courses they learned to question the content of history textbooks and curriculum with awareness of the inaccuracy and biases in how different historical people and events were portrayed. Sofia argued that her mind was not opened to this concept until she began taking courses at the university. She said she had been led to be “oblivious to these injustices” by her “white suburban high school” and recently had “started learning more about injustices and hearing people of color’s voices more.” Michelle also stated that in college, “I realized how much was kept from me about people of color and how history presented those who were white in such a positive light.” In both cases, these participants were noting the racial and nationalistic biases in the presentation of history (A. Brown & K. Brown, 2010; Duplass, 2007; Loewen, 1995; Marino, 2011) as it was exposed to them by the texts of their university level coursework. This “inner text” (Lenski, 1998) provided them with a frame to interpret the content of this @polibeats\_ post.

In another example, three pre-service teachers selected a @polibeats\_ post discussing the privileged celebration of Princess Charlotte’s bilingualism over that of children of immigrants. The elevation of white and affluent bilingualism in contrast to the

degradation of immigrants' and communities of color's bilingualism was a topic that was addressed both in the ESL Methods course and in its prerequisite course on language acquisition. This class discussion occurred in relation to theories of raciolinguistics (Alim, 2016; Flores & Rosa, 2015) which argue that a person's language is interpreted not by the language used but by the racial position of the user in society. These participants remembered those class discussions and wrote about them in their reflections, referencing a text and background knowledge through which they read the @polibeats\_ post.

All three prospective teachers stated that they were not aware of this idea until confronting it in their courses, exemplified by Parker when she said, "I had never really thought about the privilege of knowing two languages and how it is perceived differently based on the color of someone's skin until we talked about it in [Language Acquisition course]." Savannah called it a "double standard" and wrote, "it is sad that this 2 year old princess gets put in the news and praised for her multiple languages when lots of immigrants have the same knowledge and do not get this recognition." Additionally, Jessie provided a compelling critique of the @polibeats\_ post, stating, "it's interesting that we associate bilingualism with immigration or privilege. However, almost 75% of ELL's are born in America." The lens of the knowledge these participants had constructed through their coursework provided them with theory, perspective, and statistics that they used to engage with this post. Their understanding of theories of raciolinguistics permitted them to engage with this post in a more critical and conscious way. Additionally, this post provided a practical application of a theoretical concept,

possibly further solidifying their understanding of raciolinguistic theory across multiple texts and in real world examples.

Lastly, the third social issue that attracted many participants were posts on the topic of child vaccinations. It has been argued that child vaccination results in both the protection from disease for the individual but also protection from disease for the community and susceptible community members who are vaccine-ineligible (Anderson, et al., 2018); however, a rise in the anti-vaccination movement has emerged amongst parents in the United States (Pierik, 2018). A critique on this social discussion was provided by @polibeats\_ (Figure 11).



Figure 11: @polibeats\_ example #8, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Four different pre-service teachers responded in agreement to this post (Figure 11), with one beginning her reflection with “yes, yes, yes!” The popularity of this post was a bit surprising as the topic of child vaccinations did not appear to be a widespread and urgent social justice issue; however, all four participants described having a thorough discussion and exploration of this issue in their science methods course in the teacher education program. In this class, they had done a simulation and split the class into groups of people who were vaccinated, not vaccinated, and carrying the disease and acted out how the disease could spread if people were not vaccinated. This demonstration was very powerful for these teacher candidates; all four of them supported the argument in this post.

The knowledge and perspectives that they had developed in their science methods course enabled them to both comprehend and also extend the argument made by @polibeats\_. They described that many parents do not vaccinate their children due to misinformation about its connection to autism. Ariana shared how mad that made her, following up saying, “as if autism is this terrible thing?” They all expressed concern for the risk and danger that could be brought to others from one’s decision to not vaccinate and found that to directly interfere with their intentions to create a safe classroom for their students.

Only Zariah, a black women, noted the discrepancies in socioeconomic status in relation to this issue. Describing their science methods class discussion, she wrote,

We talked about the population of students who were not vaccinated in [our city] and it was largely the population of higher SES families. Families that can afford to miss work to go to the doctor or hospital. They even have nice doctors and a lot of doctors in their communities. Lower SES families cannot afford to miss work and take kids to the doctor. They don't have many doctors or hospitals in their community.

Though these aspects of privilege and access to resources were missed by other pre-service teachers, they were central elements of Zariah's discussion of the post. This critical perspective that she constructed through a text-to-text connection between her science methods discussion and the @polibeats\_ post provided a classed analysis of the topic of child vaccinations, strengthening her concern for this topic as part of a social justice agenda.

Through these examples, it was evident that prospective teachers were drawing on the knowledge and texts that they had constructed during their teacher education coursework as tools and lens to make meaning out of the @polibeats\_ posts. They referred to how their courses in the areas of social studies, science, and language acquisition provided theories and perspectives through which they could engage with some of the issues posted on the account. Furthermore, many of these participants named that they had first learned of these concepts in their teacher education coursework, signaling not only the important effect of centering these social justice issues in these courses but also leaving the question of the dangers had they not been. Would

participants have been able to grapple with these specific posts without the mental presence of the texts from their coursework? Based on the data provided here, it is difficult to know; however, what can be sure is that for these participants, these text-to-text connections were significant.

### **Text-to-world connections**

In addition to text-to-self and text-to-text connections, pre-service teachers in this study also made text-to-world connections. Text-to-world connections are when readers make connections between the text and their knowledge of and experiences in the greater world in which they function, considering other people, events, cultures, or discourses as an element of the meaning they construct while reading a text (Mantei & Fahy, 2018). Specifically, pre-service teachers made two types of text-to-world connections: 1) connections to larger social and political discourses and 2) connections to popular culture references.

#### ***Connections to larger social and political discourses***

Based on their areas and levels of background knowledge, pre-service teachers made connections to larger social and political discourses. They jumped to broader discussions of many issues such as gun control, institutionalized racism, xenophobia, LGBTQ+ issues, climate change, police brutality, gender equality, mental illness, women's rights, and Donald Trump. Sometimes they selected a post and immediately began discussing its connection to or representation of a larger issue at hand, at times never even writing about the post itself.

For example, in response to an inspirational post about self-love and perseverance, Christina immediately began discussing the stigma around mental illness, stating that “either people romanticize the idea and make jokes about it, or people seem quick to dismiss it as an actual problem.” She also wrote that this was what she “interpreted this post to be about.” While the post made no reference to the topic of mental illness, she inferred that this post was directed at countering the stigma of mental illness and supporting those who were suffering from it, participating in the larger social discourse around the topic.

In similar fashion, in reacting to the following post (Figure 12) about the linkage between the “build the wall” slogan and white supremacy, Marley wrote one sentence agreeing with the post’s arguments, describing the slogan as “an excuse to simply be a white supremacist asshole”, and then quickly began discussing Donald Trump.



Figure 12: @polibeats\_ example #9, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She named some of his infamous racist and misogynist quotes such as “Mexicans are rapists” and “grab her by the pussy” and described him as a model for others across the nation. She continued to say,

What are we supposed to do when we have a leader who models disgusting behavior and trivializes issues of importance? People are going to follow and do



the same exact shit... When we allow someone in a position of control and power to spew hatred filled words, it cannot come as a surprise that others will follow in the same suit.

While the post made no mention of Donald Trump specifically, Marley made the connection of this post to larger conversations and concerns about “white nationalism, armed culture and state violence in the age of Donald Trump” (Giroux, 2017, p. 887). Giroux (2017) argues that Donald Trump’s “hate-filled discourses of intolerance, chauvinism and social abandonment” (p. 890) have militarized and weaponized ignorance, leading to “increasing acts of violence against individuals and groups considered other in the United States” (p. 891). In Marley’s reflection, she was opposing this dangerous social movement and critiquing the power and responsibility of Donald Trump in contributing to its rise. Her awareness of these prior incidents involving Trump facilitated an instant text-to-world connection between this post and the larger commentary around discourses of white supremacy, nationalism, and violence endorsed by Donald Trump.

As was the case for Marley in the previous example, prospective teachers’ background knowledge was significant in facilitating text-to-world connections and comprehension of the @polibeats\_ posts. Claire, a second-career pre-service teacher and a woman in her 40’s who described herself as “absolutely a liberal”, wrote extensive reflections in agreement of each post, often making multiple connections to other social conversations or current events. Her connections extended across different contexts, political and social areas, locations, and time periods. For example, she compared a post

about the Los Angeles teacher strikes to teacher movements in Oklahoma, West Virginia, Arizona, and Kentucky. She then went on to discuss teacher pay and benefits in Texas, a right-to-work state prohibiting unions and strikes, and made reference to recent education legislature pledged by Texas state politicians. Furthermore, Claire's knowledge of different social and political events permitted her to make text-to-world connections that not only facilitated her comprehension of the posts but permitted her to make critiques and express her own opinions on the topic. She wrote the following reflection in response to a tweet by Ayanna Presley, a black woman from Massachusetts recently elected to the House of Representatives:

I love Ayanna!!!...here was a tough one...the man she beat was a GOOD GUY, truly a good, solid public servant. But he was the old guard, and people do want change. I felt bad when he lost, but again, so inspired, and optimistic for the future and here she is. A black woman. And in the perfect position being on the financial services committee.

The information she had about Ayanna's role and her opponent was a huge part of the background knowledge she brought to this post. She continued her reflection, writing, "there is a chance for positive change here. Like I said before about AOC, we cannot polarize, we cannot lean too far left. We must be centrists and represent and work for ALL Americans." In this piece of data, she provided her own commentary on the political decision-making and direction of the Democratic Party. On the one hand, the amount of social and political information, knowledge, and perspective that Claire had had before

approaching the @polibeats\_ account allowed her to deeply engage with its arguments in ways that were not demonstrated by other participants.

However, Savannah, on the other hand, felt difficulty comprehending many of the @polibeats\_ posts due to what she described as her disengagement with and lack of awareness of political issues. In 9 out of her 10 reflections, Savannah signaled her lack of knowledge or information in relation to the posts she had chosen with comments like, “I don’t know exactly what’s happening in the... picture”, “I don’t understand politics that well”, or even “I’m not a very credible source for thoughts because I am ignorant on a lot of these topics.” She proceeded to say in one of her reflections,

I am not up to date with current politics at all. I know I need to get into it, but it’s so much work and I don’t have much time. Also, most political issues require you to have knowledge of a previous political issue and that issue requires knowledge of another political issue. The cycle goes on and on. That’s why keeping up with recent news and politics seems so daunting and probably a reason why I don’t know much about what’s happening in the world.

Her disconnect from political issues led her to feel inept in reflecting on and critiquing the issues that were featured in the posts, presenting a lack of text-to-world connections. She was acknowledging her perception that her own knowledge, beliefs, and experiences did not match up with what she perceived to be necessary to even comprehend the @polibeats\_ posts, and this sense of feeling lost and confused led her to doubt even the meaning she was constructing while reading the text. In these examples, these

participants' text-to-world connections to larger social and political discourses, or lack thereof, acted upon their interpretations of the posts.

### ***References to popular culture***

Many teacher candidates were attracted to posts that made references to pop culture such as TV shows, movies, or music or featured celebrities. Duncan-Andrade (2010) defines youth popular culture as “the various cultural activities that young people invest their time in, including but not limited to: music, television, movies, video games, sport, internet, text messaging, style, and language practices” (p. 56). When working with students, he argues that popular culture can be not only culturally relevant but also a powerful body of knowledge itself. He states that popular culture is “a socio-politically charged space because of its increasing influence on the cultural sensibilities of this country's next generation” (p. 56). This socio-politically charged nature of pop culture is evident in the text-to-world connections that the pre-service teachers made.

Many participants teachers selected posts about movies or TV shows that they were fans of. With comments like “representation matters!”, they applauded posts that featured actresses of color such as Sandra Oh and Yalitza Aparicio as well as movies built from a non-white perspective such as *Coco* or *Black Panther*. Ariana wrote, “I think it's important for this movie to shine because it highlights black culture and black actors in a positive light.” In these examples, they were noticing the wield of influence that movies and TV shows could have on racial politics in terms of how diversity and communities of color are represented and perceived.

A few basketball fans wrote about a @polibeats\_ post sharing how the Golden State Warriors refused a celebratory championship visit to the White House to meet President Trump and rather met with Former President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C. Kirsten wrote,

I think it's a major power move and I applaud them for doing it... For people as powerful as these professional athletes to take stances like this is a great contributor to encouraging others to stand up for their beliefs and advocate. She was inspired by the resistance and political stance demonstrated by this predominantly black basketball team who refused to meet with a president who had repeatedly referred to black people in deficit, racist terms (Donald J. Trump, n.d.). Although she identified as a Houston Rockets fan, her interest in the NBA drew her attention to this post, and she expressed her appreciation for their involvement in political issues and displaying themselves as not only athletes but also as civic beings.

Many participants selected posts featuring famous celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, Ariana Grande, and Cardi B. In response to a post showing Ariana Grande's display of support for immigrants and refugees in her music video, Marley said, "music videos can be powerful avenues for delivering messages commenting on the status and issues taking place in a society." In response to a post featuring Kim Kardashian as part of a prison reform movement, Ariana wrote, "it's important that they [celebrities] get their faces out into the 'political' realms of things. That's when people actually start paying attention to what is going on with the world." Both of these participants as well as Kirsten were recognizing the power that celebrities have in their personas, media,

platform, and audience. Participants emphasized the significance of the role of celebrities in political and social issues in not only modeling a political stance but that stance then having influence on their followers.

Cardi B, a Dominican-Trinidadian American female rapper from The Bronx, has risen to high levels of fame and success in the past few years. A video posted on her personal Instagram account was reposted by @polibeats\_, a screenshot of which is included below (Figure 13).



Figure 13: @polibeats\_ example #10, (Polibeats, n.d.)

In the video, Cardi criticized the government shutdown caused by Trump's border wall and expressed concerns for the situations of unpaid government workers, saying, "this shit is really fucking serious, bro." In her video, she said,

Now, I don't want to hear y'all motherfuckers talking about oh, but Obama shut down the government for 17 days. Yeah, bitch, for health care! So your grandma could check her blood pressure and you bitches could go check your pussy in the gynecologist with no motherfucking problem.

She concluded her video saying, "we really need to take some action." Cardi B's commentary on political issues as a highly visible woman of color gained great traction on the Internet as well as with participants in this study.

Some of the participants that chose this post, all white women, described that they had "never really been a fan of Cardi B", thought she was "trashy and unintelligent" and were "usually downright baffled by statements Cardi makes." These perceptions of Cardi B's language, persona, and intelligence held by these participants, and by many in larger society, were loaded with racist associations of the "ghetto stereotype", which Anderson (2012) argues "the full weight [of which]... falls on any black person appearing in public" (p. 16). Richardson and Donley (2018) discuss the term "ghetto" in adjective form, stating that "to 'be ghetto' is to imply a distinct form of inferiority that is connected to marginal group membership" (p. 24). In fact, last year, Cardi B blasted haters for calling her "ghetto", saying "why is it that male rappers can speak how they want act how they want but people constantly bash me for it? Why do I feel like I have to apologize for being who I am?... LEAVE ME ALONE!" (Lamarre, 2018 May 5). Therefore, the

participants' initial comments about Cardi B cannot be read as simple expressions of their musical preference but rather as connected to larger problematic discourses about her in terms of race and gender.

However, in their reflections, the participants shared that by seeing this video, “even though there were lots of cuss words” and “some not so PC language”, they were “excited that someone famous was interested in talking about politics.” Christina wrote, “she is smarter than the majority of people give her credit for” and “is a person to be respected.” They acknowledged that “social media and well known celebrities have a huge impact on how we perceive information about politics” and that “Cardi B has a large amount of sway and influence in the pop culture, as well as younger citizens.” In these comments, they were acknowledging the power and knowledge that Cardi B has and the respect she deserves as both a pop culture and political figure. While it is hard to know if the racist ideologies they held about her were replaced, altered, or simply pushed to the side, their initial perceptions of her were challenged by @polibeats\_'s repost of her video.

In each of these examples, pre-service teachers gravitated towards @polibeats\_ posts that made pop culture references. As suggested by Duncan-Andrade (2010), participants might have been engaged due to these posts' cultural relevance to them as young people, but it is also important to acknowledge the sociopolitical landscape and influence of pop culture on their sensibilities.

These connections to both popular culture and to larger social and political discourses represented a collection of text-to-world connections made by prospective



teachers in this study. The knowledge and perspective that they had of broader society interacted with their meaning making of @polibeats\_ posts and often informed their understanding and interpretation of the posts. Throughout these text-to connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world), participants in this study applied their own knowledge, beliefs, and experiences to engage with the account's content. While these text-to connections served as a comprehension strategy for the participants and the included examples can be thought of as such, this study's aim to explore the development of critical consciousness amongst participants begs for consideration of Freire and Macedo's (1987) call to "read the world and the word" (p. 43). As summarized by Flint, et al. (2013),

To *read the word* requires that we encode/decode words to make meaning as the ideas relate to our experiences, cultures, and knowledge. To *read the world* means we draw upon our life experiences to understand and critique larger social structures and our place in the world.

In this sense, as the content of the @polibeats\_ account aims to critique and challenge larger hegemonic social structures, the participants' use of text-to connections in this reading transaction (Rosenblatt, 1978) were more than simply comprehension strategies but rather an attempt to *read the word and the world* within social, cultural, political, and historical contexts and in acknowledgement of their roles in those contexts. The pre-service teachers' connections of the @polibeats\_ posts about topics such as race, gender, politics, climate change to personal experiences, teacher education coursework, larger discourse, and popular culture were them applying to the text experiences they have had

while reading the world, which Freire and Macedo (1987) say “always precedes reading the word” (p. 25). Freire (1985) argues, “it is impossible to read texts without reading the context of the text, without establishing the relationships between the discourse and the reality which shapes the discourse” and that reading a text implies that one is “studying reality” (p. 18). Therefore, in these text-to connections, teacher candidates were demonstrating their participation in their critical reading of not only the word but also the world. By considering these connections through this lens, this study could argue that this method of interpretation served as a component of the development of their critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004).

#### **REFERENCES TO STUDENTS AND TEACHING**

Another prominent way that pre-service teachers engaged with the social justice issues displayed on the @polibeats\_ account was by considering their students and their teaching. By thinking about their students’ diverse experiences, plans they have for teaching about social justice in their future classrooms or being an activist educator, all participants drew connections between at least one @polibeats\_ post and education.

##### **Considering the diverse experiences of their students**

Some posts prompted prospective teachers to consider the experiences of their students, their families, and communities. For example, in a reflection on a post about homelessness, Ariana remembered a student she had had the previous semester who was homeless and described some of the actions she took with her cooperating teacher and school personnel to support the child and his family. While prior to this experience she

might have had an initial understanding or concern for the issue of homelessness, it was clearly furthered by the care that she had for her student and the tangible efforts that she had made with her cooperating teacher to aid this child.

In response to a post critiquing Miss USA mocking Miss Vietnam's English, Mackenzie thought of her English Language Learner students, stating, "no wonder our students are scared and embarrassed, they are treated and represented by the media as second-class citizens." She considered this example of overt linguisticism in relation to the experiences of her bilingual students. She critiqued the ways that they are positioned as inferior and noted the impact these types of offenses and societal perspectives could have on a bilingual student's wellbeing. In both of these instances, these participants could relate to the post by thinking about the experiences of their students.

Two pre-service teachers were prompted by this post (Figure 14) to consider the assumptions and expectations that are held for parents of students.



Figure 14: @polibeats\_ example #11, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Marley and Jessie both acknowledged the danger in making “quick, false judgments” about students’ parents and their home life. Marley wrote,

For instance, ...sometimes a teacher assumes that a parent who does not show up for parent teacher conferences, or who doesn’t seem to be taking an active role in their child’s education, automatically means that the parent doesn’t care about

their child's education. However, those are assumptions and there are numerous other things that could be taking place.

She was challenging the common, deficit myths that are held about parents of diverse backgrounds and their perceived lack of care for their child's education, myths that have been debunked (see Valencia, 2012) and arguing for more caring and understanding approaches to relationships with students' parents.

Jessie echoed similar cautions about this post (Figure 14), stating,

While time is one thing that seems to be 'equal' for all people, this is not the case.

I think some of the most destructive forms of privilege are the ones that are so deeply rooted and hidden. That is the case with [our understanding of] time.

She then acknowledged what she perceived as her own privilege growing up with a stay-at-home mom who cooked, cleaned, and packed her lunch leaving her with "more time to focus on school and relationships because I didn't have to focus on everyday needs."

However, when thinking of the students in her class, she acknowledged that "they will come from a huge variety of backgrounds" and that each will have very different home lives and therefore relationships with time. She took this post to consider the diverse experiences with home and time that she and her students will have and commit to being "free from assumptions" and responsive to the diverse circumstances of her class.

In each of these examples, teacher candidates applied the content of the post to their awareness of the diverse set of experiences and challenges of students in their classroom. This type of awareness is necessary due to the cultural mismatch of many teachers with their students' backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2016);

therefore, these pre-service teachers displaying their ability to consider their students' diverse experiences in their reflections demonstrated an element of their preparation as social justice-oriented educators.

### **Teaching students about social justice, human rights, and activism**

While Kumashiro (2001) states that there are many “complaints that research and theory on anti-oppressive education...are difficult to translate into practice” (p. 3), many prospective teachers noted how some of @polibeats\_'s posts related to instructional methods or approaches they could use in the classroom to address topics of social justice, human rights, and activism that work against oppression.

Some pre-service teachers made connections between @polibeats\_ posts and lessons they had done with their students about important women and people of color who are often excluded from or tokenized in social studies curriculum (Winslow, 2013). Jessie acknowledged this issue, writing, “there are SO many incredible stories that we don't tell. We give the students one narrative and maybe two names... But behind every big name is a whole story of smaller names that go unnoticed.” In response to a few @polibeats\_ posts attempting to highlight the “smaller names”, a few pre-service teachers shared doing read alouds about important figures such as Malala, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Coretta Scott King.

For example, Autumn described reading a children's book to her third graders about Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a Supreme Court Justice who is known for her role in the fight for women's rights and was featured in a @polibeats\_ post. She wrote,

I think that teaching kids about her pure grit and “I don’t give a shit about how things are supposed to be” attitude is important. She was definitely a trailblazer for her time and profession and I think that should always be celebrated and remembered.

She saw Ginsburg as a valuable example for her students both in her character and in her political platform and admired the risk and resilience that she carried as a pioneer of her time. Especially in this era of rising white nationalism fueled by the rhetoric of Donald Trump (Giroux, 2017), Au (2017) argues,

we should be teaching children about social justice activism and protesting through picture books (Reeve, 2017) and historical examples (Bigelow, 2015) because, especially now, our kids need to see themselves as potential warriors for justice who have power to fight back. (p. 148)

The pre-service teachers’ references to their use of picture books featuring powerful women and activists of color not only provided representation of figures of diverse backgrounds who are often undermined in social studies curriculum (Winslow, 2013) but also possibly provided an example of the activists that the students could they themselves be.

Many participants also saw themes in the @polibeats\_ posts that they thought would be important discussions to have with their students. They identified topics such as acts of racism, gender inequality, and political issues as conversation starters and examples to be used in their classrooms. Laila wrote,

For my teaching, I want to be able to share events such as [this incident of racism] and talk about them in a way that is valuable. It's one thing to complain about our society but another to think deeper into our actions and responses. Does it cause us anger? Sadness? Apathy? Why?

In this piece of data, she was signaling her aim to incorporate topics of race and racism in her classroom through a problem-posing approach that would necessitate reflection *and* action on both her part and that of her students (Freire, 1970).

In another example, Jenna described a lesson prompted by a @polibeats\_ post in which, “a discussion could stem from the question ‘why do you think movies starring women earn more money than male- leading movies?’” She followed by saying, “I would be very curious to hear a kid’s point of view on this fact.” In fact, in her reflection in response to this post, she could not come to a conclusion of her own about why women-starring movies out-earn male-leading movies. Therefore, this hypothetical lesson she described could be critical by not only centering a gendered issue as a topic for discussion and analysis but also because she in this space could be a teacher-learner (Freire, 1970), aiming to arrive at a conclusion constructed *with* her students, not for them.

In addition to these specific instructional approaches, many teacher candidates also named in their reflections certain humanizing ideologies and pedagogical stances they hoped to imbue in their future classrooms. They described how they would create classroom environments and policies that upheld anti-bullying, gender neutrality and



equality, anti-racism, and empathy for one another. For example, in response to a post about gender and “locker room talk”, Melissa wrote,

Not only can I bring scenarios such as these... to the attention of my students to analyze and critically think about, I believe this is also important to consider with how we may privilege our male students over our female students on the basis of what is “normal”. Being mindful of this will hopefully, in my opinion, lead to prevention of such biases manifesting in the classroom.

She was noting ways that she could engage her students in discussions over gender equality but also reflect on her own teaching in ways that intentionally leverage understandings of how gender is presented in the classroom. She described being “mindful” of her own gender bias and how it manifests as an important element for resisting the reproduction of sexism in the classroom.

In these examples prompted by @polibeats\_ posts, pre-service teachers described ways that they intended to incorporate diverse perspectives into the curriculum, lead critical discussions of social issues, and challenge their own ideologies and practices, all elements of a critically conscious, multicultural, and social justice teaching agenda (Banks, 2004a; Banks, 2004b; Freire, 1970; Gorski, 2009). Their ability to make curricular and pedagogical connections to the @polibeats\_ posts demonstrated a counter to Kumashiro’s (2001) concern for teachers’ challenges incorporating anti-oppressive approaches into their teaching. However, should participants non-critically incorporate these practices into their teaching, they run the risk of participating in the “methods fetish” that Bartolomé (1994) warned about. From the data gathered in this study, it is

difficult to know whether or not the pedagogical focus on tangible action (Freire, 1970) and the enactment of an “education that changes students and society” (Kumashiro, 2000b) is present or lacking. However, as seen in these examples, participants made a variety of connections from the @polibeats\_ posts to both their existing and future teaching methods.

### **“Teaching against the grain” and being an activist educator**

Furthermore, many teacher candidates associated content from the posts with being an activist educator, expressing the hopes, goals, and intentions they had as they entered the field. They drew on notions of care, love, and civicness to describe what they perceived as being an activist educator who is teaching against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Cochran-Smith (1991) posits teachers who teach against the grain as “both educators and activists, ... regard themselves as agents for change, and ... regard reform as an integral part of the social, intellectual, ethical, and political activity of teaching” (p. 279). As seen in the following examples, pre-service teachers made connections between @polibeats\_ posts and the concept of teaching against the grain.

Claire wrote, “Donald Trump is one of the reasons I’m becoming a teacher. Truth. If he can spread bad, I’m going to do my little part to spread good, positively affecting (I hope) 20 kids a year!” In another post, she also wrote, “You cannot force humanity and kindness. I can only hope you can teach it, one child at a time, and that my contribution, even if it feels like a pebble in the ocean, is something valuable.” She associated being an educator with spreading kindness, compassion, and positivity,

and she was aligning with Freirean notions of “the revolutionary potential of love to equalize asymmetrical power relations among human beings” (Bartolomé, 2008, p.1). For every piece of “bad” that was spread by Donald Trump, she would counter it with her teaching as an act of love. Jenna also described the loving classroom community she hoped to create, “a second home,” where students could feel purposeful and empowered. Kirsten described her aims to “position all students as extremely capable”, an attitude that she hoped they would carry throughout their lives. These pieces of data which center notions of love and care demonstrate a “feel-good” sensation; however, an acknowledgement by the pre-service teachers of the need to create a classroom that restores the humanity and capacity of all students as a social and political endeavor (Bartolomé, 2008; Freire, 1970) was not fully developed by these prospective teachers.

A few participants mentioned that “teaching is political”, as stated by Sofia. She wrote,

After entering this [teacher education] program, I have truly come to realize how political our jobs are and can become. I think it is important to have a political stance, as teachers, in the sense that we should fight for what we believe to be right and true. I think teachers do this not only for themselves but also to show their students that their voices really have the potential to make a difference.

Recognition of the political nature of teaching is a necessary element of being a critically conscious teacher (Bartolomé, 1994; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Freire, 1970), and Sofia’s reflection recognized the role of the teacher education program in her understanding of this concept. She recognized not only the political impact on teaching but also

commented on the importance of teachers considering their role as civic beings themselves and civic role models for future generations.

Kirsten also noted that “this job [teaching] is extremely political”. In her reflections, she wrote about the actions of activist educators highlighted in @polibeats\_ posts such as the superintendent who used her own health insurance to provide healthcare for a student or teachers who helped their students leave school more discreetly during ICE raids. She acknowledged the inherent risk and sacrifice in these actions; however, she stated, “it is our job to do the best and what is right for our students” even if that “can cause ethical dilemmas.” Her stance aligns with these educators who taught against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991) and engaged in acts of love that restored the humanity of their students (Freire, 1970). In this reflection, Kirsten demonstrated a deep understanding of the political nature of teaching.

Two particular topics connecting politics and teaching were frequently selected and garnered a lot of attention from participants. First, a handful of participants engaged in the topic of gun violence uniquely through the lens of a future teacher. Most of all, they expressed fear. Christina described in detail the experience of doing an active shooter drill with the first graders at her field placement and recounted what an emotional and scary moment it was for her as an aspiring teacher. Melissa stated, “the heart-wrenching news of any school shooting has always made me consider the ‘what if’ of me possibly being in that specific situation.” Jenna expressed that same fear, writing,

There have been times at night where I have dreams about what I would do as a teacher if there was a gunman. How I could make my students safe and make sure

not harm comes their way even if that means risking my own life. That makes me so sad. That it has happened so often and not much change has been done. It scares me more than anything about being a teacher.

The vivid fear that both of these participants exhibit and grapple with in imagining themselves and their students in a school shooting is an experience of dehumanization in itself. However, alongside her fear, Isabel also acknowledged the stalemate nature of political negotiations surrounding the issue of gun violence and school shootings when she noted that “not much change has been done.” She recognized how the polarization of this political issue directly impacted her role as a teacher.

Sofia also commented on the politically charged discussion of gun control, expressing her extreme disapproval of arming teachers. She argued instead for educational funding and smaller class sizes to be able to develop empathy and more meaningful relationships with students in order to prevent future school shootings. In this reflection, she was engaging political discussions of gun control and education reform. Her recognition of the intertwined nature of these political debates exhibited an awareness and exercise of her own position as a civic being.

Another topic of interest was the Los Angeles teacher strike, deeming this post below (Figure 15) the most highly selected post across all of the participants.

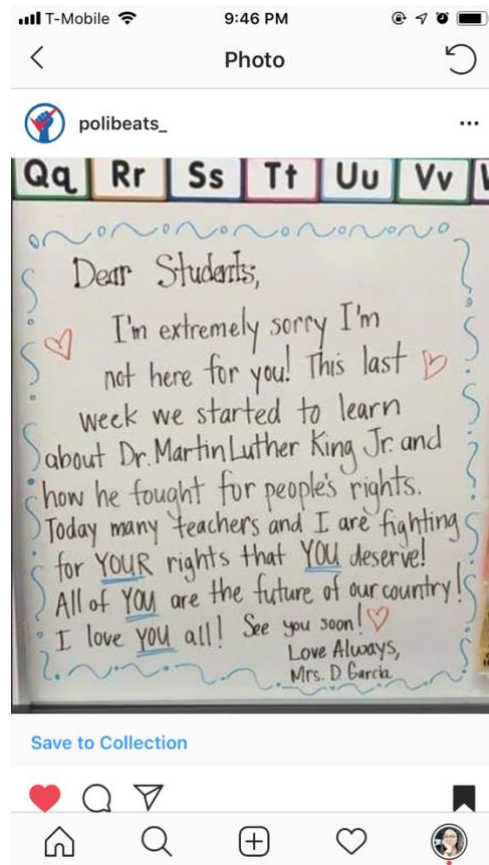


Figure 15: @polibeats\_ example #12, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Many participants described being inspired or warmed by this note and the teacher's actions while simultaneously many participants were sad and outraged by the conditions that deemed this strike necessary. Abigail saw the strike as "a great moment for teachers to stand up for what they believe in", and Autumn stated that it "reminded me of why I want to be a teacher and who I am doing it for." Isabel noted the importance of modeling activism for our students, and Michelle wrote, "actions definitely speak louder than words and for students to see that their teachers are fighting for them really shows the students that their teachers care for what's best for them." These pre-service teachers

valued the teachers' actions and admired their decision to protest. They perceived the teachers' protest as a political act of love (Freire, 1970) not only for better conditions for themselves but moreover to provide "what's best" for their students.

Others, however, were upset by the need for this strike. Isabel was disappointed by why this strike even had to happen, saddened by the fact that teachers are overworked, underpaid, and often disrespected. Jessie, who was actually from Los Angeles, talked about the large class sizes she experienced growing up and now, as a teacher, argued that they are "doing a disservice to the students and not being able to care for them... individually." Participants also expressed concern for the students. Savannah questioned whether or not the students would understand what the teacher was fighting for. Claire shared statistics about the poverty and homelessness levels of L.A. students and worried how these students would survive without school being in session.

The way that the participants engaged in this post from a variety of angles demonstrates the complexity of being an activist educator. They acknowledged the layered implications of procuring better conditions for both them as teachers and in turn for their students. They noted the different challenges and consequences of these teachers' decisions to strike and still supported their bravery and their mission.

This @polibeats\_ post (Figure 15) and the others in this section provided compelling terrain for a thoughtful exploration of what it means to be an activist educator teaching for social justice. In these examples, the prospective teachers engaged with interconnected notions of love, civicness, and political issues, considering how they

related to their work as future educators entertaining the idea of teaching against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991).

### **DISAGREEMENT, NON-EXAMPLES, AND CRITIQUES**

While many pre-service teachers wrote reflections agreeing with the @polibeats\_ posts, not all participants appreciated their content. There were a handful of participants who disagreed with a @polibeats\_ post or wrote a critique of their argument. Others disengaged entirely.

A few participants used alternative perspectives, information, or bodies of knowledge to challenge the argument being made in a @polibeats\_ post. For example, in response to a chart showing white women voting patterns, Sofia, a Latina woman, wrote, “what this post says about taking and educating women as if they’re helpless - I don’t agree. Some of those women are probably really well educated and still voted that way.” This demonstrated her willingness to disagree with a post and use other sources of knowledge to challenge its idea. As a critical consumer and as a person of color, she was likely drawing on her own lived experiences with white women as knowledge to conclude that their voting decisions might not have been a result of lack of education but rather intentional.

Similarly, a post featuring a performance by Beyoncé, a black woman in an extravagant dress, and Ed Sheeran, a white man in jeans and a t-shirt, was used to discuss different labor expectations for women and men. Christina, however, did not think “that this photo is a very accurate measurement of that.” Instead, she argued, from her



background knowledge of popular culture, “that these two artists are just very different and have equally different ways of representing themselves and they ways that they like to perform.” While this observation is true, what she failed to notice was how their race and gender has dictated the “different ways” that they represent themselves and perform.

Three participants wrote about the following post (Figure 16).



Figure 16: @polibeats\_ example #13, (Polibeats, n.d.)

They made comments like “I hate this picture” and “it’s hard for me to see this post”, yet followed by stating that they do not like Donald Trump themselves. Savannah wrote, “I don’t understand having to be so hateful and escalating every situation.” Laila echoed her sentiment, explaining, “people are so mad at Donald Trump because of his ignorance, his opinions and his lack of leadership in this country. However, reproducing hate only perpetuates the very stigma that people ‘hate’ about Donald Trump.” Jenna also wrote, “We should be able to live in a world where people disagree on things that they can discuss in a civil manner.” These students expressed desire for a world of empathy and mutual respect that is extended to all, including Trump, which was not reflected in this post by @polibeats\_.

A common approach used by @polibeats\_ is pointing out contradictions in the values and actions of a given group. The following two examples show how two pre-service teachers saw their personal experiences as non-examples to the claim being made by the @polibeats\_ post about a group of people.



Figure 17: @polibeats\_ example #14, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Laila was annoyed with this post (Figure 17), stating that it was a generalization. She explained, “I am pro-life and I do think that many people who are pro-life cared about the children being separated from their families at the border and even more so for the children that died in custody.” She identified as a member of the pro-life group yet also expressed deep regret for the two children who died at the border. She saw herself as a non-example of this claim and thus pushed back on its message, questioning its logic.

Melissa provided a critique and alternative perspectives to this post by @polibeats\_ (Figure 18).



Figure 18: @polibeats\_ example #15, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She made a connection from this post to larger discussions of border security and immigration policies. She wrote about those in favor of border security saying,

I believe that most of the people who desire these things desire them out of a place of fear and desire for protection, despite the common narrative that they desire these things out of a dislike for immigrants. I say this in consideration of my own family—they are conservatives who desire stronger immigration policies and are all for immigrants who come in legally.

From her perception of her family’s perspectives, she argued for a different understanding of diverse political beliefs. In her reflection, she went on to provide other non-examples of generalizations about groups of people saying that not “all conservatives or people who want stronger border security are anti-immigrant” and “not...all

immigrants are dangerous.” In her reflection, she provided non-examples, contradictions, and critiques of the larger conversations about immigrants and border security.

Each of these examples demonstrated ways that participants disagreed with content on the @polibeats\_ account. They used alternative perspectives and information to support their challenges. Sometimes they acknowledged their own position or background that informed their disagreement; other times they did not. While disagreement was encouraged in this study and is an important element of the dialogic nature of Freire’s (1970) humanizing pedagogy, some of these participants’ commentaries do not support the goals of humanization for all nor do they operate with political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1994; 2004). Their comments attempting to humanize people like Donald Trump and “conservatives who desire stronger immigration policies” ultimately threaten the humanization of those they are attacking, leaving a complicated discussion of the idea of humanization for all. These teacher candidates’ reflections providing disagreements, critiques, and non-examples, particularly in this abnormal political era, become important elements to consider in the field of social justice-oriented teacher education.

## **CONCLUSION**

Research Question #1 asked, How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with issues of social justice through interactive social media? As seen throughout these examples, when prospective teachers were engaging with a @polibeats\_ post, they used a variety of approaches to interpret its content. They drew on their emotions, expressing

hope, sadness, and anger. They made text-to connections, considering application of the posts to their or others' personal experiences, to their teacher education coursework, and to larger discourses and cultures. They thought of their students and their teaching and engaged with discussions about what it means to be a social justice-oriented educator. They used their perspectives and other knowledges to critique and challenge the arguments made in the @polibeats\_ posts. These different ways of engaging with and making meaning of the content on @polibeats\_ provide insight not only into their strategies as critical consumers of social media but also into their understanding of different social and political issues. In the next chapter, I will consider how pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds informed their understanding of the issues presented by @polibeats\_.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CUSTOM INSTAGRAM FILTERS: GENDER, RACE, AND RELIGION IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' BACKGROUNDS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

On the Instagram app, content producers can put “filters” on their photos, a feature for photo editing and enhancement that changes the color scheme of the entire post. This chapter considers how pre-service teachers’ sociocultural backgrounds serve as filters, or lenses through which they consumed topics of social justice and posts on the @polibeats\_ account.

The following chapter addresses Research Question #2, How do the pre-service teachers’ sociocultural backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media? Using the participants’ written reflections alongside their linguistic histories, a digital storytelling course assignment in which they shared their autobiography along the lines of language, emerging themes showed connections between prospective teachers’ backgrounds and their interpretation of the content on @polibeats\_. Aspects of their histories and identities, particularly gender, race, and religion, played large roles in their interaction with the @polibeats\_ account. This was not surprising as Britzman (1986) argues that “the student teacher’s biography, or cumulative social experience, becomes part of the implicit context of teacher education” (p. 443), and this study looked to comprehend how their biographies informed their understandings of oppression, power, and social justice. The data shows how not only pre-service teachers’ past experiences but also their current perspectives informed how they read the world and the word (Freire, 1970). While the focus on certain markers such as race, gender, and religion can be essentializing as well as maintains notions of binaries, the predominance of the teaching corps as white and female (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) contributes to the concern for diverse student populations (Villegas,

Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Furthermore, these participants engaged with their own race, gender, and religion, often naming them as important elements of their biography. First, I will begin this chapter by describing how these particular background elements worked across multiple participants' written reflections. Second, I will then focus on two different teacher candidates, describing how their personal backgrounds informed their interpretation of the account, providing individual examples on a deeper level.

### **PARTICIPANTS AS WOMEN**

Of a cohort of 22 women, over half of the participants wrote about posts that related to gender or women's issues. In fact, one participant, Katherine, a white woman, chose mostly posts about women, with 8 out of 10 of her reflections centering on women's issues. As a predominantly female teaching corps (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) functioning in a patriarchal society, many participants made connections to the @polibeats\_ posts that exposed or critiqued the experiences of women making text-to-self connections as well as engaging larger dominant feminist discourses from their own personal knowledge bases. However, as notions of gender have been downplayed in education (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005) and feminist theories in education have often been critiqued for centering white women's experiences (see Henry, 2011), pre-service teachers' discussions of women's issues often were underdeveloped and lacked intersectional lenses. Furthermore, all of the participants' comments and thus the researcher's analysis functioned from notions of heteronormativity and gender binary, both of which are oppressive structures that are challenged and critiqued by critical consciousness.



## Women empowerment

In many instances, participants argued for solidarity and empowerment amongst women. Hemmings (2012) argues that authentic solidarity amongst women extends beyond superficial empathy for others and results in tangible action against oppressive structures. While action could not be captured in these reflections, these examples show participants' locations along this spectrum of solidarity. Ashley wrote, "We need to be a community of women that support one another and teach one another." Similarly, Ariana wrote, "We as women need to support one another and it stinks when we can't put our differences aside to just lift each other up." These comments described notions of care, support, and sisterhood as important elements of unity that they perceived were needed across women. Two participants chose the post featuring a women's protest in India, describing how they "love that these women came together to stand against the injustice of sexism." This example extended the notion of unity and "coming together" to doing it in opposition of injustice. These pieces of data showed the value that these participants gave to the need for solidarity amongst women and recognition of the potential power of this unity against systems of injustice.

Three different participants reacted to this post (Figure 19), appreciating its humor and making text-to-self connections.



Figure 19: @polibeats\_ example #16, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Katherine began her reflection saying, “this post is everything”, and Ashley mentioned that it reminded her of her own grandma. She continued to say, “it also is just such a good reminder for girls about what’s important in life, and silly boys are not what’s important.” Abigail echoed that idea, writing, “this really put it into perspective that we need to be talking less about boys and more focused about ourselves. We honestly could take another class for the amount of time boys are brought into the conversation.” In these examples, these participants appreciated the generational knowledge that was being passed down from one woman to another. They agreed that girls, and women, should reject the “distraction” of boys and focus more on themselves and their studies. This aligns with traditional notions of the second wave feminist movement (Hallstein, 2008) that encouraged women to work and advance professionally rather than being defined by their home responsibilities or their relationship with a man.

Katherine, however, slightly disagreed, arguing that the post adhered with both the historical stereotypes that a woman should be the one worrying about a man as well as the counterargument that instead, women should be educating themselves. She drew on her own experiences and perspectives to account for the possibilities of a woman being simultaneously educated and concerned for her love life. She shared,

I, being the hopeless romantic that I am, really enjoy having a supportive relationship with my boyfriend. Key word: supportive! We also have mutual respect and trust for one another allowing us to be independent and flourish with or without one another!

She experienced lots of joy from her relationship and argued that she was respected and supported by her boyfriend as well as being independent and flourishing in the other areas of her life. She was tapping into the idea of self-determination, a woman's right to choose the design of her life (Snyder-Hall, 2010), which, for her, meant balance between a relationship and success. Snyder-Hall (2010) discusses the complexities of feminists advocating for women's right to choices but then also criticizing their choices in the name of feminism, the ideological and social struggle which Katherine was commenting on.

In each of these examples, prospective teachers were discussing issues of women empowerment. They argued that solidarity amongst women was important to strengthen their community and opposition to injustice. They also demonstrated views across the spectrum concerning the feminist debate on women's pull between their personal lives and their career. In these examples, participants related not only personally to the @polibeats\_ posts but also demonstrated an awareness of bigger themes and arguments of feminism.

### **Women's issues, rights, and politics**

Many participants selected posts that centered on women's issues, rights, and politics. A few participants commented on women's participation in government. Claire and Autumn celebrated women of color politicians such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Lewis, describing how powerful they were and how hopeful they made them feel. Autumn also wrote about both Ocasio-Cortez and Ruth Bader Grinberg, describing

them each as “a total pioneer of her time.” They displayed both inspiration and trust in these women’s power and characters.

Laila stated, “A big step for our country would be to have a female president”, expressing support for the idea, however, Katherine wrote, “women being able to be in charge of our government in the US is not something our Nation has fully accepted.” She was commenting on the heated political discussion of whether or not the U.S., with its structural social hierarchies and ideologies of patriarchy, racism, and capitalism, was “ready for a woman President” (Corrington & Hebl, 2018; A. Gist, 2017). The following post (Figure 20) commented on this reality, however, by presenting a contradiction in its argument.



Figure 20: @polibeats\_ example #17, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Michelle wholeheartedly agreed with this post, writing,

Women get called out and people complain about women being driven by their emotions, but seriously, the MALE president feels like he has too much on his

plate that he decides to shut down the government... just because he couldn't get what he wanted.

The @polibeats\_ post (Figure 20), and Michelle, were critiquing the stereotype that women are dispositionally, overly emotional as compared to men who are characterized as logical and emotionally composed (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009). However, in this example, Trump's government shutdown driven by the fact that "he couldn't get what he wanted" could be perceived as an emotional and irrational decision which had grave consequences for many. This example challenged the popular conversation of whether or not a woman could be President, a debate which these three participants took up. In these reflections, these participants engaged in critical discussions about women politicians notwithstanding an acknowledgement of the societal barriers working against them.

Additionally, the participants expressed concern over women's representation in government, exemplified by Mackenzie when she wrote,

These are the people writing and passing bills, making important decisions about our lives, and such a huge population, women, aren't well represented. No wonder the issue of birth control is such a big deal, because it's just a bunch of white men deciding about things they have no business deciding. Women and minorities need to be represented.

Mackenzie noted the underrepresentation of women, and "minorities", in politics, in which women and nonwhite politicians each respectively represented around 25% of the members of the most recently elected Congress despite both constituting much higher percentages of the U.S. population (Pew Research Center, 2018; 2019). Volden,

Wiseman, and Wittmer (2018) found that legislation regarding women's issues was much more likely to be sponsored by women politicians, validating the worries for the advancement of women's agendas with such under-representation in Congress. Furthermore, Mackenzie was discussing the powerful implications of political decisions being made by "white men" about women's lives and bodies (Gordon, 2007; Volden, et al., 2016). She was acknowledging the irony, yet rejecting the logic, that legislative decisions concerning women's health, contraception and abortion policies, fair wages, childcare, and family leave, all widely recognized as women's issues, be decided by politicians who are not women themselves.

In consideration of another prominent issue in women's politics, Sofia wrote about abortion, stating that "it should be an individual choice." She continued to imagine herself in the situation of getting pregnant at this very moment and whether or not she would keep the child and even admitted to having an abortion herself a few years ago. She asserted her right to this choice saying, "how would my decision to have an abortion affect some random person in another state." She was locating her personal self in this political issue, both figuratively and literally. Her pro-choice stance was backed by her rhetorical question of how her individual decision should be of concern to any other person. She, like Mackenzie, was challenging the ways that legislative policies could directly affect her life and her body as a woman (Beckman, 2016; Gordon, 2007; Volden, et al., 2016). In both of these instances, these participants criticized the political influence on women's issues of birth control and abortion and argued for a say in these decisions.

Ashley related to the following post (Figure 21), stating,

This post is so interesting to me because I have talked a lot about how men and large corporations are the ones that benefit off of women being insecure of their bodies. It is so sad that girls are so focused on the way they look versus the ways they act and the things that they do.



Figure 21: @polibeats\_ example #18, (Polibeats, n.d.)

In her reflection, she acknowledged the complicated pressures of everyday women’s experiences with issues of body image, appearance, and self-worth, acknowledging “the female body...[is presented] as aesthetic objects to be judged and consumed” (Nurka, 2014, p. 485). However, Ashley also identified the position of these experiences in the midst of larger structures such as capitalism and patriarchy, noting the connection between insecurities and consumer culture (Featherstone, 2010). Furthermore, she related to this post because of an awareness and a conversation she already had had, driven by her personal and discursive experiences as a woman.

Six participants wrote about the dangerous double standards that pervade the experiences of women and men. Five of these reflections targeted Donald Trump and his “locker room talk”. In 2016, footage was released in which Trump talked about how he

could “do anything to women” and just “grab them by the pussy”, statements that he chalked up as just “locker room talk” (New York Times, 2016).

Four participants mentioned this “locker room talk” and were disappointed with how it was excused by many with the expression “boys will be boys”, a belief that is argued to endorse aggressive, violent, and inappropriate sexual behavior (Miedzian, 2002; Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzdny, 2002). In their reflections, the pre-service teachers described his comments as “vulgar” and “problematic”, and Marley wrote, “‘boys will be boys’ cannot and should not be the excuse we use to explain and rationalize behavior that is cruel, demeaning, sexualizing and wrong.” Isabel criticized the power that Donald Trump holds in his position, questioning, “By him being President does it mean it’s okay to do what he does/what he has done, especially to women?? Ahhh so frustrating.” In these pieces of data, participants were outraged by the misogynistic attitude and behavior that Donald Trump exercised, modeled, and justified from his powerful position as President and were concerned for how that would be picked up by others.

Sofia noted a double standard in how AOC, on the other hand, was criticized for a video in which she was dancing, and wrote, “meanwhile, there footage of our president saying to grab women by the pussy but that’s okay. That’s just locker room talk. Bizarre.” She was describing how puzzled she was by the fact that Trump’s power as President, and also as a white, rich, male, left him in almost an untouchable position despite his behavior while AOC, a young woman of color, was scrutinized for simply dancing, which Sofia described as “not doing anything offensive.” All four of these participants expressed extreme resentment for how the “boys will be boys” attitude gave



permission to the perpetuation of talk and behavior that is degrading and dangerous to women. Furthermore, they criticized Donald Trump's misogynistic nature and expressed concern for the power that he held in his position as President and the perpetuation of violence against women under him. Trump's public role in the personification of rape culture and sexual assault has been documented both in popular and academic spheres (Maas, et al., 2018), and the participants in this study were keenly aware of the implications of his persona and this discourse in the shaping of social norms.

### **Lack of gendered analysis**

Critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) requires that incidents and ideologies be analyzed within larger sociopolitical structures of power and oppression, rather than taken at face value. On three different occasions, three participants chose a post regarding a women's topic but failed to analyze it through a gendered lens, that is, with consideration of notions of power and oppression in patriarchal society in order to recognize its connection within larger discourses around women. For example, Jenna was intrigued by a post stating that movies with women lead characters outsell movies with male protagonists. She hypothesized that the reason for this was that women go to the movies more often and "force" their significant others to join them. She failed to acknowledge that support for women's movies could be intentional, for example, for women's affirmations of their own experiences, to expose their daughters and sons to women leads, or to financially support a project prioritizing women. Her analysis lacked

gendered perspectives such as these which consider the power dynamics between men and women that might affect the movie sales outcomes.

Similarly, two participants celebrated the following post (Figure 22) recognizing education majors.



**Tanesha McCargo**

@TaneshaLayrean\_



Stem is hard. But guess what?  
Business is hard. Nursing is hard.  
Communication studies is hard.  
Graphic design is hard. And God  
bless the education majors  
because they will literally have one  
of the most impactful, yet  
underrated careers ever. Let  
people be.

Figure 22: @polibeats\_ example #19, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Jenna wrote, “every major is important and every job has a purpose in the world” and described the importance of teaching children to value each profession’s role in society.

Similarly, Melissa argued that teaching is “an incredibly challenging, impactful, and beautiful journey”, stating that,

Every day is an opportunity to show a child they are loved, tell them they are capable, and challenge them to push themselves as learners... teachers have the unique opportunity to mold children in a way that many other professions do not;

we can model kindness, respect, and critical thinking for the future leaders of our society—and that is no small thing.

Both teacher candidates clearly took great pride in their role as teachers and highly valued their contribution to society in this profession. They appreciated this post for highlighting their impact and yet also recognizing the underrated nature of society's perception and treatment of teachers. However, both reflections lacked an analysis of the role of gender in creating and sustaining the lack of respect for and deprofessionalization of teachers. Teaching has been historically perceived as women's work (Henry, 2011; Schwager, 1987), seen as an extension of mothering, and due to issues of gender inequality has thus been substantially underpaid and underrated. An understanding of the role of gender in creating these circumstances could be a powerful addition to these pre-service teachers' arguments.

In a final example, Christina critiqued the following post (Figure 23), stating that the difference in these two artists' appearances was simply because they are “just very different and have equally different ways of representing themselves and the ways that they like to perform.”



Figure 23: @polibeats\_ example #20, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote that “part of Beyoncé’s stage presence is her love for putting on a unique and entertaining aesthetic” whereas Ed Sheeran simply “likes to dress more casually.” She concluded by saying she, was “happy for both performers because they are able to

represent themselves in this moment the way they would like to be seen.” While her statements might not be untrue, she did not acknowledge the ways that race and gender have worked together to create divergent norms for the appearances and work expectations for white men and women of color and how these factors manifest in and dictate the experiences of both celebrities and everyday people in pervasive ways. Furthermore, she was unaware of how Beyoncé’s audiovisual performance is a part of her black feminist expression (Weidhase, 2015), and she never critiqued the privilege carried by Ed Sheeran as a white male. Her understanding of this post could have been better informed by theories of black feminism and intersectionality.

### **Dabbling in notions of intersectionality**

In a few instances, participants alluded to notions of intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989), touching on the ways that gender and race, as well as a multitude of other factors, interact in human experience. Crenshaw’s (1989) seminal piece and coined term argues for consideration of how Black women are “multiply burdened” (p. 140) by “race and sex discrimination” (p. 142). She states, “because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (p. 140). Therefore, analysis through an intersectional lens must account for the layered oppression facing Black women and other women of color, the depth of which is not faced by white women or Black men. In an extension and revisiting of Crenshaw’s work, Collins and Bilge (2016) suggest that

intersectionality in its origins and iterations since has considered multiple layers of oppression including but also in addition to race and gender, leading to a wide range of heterogeneity of intersectional experiences. They argue that intersectionality as a heuristic tool would consider the diversity of these factors in both contextual and relational terms. In the following examples, participants referenced both race and gender in discussing some of the @polibeats\_ posts but were unable to truly view these arguments through an intersectional viewpoint.

For example, when discussing Somali-American politician Ilhan Omar, Laila wrote,

Ilhan Omar is making strides that any woman, person of color or not, can look to and be proud of. It's one thing to be the first man to do something, but it's an entirely other thing to be a woman of color to do it.

In this piece of data, she acknowledged both race and gender in Omar's identity and celebrated her achievement as a woman of color. In her comment that "it's an entirely other thing to be a woman of color to do it", she briefly alluded to the multiple burdens Omar faced but failed to analyze her intersectionality in depth. Her comments remained surface-level, with almost a meritocratic twinge, rather than describing the ways that Omar's race, gender, language, immigration status, and class together might have been factors both in the oppression she experienced and the success and strengths that she has had as a politician.

In another light, Sofia, a Latina teacher candidate, discussed the intersections of race and gender in response to a post highlighting white women's votes for Republican

Senator Ted Cruz and arguing that they needed to be “educated.” Sofia rejected this idea of extending sympathy and education, stating that they are not helpless and writing, “some of those women are probably really well educated and still voted that way.” She suggested that these voting patterns were intentional rather than accidental. She was accounting for some of these white women’s privilege, implying that the interactions between their race, gender, and educational background led them to vote in this way against an alternative candidate, Beto O’Rourke, whose platform prioritized social justice and political issues of people of color. As white women have historical experiences being beneficiaries of political protections and advantages such as through affirmative action (see Hall, 2016), an intersectional analysis of Sofia’s argument could have pointed out “the difficulty that white women have traditionally experienced in sacrificing racial privilege to strengthen feminism” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 154). White women’s racial benefits can obscure their understanding of and solidarity with women of color, as was seen in the voting patterns of this election.

In one of her reflections, Kirsten exemplified this obscured viewpoint as a white woman when responding to the following post (Figure 24).



Figure 24: @polibeats\_ example #21, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote, “as a white person, I tend to not notice these things (which I am working on getting better at). Now, as a woman, I do notice these things.” She portrayed her status of white privilege in her inability to notice the lack of racial diversity since she was white. However, she stated that she constantly noticed the lack of gender diversity due to her subordinate position as a woman. This demonstrates her consideration of issues of social justice primarily through her own personal identity and experiences as a white woman. This exact issue has been the critique of white feminism from many frameworks of feminists of color (see Henry, 2011). Furthermore, this has concerning implications with respect to the racial and cultural mismatch of a white female teaching corps with an increasingly diverse student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), implying that many social issues affected K-12 students and their communities are



ignored or overlooked because teachers do not personally relate to them. Nonetheless, Kirsten stated she was “working on getting better at” noticing examples of racial oppression and went on to describe how she intended to use her white privilege to challenge these types of situations.

In each of these examples, pre-service teachers briefly mentioned the ways that race and gender interact in human experience; however, their analyses were not robust. In these comments they might have pointed out different incidents involving both race and gender, but their inability to consider the “multiple burdens” of Black women and women of color deemed their arguments “insufficient” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). Furthermore, they neglected the multiple other factors such as language or class that were at play in these examples and moreover, their own relations to privilege that might have limited their abilities to analyze these posts from an intersectional lens (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Henry (2011) argues that as teacher educators, “our task is to help them understand that feminism represents a range of theoretical and activist positions grounded in the realities of divergent communities and that gendered analyses can be useful tools in their pedagogical work” (p. 263). This encourages prospective teachers on the path to critical consciousness to consider the role of gender in their lived experiences and in their work as teachers within a patriarchal, heteronormative society through theoretical and discursive perspectives that are informed by realities of multiple communities beyond their own.

As women, participants in this study responded widely to posts regarding women’s issues and experiences. This aspect of their background, gender, strongly

informed their attraction to and understanding of these posts by @polibeats\_.

Furthermore, their position as members of a subordinated group facilitated their ability to agree with the contradictions, challenges, or jokes about gender on @polibeats\_; not once did they wholeheartedly disagree with claims about gender inequality or women's issues that were made by @polibeats\_. Their backgrounds as women, but also as predominantly heterosexual, cis gender, and white women, largely informed their interactions with @polibeats\_ posts about gender.

### **PARTICIPANTS AS RACIAL BEINGS**

Another aspect of the participants' backgrounds that they signaled often in their reflections was race. Of the 22 participants, 16 identified as white, two as Asian, two as Mexican, one as black, and one as bi-racial: Latina and black. Despite literature indicating that pre-service teachers are unaware or resistant to issues of race (Picower, 2009), participants in this study engaged with the topic of race in @polibeats\_ posts; every participant wrote about race at least once in their reflections. As Critical Race Theory contends, race is endemic in society, producing starkly contrasting educational conditions for white students and students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), both in K-12 schools and in teacher education programs (K. Brown, 2014). Therefore, racial competence is an important component of the development of pre-service teachers' critical consciousness to work in more humanizing ways in schools, teacher education programs, and society, and prospective teachers in this study demonstrated their different orientations toward race along this trajectory towards political and ideological clarity.

### **Centering the experiences of pre-service teachers of color**

Pre-service teachers of color made personal, text-to-self connections to many of the @polibeats\_ posts. Ariana and Sofia, both women of color, selected @polibeats\_ posts that highlighted the success of movies featuring non-white actors/actresses and stories. While white pre-service teachers selected and celebrated these same posts, the participants of color engaged with the posts in different ways. Ariana, a Black and Latina woman, described how important the success of Black Panther was because “it highlights black culture and black actors in a positive light. So many times in movies black people are the maids, sidekicks, etc. In Black Panther, African American people got to lead and be the stars of the show.” She celebrated the showcasing of this movie during Black History Month as creating an opportunity to show the quality of the movie and a chance to “watch black people thrive”, concluding her argument by saying, “representation matters!” On the other hand, white prospective teachers did not appreciate the depth of this movie’s impact, instead saying it “is a great suggestion to show during this month” simply for its reputation as a good movie, not for the powerful statement it made in worldwide racial politics.

Ariana’s support of this movie recognized what Smith (2018) called its “revolutionary power”. He argued that the Black Panther film was significant for multiple reasons: for having characters and particularly superheroes that “look like you”, for engaging “complicated themes about race and identity” and “what it means to be black in both America and Africa”, for having “an African-American director and a predominantly black cast”, by showing black narratives have “the power to generate

profits”, and most importantly, he argued, “that making movies about black lives is part of showing that they matter.” While the movie of course had its own rightful critics (i.e. Tompkins, 2018), its significance as a piece of an important black narrative cannot be denied, and Ariana felt that significance personally as a black woman.

In a similar example, Sofia, a Mexican woman, selected a post about *Coco* winning an Oscar. She wrote, “this is just really cool that this generation of kids got to grow up with such a popular movie that depicts Mexican culture” and described how happy it made her. She went on to share that she was currently reading, and loving, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika Sánchez. When her boyfriend teased her for reading a young adult novel, she snapped back, “sorry that when I was growing up I didn't have culturally diverse characters in books that I could relate to until now.” She concluded her reflection, saying, “it’s a beautiful thing.” The level of personal connection that Sofia had to the success of *Coco* was not only due to her own experiences as a Mexican woman but also in appreciation for the different experiences that future children of color might have growing up with culturally relevant literature and media that affirms their identities and communities.

In response to the @polibeats\_ posts about racialized violence, pre-service teachers of color sometimes made very vivid personal connections that were driven by their perspectives as a person of color. For example, Ariana wrote in response to a post about a hate crime towards a black, gay male, saying, “it scares me to think about the future my children will grow up in especially because I am black.” While many white prospective teachers might have also expressed fear or sadness towards this event, they

did not have to carry the same weight of worrying that this might happen to their own family or children.

Zariah, a black woman, also expressed this fear as well as anger concerning the actions of racist white people and acts of racial violence highlighted by some of the @polibeats\_ posts. She had selected the same post about the hate crime, saying “no one is safe”, which was burgeoned by the recent increase in hate crimes towards people of color fueled by Trump’s hate-filled discourse (Giroux, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.a). Zariah also chose the following post (Figure 25) to discuss people of color’s concern for safety in this era.



Figure 25: @polibeats\_ example #22, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She agreed with this post entirely, stating that many “mass shootings...terrorist attacks...hate crimes and sexual assaults” have been performed by white people “who think they can get away with anything and for the most part have been.” She wrote,

‘These people’ have made life worse for so many people and we can now say how unsafe we are around them. If it’s not a physical assault to a POC or a woman then it’s a verbal assault to a Hispanic person speaking their home language.

Zariah, a black woman’s, use of the word “we” implied her own fear for her safety and her membership in a community of color that is targeted by racist language and violence. Her discursive othering of white people sporting MAGA hats through the use of quotation marks around “these people” mimics the wordplay of the post, a tactic the POC @Pidgejen used in their tweet to imitate racist language and practices of othering often used by white people.

Additionally, Zariah revealed in her linguistic history presentation that she was queer and in a relationship with a Mexican woman, which she described had shaped her language and understanding of the world. Her and her girlfriend’s intersectional memberships in multiple oppressed communities (Collins & Bilge, 2016) could explain her amplified sense of the danger inflicted by white racist men. Through an intersectional analytic lens, it could be implied that Zariah’s background as a black queer woman greatly informed her understanding of these @polibeats\_ posts highlighting racial violence due to the complex ways that she and her loved ones might be oppressed, targeted, and even endangered across multiple domains of power.

Through these examples, these pre-service teachers of color demonstrated unique interpretations that were shaped by their racial lenses. Much of the existing literature argues that prospective teachers of color often feel their lived experiences and their racial and cultural knowledge are not well-integrated into teacher education programs (Amos, 2010; Gomez et al. 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Sheets & Chew, 2002). However, the pre-service teachers of color in this study, and in this course assignment, found many @polibeats\_ posts and discussions to be relatable to them and their own perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, teacher candidates of color were able to engage with social justice issues through an authentic concern for the humanization of they themselves, their loved ones, and their communities, illustrating Quirocho and Rios (2000) claim that “many minority group teachers, in comparison with their European-American counterparts, are more likely to bring a critical, social justice orientation and consciousness that stems from their real, lived experiences with inequality” (p. 522). By positioning their lived experiences as not only gateways to discussing social justice issues on the @polibeats\_ account but also as valid and legitimate knowledge itself, this course assignment and this study could serve to better integrate the strengths that pre-service teachers of color bring to teacher education programs.

### **Awareness of race, racism, and white privilege**

When interacting with the @polibeats\_ posts, white participants also demonstrated an awareness of race and recognized examples of racism. In many of their reflections, they described how white privilege worked in society and in connections to

events they have witnessed in their own lives. There have been many theories on what it means to have a white racial identity and be an anti-racist educator. Helms's (1984; 1995) framework of white racial identity development describes a spectrum of statuses in which white educators could find themselves, for example, in a state that is oblivious to the race of others and their own ranging to a space of multicultural understanding that embraces a non-racist white identity. Leonardo (2009) argues that white people are not passive but rather active agents that can either invest in the racial discourse of whiteness and reap its benefits, be seemingly and superficially critical of whiteness, or enter into the "third space", a place of constant struggle and tension which works against their own complicity in racist structures and towards an anti-racist mission. These theories provide compelling backdrops to the following data pieces demonstrating how white prospective teachers engaged with @polibeats posts about race, racism, and white privilege.

For example, when Jenna was reflecting on a post about a white man who was charged with rape, she wrote,

To think that he only had to pay \$400 and served no jail time is crazy, and makes me think there might be the factor of white privilege involved. Sadly, I doubt if the same incident were to happen with an African-American man, that he would get off with a \$400 fee.

She acknowledged how race could work in favor of or against someone especially in front of the law. A few other participants responded to posts with examples such as this, noticing how whiteness benefits many while harming others.



White participants were also able to point out racist beliefs and implications in their families, their home communities, and themselves. In their reflections, three participants described the racist beliefs and actions of their families that they were now able to recognize “since... going to [college].” Ashley said, “Both of my grandfathers are racist, and are not ashamed of it... I have become more and more aware of the things they say, and how they act around people of color.” Marley shared in this experience, describing the beliefs of her family members about immigrants and people of color as “close-minded”, “extremely negative”, and “irrational.”

Two other participants described their hometowns and former classmates as racist. Parker criticized her elementary school, which was primarily white in a predominantly white neighborhood, for pretending to be diverse by posting banners featuring people of color. She wrote, “I think that this is problematic in the sense that these people were used solely for the color of their skin in order to sell a false reality.” In each of these cases, these participants, white women, were able to conduct a racial analysis of social scenarios and beliefs in their loved ones and home communities, making connections to the @polibeats\_ posts in relation to racism as it looked in their own lives.

While their ability to recognize this racism in their loved ones is important, in their responses, they made no reference to challenging those beliefs. However, critical consciousness requires reflection and *action* (Freire, 1970), and it seems that these white pre-service teachers are the exact target audience for recent cultural pieces such as “What to do about your racist AF uncle at Thanksgiving” (Richards, 2018), providing guidelines

and suggesting the responsibility of white people to call out their racist family members over the holidays when families are gathering together. Mobley and Fisher (2018) approved of this logic, sharing that they feel that, as political scientists, they have a civic duty to discuss politics at the dinner table, particularly in this political era. However, Sostaita (2016) argues that the focus on white people's discomfort with their racist or Trump-supporting family members draws the attention away from the threats that people of color are facing in this racial and political era. Engaging with these larger discourses and discussing ways for prospective teachers to translate their observations about their family members and home communities into action could further develop their critical consciousness.

In response to a post about police brutality, Jessie wrote, "our underlying biases that we think aren't there, and that many people fail to address about themselves. This is what makes racism so real and scary." Her recognition of the existence and danger of racism demonstrated a racial awareness that was contradictory to Picower's (2009) and Matias' (2016a) observations of white pre-service teachers' displays of denial and resistance to racial discussions. Furthermore, her use of the words "our" and "we" represented her inclusion of herself in this statement about racial biases, acknowledging her own complicity in the process of racism.

In response to a post about privilege, Melissa explained how it took her "20 years to understand and accept" her own privilege. She described, "so much of my ignorance to the idea of 'white privilege' came from me not being affected by any issues it pointed out, which goes to show my privilege even more." She was signaling how her privilege

had blinded her from understanding race and racism. She also shared that she had been on a long journey of understanding her privilege as a white person, demonstrating her emergence from a place of obliviousness or denial to being able to come to terms with the realities of her privileged position.

Katherine selected the following post (Figure 26) about race.



Figure 26: @polibeats\_ example #23, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote,

this one was a little difficult for me because I know I am a person of privilege because I am a white person. I don't think that I am a racist person, but I cannot disagree that white people are socialized to be racist.

While she recognized her privilege as a white person, she did not necessarily connect privilege with racism. She also seemed hurt by her association with the group that this post was directed at and even attempted to distance herself from it. In a similar reflection, Autumn wrote, “there will always be this struggle that I face of being a white privileged female and navigating my position.” While both participants acknowledged their privilege, they also expressed discomfort with their whiteness and the challenge of negotiating this position in their lives. However, Autumn seemed to portray possible entry into the “third space” (Leonardo, 2009) while Katherine might still be in a place of denial.

Ashley also expressed uneasiness with a post about white people, featured below (Figure 27).



Figure 27: @polibeats\_ example #24, (Polibeats, n.d.)

In her reflection, she wrote,

This made me kind of angry at first because he was generalizing and stereotyping white people. I also realized reading this I didn't know that Sikhs and Muslims

were different... After thinking through things I wasn't as angry but just frustrated because not every white person is racist.

Ashley was clearly offended by the statement “white people” because she felt like it was a generalization or a stereotype. However, she then admitted that the statement did apply to her, a white person, and after reflecting, she described that her emotions calmed down. Ultimately, her frustration was with her inclusion in a group of “racists”, and her final statement, “not every white person is racist”, shows her desire to be an exception to this stereotype, without ever discussing her own complicitness in relation to white privilege and white supremacy. This interesting change of emotions as well as her simultaneous representation inside and, what she perceived as, outside of a group of “racist white people” demonstrates the complex nature of pre-service teachers confronting their own whiteness and racism.

Many participants did outwardly discuss their own privilege as a white person, noting how race, racism, whiteness, and privilege had functioned in their own experiences. However, the location of these comments within the frameworks of Helms (1984; 1995) and Leonardo (2009) presented conflicting and unsettled representations of different components of a white racial and anti-racist identity. The participants demonstrated a range of perspectives: denial, acknowledgement and tension towards the existence of the social structure of racism and their complicity within it, the fluid and dynamic nature of which Helms (1984; 1995) described and anticipated. Further and individual exploration of these teacher candidates' beliefs and actions would give a better

assessment of the development of their white racial identity throughout the teacher education program and in this assignment.

In this study, both white pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers of color connected to @polibeats\_ posts through a racial lens that was informed by their own racial background. They were able to understand, analyze, and reflect on the @polibeats\_ posts about race using critical perspectives. Additionally, in their reflections, they discussed and shared micro-level scenarios that demonstrated how racism and white privilege played out and made connections to these scenarios and the @polibeats\_ posts from their role as either a white person or a person of color. Overall, race was a large theme in both the posts that were selected and the prospective teachers' interpretations of the @polibeats\_ account that was greatly informed by their own racial backgrounds.

### **PARTICIPANTS' RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS**

An enormous element of pre-service teachers' backgrounds that was prevalent in their reflections and linguistic histories was that of religion, specifically Christianity, an element of teacher candidates' identities that has rarely been considered in the teacher education literature (White, 2009). Eight of the 22 participants wrote about being a Christian in their reflections, and this religious connection perspective greatly informed their understanding of @polibeats\_ posts. Jessie explicitly stated, "most of them for me I was thinking through from the lens of a follower of Jesus." Not as a future teacher, not as a white woman, but as a Christian. As exemplified by Jessie, for many participants, their

perspective as a Christian was the most dominant aspect of their personal background that informed their interpretation of @polibeats\_.

Some @polibeats\_ posts highlighted inconsistencies in between Christian beliefs, political issues, and social justice. Many participants who strongly identified as a Christian chose to respond to these posts and agreed with the arguments made by @polibeats\_. For example, in response to a post about a Christian's mistreatment of gay couples, Mackenzie wrote that she did not believe in "using [her religion] to cast judgments about [others]." She acknowledged that many Christians "use religion as an excuse to hate a certain population of people", concluding her statement saying, "the Bible doesn't say we should hate and discriminate against gay people, in fact I believe it says the opposite." In this example, Mackenzie was agreeing with the hypocrisy that she said many Christians demonstrate in the hate-filled mistreatment of gay people which they justified through the Bible. In this example, she was commenting on a larger sociopolitical battle in the world of Christianity in which Guest (2001) argues that believers "on both sides" employ biblical references and interpretations to justify their acceptance or rejection of gay and lesbian populations. Her familiarity with this discourse appeared to form a large part of her understanding and opinions of this post as a Christian herself.

Claire noticed hypocrisy as well in her former Catholic high school and Jesuit university classmates' support of Donald Trump and his agenda. "Are you kidding me?" she wrote. "The entire Jesuit belief system is about Be Attentive, Be Reflective, Be Loving. Jesuits believe in *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person." She expressed

disbelief that her classmates, with whom she collectively participated in an education that encouraged service and care for individuals and communities, could support the MAGA mission that the @polibeats\_ account described as associated with “baby cages, Muslim ban, refugee ban, pussy grabbing, Charlottesville, Pocahontas, shithole countries, NFL protests, white supremacists, Puerto Rico, Mexicans are rapists, and refugees are terrorists.” She said that her former classmates “sit in judgment and entitlement” and wondered desperately how to convince them to return to their caring Catholic roots. In these comments, Claire expressed concerns for some right-wing Catholics’ “alliance of hate with evangelicals who support President Trumps’ policies” which was also condemned by the Vatican (Garcia-Navarro, 2017). She found her Catholic indoctrination to utterly oppose the policies and practices associated with Trump and discussed this element of her identity and her social circle to play into her interpretation of the @polibeats\_ posts.

In another example, Michelle responded to a post about the Covington Catholic School’s students who tormented a native man at an indigenous people’s march in Washington, D.C. She wrote,

As a Christian, I have gone to church learning the importance of loving my neighbors just as God as loved me. These boys are Christian, but why are they acting like this... Honestly these boys are definitely not showing God’s love. She found that these racist actions were not exemplifying the Christian love that she believed in. In this example, as well as in those of Claire and Mackenzie, these pre-service teachers’ Christianity facilitated their alliance with @polibeats\_ posts that stood



against injustice. Social justice has been identified as a central component of Christian theology, Biblical interpretations, and the Christian legacy (see Edwards, 2012), and in these cases, these prospective teachers engaged their Christian backgrounds to support their stances as people committed to social justice.

One participant, Jessie, recognized the intersections of politics and religion in the following @polibeats\_ post (Figure 28) in what she described as misuse of Christianity for political gain.

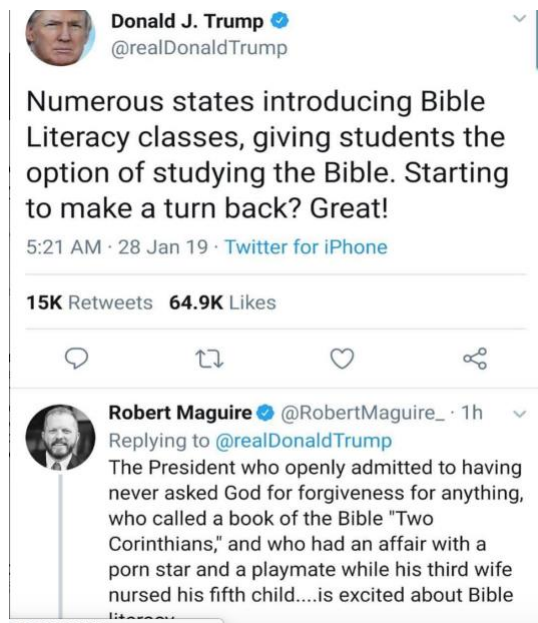


Figure 28: @polibeats\_ example #25, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She wrote, “Yes, this hurts me. As a Christian, it’s hard to watch a president claim Christianity for a political agenda, without exemplifying Jesus.” She argued, “If you really loved Jesus, you would know that Jesus hates injustice (because God is just), fights oppression, calls us to love and serve the poor, widow, and orphan.” Her reflection

showed her coupling of Christianity with social justice (Edwards, 2012), principles that she did not believe Trump was representing. Jessie’s reflection, and this post, were commenting on Trump’s explicit appeals to the ideologies of Christian nationalism, which for many, override his reputation as “not traditionally religious or recognized (even by his supporters) to be of high moral character” (Whitehead, Perry, & Baker, 2018, p. 150). Jessie, however, was not persuaded and expressed her disappointment in how her religion was being used to justify and advance an unjust political agenda by a man whose character and relationship with Jesus she questioned.

While most of the participants who named their Christianity in their posts agreed with the @polibeats\_ arguments as described in the previous example, Melissa, however, was deeply offended and “honestly frustrated” by the following post (Figure 29) which took direct aim at Christians.



Figure 29: @polibeats\_ example #26, (Polibeats, n.d.)

She felt that her religion was being framed as “bigoted and close-minded” and that the creator of this meme did not have “a firm understanding... of God’s identity” or of the Bible, something that she explained she believed was “without error and 100% true.” These comments show her inability or refusal to take a critical look at her own religion through a gendered lens as prompted by this post. Her steadfast commitment to her understanding of Christianity, God, and the Bible with such confidence limited her from entertaining or grappling with other perspectives that were offered through a feminist and critical perspective.

The tensions between Christian nationalist stances and critical stances were important to note. For instance, in her post-questionnaire, Melissa indicated that the account and this course assignment lost credibility early on because this post was so offensive to her. She was disappointed with how it portrayed Christians and “put one story on a group of people.” She even described @polibeats\_ as “an opinionated account” stating that it is “not a news source” and that she “didn’t trust everything they say” based on this specific post. This reflection and these comments demonstrated Melissa’s unshakeable commitment to her Christian identity and beliefs and to its role as the most powerful guiding perspective in her life. She was so deeply entrenched in her Christian identity and the ways that it was attacked in this post that she disregarded the other posts on this account, despite the fact that in her other reflections, she expressed support for many of its arguments about social justice. Her simultaneous acceptance and rejection of @polibeats\_ posts demonstrated the struggle and tension that she was experiencing as she negotiated different aspects of her sociocultural background and her understanding of social justice.

Melissa's response poses many questions for the consideration of how her Christianity intersects with her teaching and her perspectives on social justice. How will Melissa approach children and families from diverse backgrounds who might be, for example, gay or Muslim? How will she teach a science curriculum? How does she reconcile the ways that Christianity has been connected to violence, hate and abuse? How does her Christianity shape her understanding of what it is to be a teacher, especially of black and brown children? Are there ways that her Christianity aids her commitment to social justice?

These questions and Melissa's example are noteworthy because pre-service teachers' religious identities are not considered in the pedagogical methods and approaches of social justice-oriented teacher education (White, 2009), however, for Melissa and for the other Christian participants, they formed a large part of their ideological foundations and dispositions. White (2009) observed, "religion was silenced in a class where we were openly encouraged to deconstruct how notions of race, socio-economic class, gender, and sexual orientation impacted teaching and learning in public schools" (p. 857), pinpointing the irony that religion is often not incorporated as an important element of multicultural, democratic, or social justice-oriented education. While religion was not widely addressed as part of the teacher education program in this study, participants' own religious backgrounds still formed a strong part of their understanding of the @polibeats\_ posts and the social and political issues they featured.

The next section will present narratives of two purposefully selected teacher candidates. For each focal participant, I will provide an overview of their sociocultural background and life experiences as suggested by their linguistic histories and from knowledge we have shared through our researcher-participant and instructor-student relationships. I will then, in response to Research Questions #1 and #2, describe their

engagement with the @polibeats\_ account focusing on the posts, themes, discourses, and interpretations that they took up with consideration of their personal histories and their positions as future teachers.

### **ISABEL: FOCAL PARTICIPANT #1**

#### **Growing up in Spanglish on the Texas-Mexico border**

In her linguistic history, Isabel, a Mexican American woman, described growing up on the Rio Grande Valley on the Mexico border. She shared that her childhood memories hold many influences and memories of Mexico and Spanish. Everyone around her spoke Spanglish, a hybrid language practice which meshes Spanish and English and is common on the border (Anzaldúa, 1987), a language which Isabel said she speaks comfortably. As a child, she used to chase down the man selling elotes and the dulces truck after school and shared that with her family she would cross the border often to get “good Mexican food.” She remembered always wanting to know Spanish to be able to speak with her extended family and elders in her community and throughout high school and college took Spanish classes.

Isabel concluded that her studies have taught her a more academic English and Spanish. She shared a short anecdote of her abuela encouraging her Spanish, saying, “tienes que aprender mija”; meanwhile Isabel was thinking “that’s not the formal Spanish they taught me in college.” She was further motivated to learn more Spanish by her relationship with her boyfriend, whose parents were from Mexico and whose family spoke mostly Spanish.

Isabel also described her roles as a teacher and as a godmother as influential in her language choice and behavior. She wanted to be a “role model” and always tried to show her best self. She added that her language had also been greatly shaped by her experience in the teacher education program cohort. She described them as a diverse group and that she often learned new words or expressions from them.

### **Isabel’s engagement with @polibeats\_**

Throughout her reflections, Isabel selected posts about race, teaching, gun violence, and self-love and always supported the arguments made by @polibeats\_. She demonstrated a unique perspective on the two posts she had chosen about race that was likely driven by her status as a Latina woman. One post was about an elderly white man crying when he was gifted Michelle Obama’s new book for Christmas. She wrote, “THIS LITERALLY MADE ME CRY. Right away it reminded me that NOT all white people are racist.” These words “not all white people are racist” were found in some of the other participants’ reflections, however, the meaning and use were different. White participants were writing those words as a way to disclaim their association with racism and assure themselves and others that they were good people. In this case, Isabel, as a Mexican American was expressing that this post challenged her assumptions of and experiences with white people’s racism. This statement implied that she had had experiences supporting the idea that all white people are racist, and this post helped restore some hope she had for white people by showing her “an exception to the rule.”

Isabel also chose to respond to the following post (Figure 30) about racism.



Figure 30: @polibeats\_ example #27, (Polibeats, n.d.)

In response to this post, Isabel wrote about colorblindness, describing how white people say, “they do not see color” and about when they “claim that racism is not real”, all of which she said is “a load of lies.” She also wrote about the look mentioned in this post (Figure 30), saying, “the message is CLEAR and the feeling is UGLY.” She wrote so vividly about this look, like she knew it all too well, as if it had happened to her. The ways that Isabel connected deeply and personally to this post about race was informed by her own “cumulative social experience” (Britzman, 1986, p. 443) as a Mexican woman.

One of the biggest concerns that Isabel expressed in her reflections was the fear that was provoked by the existing state of gun violence and school shootings, which in 2018 were at all-time high levels of occurrences and deadliness (Center for Homeland Defense and Security, 2018). She chose the following post (Figure 31) as one of her ten reflections.



Figure 31: @polibeats\_ example #28, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Isabel wrote immediately, “SO IMPORTANT AND WHY HAVE THEY NOT DONE ANYTHING ABOUT THIS.” She went on to discuss how sad the repeated school shootings had made her and asked what would need to happen for schools to be protected through gun control. She claimed that people act as if immigrants are the ones who were dangerous; however, “almost all gunmen who have killed innocent lives are white males who claim insanity.” She concluded, “it honestly seems like a race thing.” In these comments, she was exhibiting her awareness of the complex entanglement of white masculinity, racism, and gun violence a topic of both popular and academic debates (Duxbury, Frizzell, and Lindsay, 2018).

In this same reflection, Isabel described an intense fear she had of school shootings to the point that it gave her nightmares. She said she had dreams in which she had to decide whether or not to risk her own life for her students’ safety, writing, “it scares me more than anything about being a teacher”, showing the depth to which she felt



the both imagined and possibly real threat of gun violence. Furthermore, Isabel expressed extreme frustration that “not much change has been done”, drawing attention to what she perceived as political stagnation about gun control that was unacceptable. In another post about the L.A. teacher strike, she shared that she participated in the March for Our Lives march. She wrote, “it felt so good out there because I know I was out there for a reason. But it made me sad because gun violence was happening so often that it had got to that point.” This example showed how her activism, particularly about gun control, was not only in her thoughts, conversations, and Instagram but also existed outside of the digital world. She described her participation in the march as “scary at first”, but she ultimately found it empowering.

Isabel chose three posts about teaching and activism which highlighted the L.A. teacher strikes, beginning one reflection with, “First ... WHY? Why do teachers have to go on strike for the RIGHT thing to be done.” Throughout her reflections, she expressed disbelief and disappointment with how teachers were treated and perceived in society. She listed multiple examples of how teachers are overworked, underpaid, disrespected, and deprofessionalized and described the education system as “unfair”. However, she praised teachers who went on strike, saying that “they do it because they care and want the best education for their students”, following by saying, “that is why I will do it.” She mentioned again her participation in the March for Our Lives March, saying that she marched “for the kids that would one day be in [her] classroom, knowing how important their safety is.” Throughout all of these examples, Isabel was showing an understanding of and admiration of teacher activism that works towards quality educational conditions

for both students and teachers. She demonstrated an understanding of challenging issues facing teachers surrounding pay, respect, and safety and a belief and interest in activist approaches such as strikes and marches. Her awareness of the political nature of teaching and the role that teachers have as civic being was reflected in her written responses.

A prominent theme throughout Isabel's reflections was voice. In a few reflections, she described a personal conflict she faced between speaking up or not, describing it as something she "battle[s] with all the time." She wrote, "I am always conflicted whether or not my voice will matter if I do speak up." While this doubt or insecurity could be perceived as an individual challenge, it could also be view from a collective perspective, noting her membership in subordinated communities as a woman and as Mexican.

In another post Isabel had selected referring to Donald Trump, she expressed her disapproval of him and his actions and said, "why do people say we have a voice in voting and then it just gets squished on? Like what the heck man." In this statement, she expressed a sense of defeat in terms of whether or not her voice mattered particularly in the election. As someone whose identity was historically and doubly disenfranchised (Menchaca, 2011), Isabel's concerns about the impact of her vote was valid and dually shaped by her identity as a Mexican woman.

Isabel chose two posts about self-love from @polibeats\_. In one reflection, she wrote about her challenges in taking care of herself, sharing that while she always tried to be there for her friends, "behind closed doors I was dealing with my own problems." She wrote,

I always hide it though because I never want anyone to see me fail or struggle unless you are a close friend and I can open up... I just feel that I would never want to see a friend ever say they are not enough or not capable because everyone is. I just wish sometimes I heard that too if that makes any sense.

In this reflection, she, from a very vulnerable place, was sharing her experiences in the complex world of self-esteem, self-love, and self-care. Through the theme of voice, it could be implied that Isabel's challenges with the question of expressing herself were also tied to these deeper conversations of self-worth.

In both her linguistic history and in her reflections, she emotionally told her story about how she was bullied severely in high school and how it affected her wellbeing. However, she always tied this experience to how she aimed to care for her students in her classroom and intervene when she sees acts of bullying. In these instances and in her role as a teacher, she owned her voice and its power. In conclusion of her reflection about speaking up, she wrote, "my voice can be the voice that encourages my students to be kind and make a difference in the world." In response to the post about the teacher strikes, she concluded, "this message reminds me about how we are role models for our students and if we want them to take active roles in the world they live in, this is one way to show them how much they matter." In these examples, the intentions that she had as a teacher and in valuing her students' voices permitted her to assert her own.

In a similar connection, Isabel expressed general appreciation for the @polibeats\_ account, sharing that it affirmed her voice, ideas, and opinions. She described that it was "cool seeing what I had already been thinking but hadn't said verbally" be posted by

@polibeats\_, and it left her “feeling validated that other people say the same thing.” In her post-questionnaire, she wrote, “I learned about all the different insights and just how some people think the same and how my opinion should not be belittled because it's different. Our voices are powerful.” She claimed a part of this community and found strength in her voice when it was united with others. She indicated that she will continue following @polibeats\_ and still read and liked all of their posts “even though [she] finished the assignment a while back”.

Isabel’s relationship with the notion of voice was significant in her trajectory towards critical consciousness. Her participation in this digital community empowered her sense of self and her belief in her own voice. Feminists of color such as hooks (1994) call for “transgressive speech”, defined as a voice that speaks back to authority despite the consequences that it might bring. hooks argues, as summarized by Henry (2011), that “coming to voice enables one to locate herself, and express her inner feelings, needs, and desires and name the issues critical to the survival of an entire community” (p. 265). In her data, Isabel was alluding to interest in or aspiration for this type of voice in order to advocate for herself, her beliefs, and for her students, and this sensation was emboldened by her engagement with the @polibeats\_ account. As critical consciousness requires both reflection and action, Isabel’s steps towards amplifying her voice and her participation in social movements such as March for Our Lives demonstrated her commitment to developing her praxis as a social justice educator.

Engaging with this Instagram account appeared beneficial to Isabel even outside of her coursework. It could be implied that her background as a Mexican woman from the

border was represented by @polibeats\_ in a way that was not typical of traditional media, facilitating her deeper engagement with the account. It is also important to note that while this account might share non-dominant perspectives on many current social issues in a powerful way, Isabel was indeed participating in an affinity space (boyd, 2014) and felt affirmed rather than challenged in her engagement with this account. She was developing a collective identity that was building upon but also shaping her ideological dispositions (DeCook, 2018), which was a positive experience for her. As many pre-service teachers of color have expressed feeling their perspectives diminished or obscured in teacher education programs (Amos, 2010; Gomez et al. 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Sheets & Chew, 2002), the affirmation that Isabel experienced in this affinity space was necessary and embraced in line with the purposes and intentions of this study.

## **SAVANNAH: FOCAL PARTICIPANT #2**

### **Growing up in rural, small town Texas**

Savannah, a white woman, grew up on a farm with her mom, dad, and two brothers in an extremely small, poor town of 400 people in rural Texas. Most of the residents were farmers and ranchers, and the feed store was a prominent fixture of the community. There were 12 people in her high school class, and the whole school could fit on one school bus. While they were too small to have a football team, the whole town would attend basketball games every Friday night, and Savannah described that her participation in basketball and volleyball was central to her life, friendships, and knowledge. She also shared that she was born in the [Christian] church and was raised

knowing language and vocabulary of church. She described her hometown as “her favorite place to be.”

Savannah’s town was mostly African American and Mexican, and almost all of her friends were black. She admitted that, despite being “blindingly white”, she actually used to think she was black and described that she often adopted her black friends’ language and things that they did. Her parents’ accent, however, was “hick”, and it “drove her crazy”. She shared how she had lost most of her hick accent since coming to college and now found herself often correcting her parents’ language. Savannah accredited college with teaching her how to “talk more professionally and probably more as a normal human.” She shared that in the teaching profession, it is important to know vocabulary and proper language and described her role as a teacher as influential on her language.

#### **Savannah’s engagement with @polibeats\_**

In Savannah’s reflections, she signaled her lack of background knowledge and awareness of many of the social and political issues brought forth by @polibeats\_. In 9 out of 10 of her reflections, she indicated her lack of knowledge about the topic featured in the post she had selected, writing in one, “I don’t understand politics that well, so I’m limited in what I understand about most of these posts.” Savannah felt inept in her ability to respond to the issues in the posts due to her lack of background knowledge and often missed the meaning intended by @polibeats\_.

In three separate posts that she chose about the racist acts of students from Covington Catholic High School towards an indigenous man at the Indigenous People's March, she admitted to not knowing what was going on in the post and redirected her reflection towards other discussions such as her general ideas about racism, Trump, or politics. She described her feeling of being lost on this account, writing,

This is a prime example of recent politics that I have not heard about nor do I understand. I have no idea what this post is about because I am not up to date with current politics at all. I know I need to get into it, but it's so much work and I don't have much time. Also, most political issues require you to have knowledge of a previous political issue and that issue requires knowledge of another political issue. The cycle goes on and on. That's why keeping up with recent news and politics seems so daunting and probably a reason why I don't know much about what's happening in the world.

In this excerpt, Savannah described her continued disconnect and lack of understanding of political issues and the content of the @polibeats\_ account. Through her reflections, and in this piece of data, she exemplified the role of political prior knowledge as an important aspect of participants' background that informed their engagement with the account, and in this case, limited hers.

In her reflections, Savannah interpreted the arguments made by @polibeats\_ primarily through her own personal experiences with or perceptions of their meaning, rarely drawing on or fully understanding larger discourses, other events, or counterarguments related to the post. For example, Savannah disagreed with a post about

feminism based on her own perspectives. She wrote about her “Southern country values” and shared that she had had “experiences of men treating women kindly, where women are equal to men but at the same time men and women know they are different from each other and complement each other.” She followed by later saying, “I haven’t experienced men treating women badly, but I do know it’s out there”, and she acknowledged her privilege in not experiencing mistreatment the way other women had. However, these experiences had by women “out there” did not inform her consciousness or awareness of feminism. In her reflection, she questioned “the feminist movement”, describing that it sometimes “has women trying to show that they are better than men” rather than equal. She also outwardly stated her disagreement with abortion “in any form or fashion”. Ultimately, Savannah’s understanding of feminism was defined by three issues: mistreatment, equality, and abortion, and she interpreted each through an individual lens rather than as part of larger macro-level systems of oppression informed by a diverse array of experiences of others. Her Southern values deeply informed her understanding of issues of gender and feminism, in some ways limiting her ability to see the issues of social justice at hand, and furthermore, her lack of awareness of larger political conversations and feminist discourses interfered with her complete understanding of the intentions of the posts.

The only political topic on which Savannah had a strong opinion was that of gun control. She described her familiarity with and the commonality of guns in her hometown, sharing that “everyone has a gun and probably multiple” and recalled how “students would come to school with guns in the backs of their trucks.” She characterized



guns as “tools” that were needed by people who live in the country and shared that no one has ever been killed by a gun in her hometown during her lifetime.

From this perspective of her personal background, she expressed offense at how in school shootings people “blame the gun.” While she agreed that more safety precautions could be engaged, she also shared that more intense background checks and raising the age for being able to buy a gun would “only affect people who follow the rules... not the ones who do not.” She argued that “people who want to get their hands on a gun will get their hands on a gun”, signaling her perception of larger issues at play in the recent school shootings than just gun control. Her unique perspective as someone from the country led her to have more grounded opinions on the topic of gun control featured in a post by @polibeats\_; however, her personal familiarity and appreciation for guns in her unique experience countered more humanistic agendas and arguments for gun control.

In response to one post about how Princess Charlotte’s bilingualism is overly celebrated in contrast to that of immigrants, Savannah called it a “double standard”. She wrote, “if you’re educated and privileged and speak more than one language, it is respected and praised. If you’re from another country and learn English, you are looked at as less than and expected to know formal English.” She went on to discuss how everyone’s English was constantly developing and evolving and named how “there are so many forms of English and it’s crazy that certain forms are valued more than others.” She wholeheartedly supported the argument of this post, concluding her reflection saying, “How do you even help people become aware of this double standard? What a crazy

world we live in.” All of these ideas about language were addressed and shared in both the ESL Methods and Language Acquisition courses at the university teacher preparation program. Through these courses, Savannah was exposed to these discourses about power and oppression in language, and in this reflection, she had depth in her ability to connect and discuss the ideas and intended meaning of this post. While Savannah engaged with some posts through her own personal experiences and background, this provides a valid example of how course content laid the foundation for her to access and get behind this discussion of an issue of social justice.

In interpreting the arguments made by @polibeats\_, Savannah often attempted to entertain both sides and wrote from a place of conflict, confusion, and indecision in her own head. In particular, she signaled the contrast of her rural, small town background and her college education in the city as a place of tension in her beliefs. In response to a post showing the statement “We fucking hate Donald Trump” projected on a public building, she wrote,

This is a strong statement. It’s hard for me to see this page and this post because I have this internal conflict. I’m from a small town and my parents are conservative and a lot of my hometown is as well. [College town] is very liberal. I’ve come to see the reasons for the beliefs on both sides and I agree with things on both sides and don’t agree with things on both sides.

She named both her home town and her college town as influential but opposing contexts for the development of her political ideologies, leaving her often in spaces of conflict.

In response to a @polibeats\_ post about the border wall, Savannah again demonstrated this tension that was created by perspectives she had gained both in her home town and her college town. At the beginning of her reflection, she described the wall as “out of hand” and knocked its credibility as a strategy for border protection.

Later, she wrote,

Once again I was raised in a more conservative way where the data is shown on how much each documented citizen pays out of their pockets for an undocumented citizen to have free doctors, free hospitalization, free education, and the list goes on. I understand both sides. I don't know what to think once again because I have this internal conflict from seeing what [college town] has made me realize and from home where most people are conservative.

In this reflection, she acknowledged different viewpoints, informed by both her upbringing and her education; however, she never landed on a belief of her own but rather went back and forth between different ideas belonging to others. Ultimately, she figuratively “threw her hands up” and concluded her reflection by pointing out her perceived ignorance and lack of credibility on this political issue. She failed to recognize the wide range of knowledge that she had gained by traversing these different political and ideological landscapes and saw her state of “crisis” as debilitating instead of empowering.

In these examples as well as throughout her reflections, Savannah also carried a dichotomous perception of politics (i.e. conservative-liberal, Democrat-Republican), without acknowledging the existence and value of an in-between place, where she might

reside. In other pieces of her reflections, she described politics as “polarizing”, “hateful”, and “escalating” “on both sides” and signaled this divergent discontent nature as the reason for her disengagement with politics. She described that it was “not enjoyable to be around”. In another reflection, she wrote,

people today are so harsh and rude about everything political. It’s a scary world and is yet another reason why I don’t have an interest in keeping up. If I don’t know about it, then I don’t have to get into arguments with people about the issue.

In this piece of data and throughout her reflections, she revealed that her lack of awareness of politics was in some ways a choice, implying that she intentionally disengaged from these topics in order to protect herself from difficult social situations and from “crisis”. The ideological tension she experienced between her small town, conservative background and her liberal university left her feeling defeated and led her to detach from political issues and discussions.

However, this post (Figure 32) challenged her disengagement with politics in a deep way.



Figure 32: @polibeats\_ example #29, (Polibeats, n.d.)

In a remarkable reflection, Savannah wrote,

This post makes me realize my white privilege and how much I haven't experienced because I am a white female. The way this person talks about politics makes it seem like life or death. When I think of politics I do not think that way. I'm also coming from a place where I'm tired of politics because everyone is so hostile and angry. This makes me realize why it is the way it is. These people feel as though they are fighting for their lives. Because I am a white person, I am able to not worry about politics and still benefit in many ways. Other people cannot do

this. They have to fight to survive in a sense. These are the kinds of things that make me rethink how I look at things.

She acknowledged her white privilege that was permitting her to disengage from politics without any major repercussions. Through this post, she recognized that, for some, political engagement was crucial to their survival and wellbeing and caused her to “rethink how [she] look[s] at things”, possibly prompting a deeper exploration of her understanding of political issues.

Savannah’s background as a white woman from the country provided her with a unique lens for engaging with issues of social justice on this account. Her comfort with racial diversity and desire for equality, likely developed and expressed through her childhood, personal friendships, and Christian identity, demonstrated a caring and humanistic approach to many social issues, noted in her responses to posts about racism and double standards between different groups of people. However, her disengagement and lack of information about political issues limited her ability to comprehend and think critically about other posts on @polibeats\_. Savannah stated that “this Instagram account really makes me realize how much I am missing out on in the world” and expressed hopes of engaging more with political issues once she finished with school. However, she indicated on her questionnaires that she did not have an Instagram account and therefore would not continue following this account in the future. In order to achieve the political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1994; 2004) needed to be a social-justice oriented teacher, it is necessary that Savannah find an outlet or avenue to explore social and political issues and develop her critical awareness of their impact in her students’ world.

This chapter addressed Research Question #2, How do the pre-service teachers' backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media? The data included in this section has shown the ways that aspects of the participants' sociocultural backgrounds informed their interpretation of the issues of social justice that were featured on the @polibeats\_ accounts. Particularly, participants' gender, race, and religion provided personal lenses through which the content on the account was filtered, both facilitating and hindering their alignment with the social justice-oriented arguments made by @polibeats\_. Furthermore, these examples provided insight into how prospective teachers sociocultural backgrounds and identities shape the ways that they engage with topics of social justice and in turn, how they might approach their role as teachers of a culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

## **CHAPTER SIX: INSTAGRAM, PROBLEM-POSING, AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Participants' engagement with Instagram and the @polibeats\_ account was used in this study as a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) that presented social problems and issues to pre-service teachers to consider in their own reflection and action. The following chapter addresses Research Question #3, What possibilities and challenges exist in the use of social media for preparing social justice-oriented educators? Participants completed a pre- and post-questionnaire at the beginning and end of the study respectively, the data of which was used to answer this question. In the pre-questionnaire, they answered open-ended and multiple choice questions about their use of Instagram to understand their existing social media practices. The post-questionnaire asked both open-ended and multiple choice questions about their engagement and understandings of the @polibeats\_ account. The results of the questionnaires show an array of practices and perspectives of social media, the @polibeats\_ account, and its connection to their work as educators. I will begin by describing the results from Questionnaire #1 followed by an analysis of the results of Questionnaire #2. The implications of these results will be further examined in relation to the use of social media in social justice-oriented teacher education later in Chapter 7.

### **PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

The first questionnaire was aimed at gauging the participants' existing use and practices of social media, specifically the app included in this study: Instagram. Of the participants, 86% reported that they have an Instagram account. They indicated that they



used it often with more than half of them using Instagram once or more a day. This supports Alhabash & Ma's (2017) survey findings which indicated that Instagram was the app that college students spent the most time on daily. For this reason, the choice of Instagram as the medium for this study was fitting, as it built on the existing digital practices of many prospective teachers and college students.

The pre-service teachers in this study mostly followed accounts of friends and family as well as some accounts associated, for example, with fashion, food, fitness, travel, and memes (humor). Many described using Instagram primarily to keep up with family and friends, but also a few mentioned using Instagram to explore their own interests and to get insider looks at the lives of celebrities. Lee, Lee, Moon, and Sung (2015) found that Instagram users were motivated by 5 factors: social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking, and each of these were represented by teacher candidates' responses in this questionnaire. Generally, the participants were more active consumers than producers of Instagram content, scrolling and watching stories often but posting on their own only occasionally or even rarely.

While Instagram and other social media apps might have positive purposes, they can still have negative, unintended consequences for users, which were expressed by some pre-service teachers in the pre-questionnaire. Five participants described that they struggle with Instagram because it often led them to compare themselves to others, and a few mentioned that they did not use Instagram for this reason. Lup, Trub, and Rosenthal (2015) expressed concern for the connections between Instagram, social comparison, and depression that these participants referenced. In a study surveying Instagram users aged

18-29, they found Instagram use to have positive associations for wellbeing for people who followed non-strangers but negative associations for wellbeing, including social comparison and depression symptoms, for those who followed many strangers. These findings were insightful for understanding some of the challenges that prospective teachers possibly faced as Instagram users before participating in this study.

Questionnaire #1 intended to understand pre-service teachers' existing practices and uses of Instagram prior to engaging with the @polibeats\_ account for the purposes of this study. While many of the participants were already users of Instagram, consideration must be paid to how this study and course assignment asked them to use this social media app in a different way than they were accustomed. Media scholars have recognized the important discussion of context collapse, which boyd (2002) referred to "as how people, information, and norms from one context seep into the bounds of another" (Davis & Jurgenson, 2014, p. 477). In this sense, this study involved using Instagram, an app that participants primarily had used for personal reasons, for professional and academic purposes.

Furthermore, while participants had likely spent their time on Instagram in affinity spaces (boyd, 2014), following and interacting with other like-minded individuals and communities, this study required that they followed and interacted with an account that was unlike any that they had described formerly following. Therefore, this study disrupted some of the participants' existing uses, practices, and purposes of Instagram in ways that might have been problematic and/or powerful.

## **POST-QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

After completing their ten written reflections as part of the ESL Methods course, participants were asked to complete a second questionnaire which aimed to gather insight into their experiences engaging with @polibeats\_ on Instagram. Participants indicated interacting with the @polibeats\_ account in a variety of ways with no consistent method dominating across the participants. Some indicated seeing the @polibeats\_ posts while scrolling through their feed; others directly visited their profile to read and select posts. Some participants completed their ten written reflections in one sitting; some saw @polibeats\_ posts every day. A few indicated that they reviewed their posts simply for the purposes of the assignment while others described continued involvement with the account even after submitting their assignment. These different responses illustrate an array of practices that pre-service teachers used to complete the assignment and engage with the @polibeats\_ account, drawing nonconclusive results about how or if the method of interaction affected their written reflections.

### **Increased awareness of diverse perspectives and of social/political issues**

More than half of the participating prospective teachers described this assignment as an opportunity to learn about different understandings of political and social issues. They shared that they learned about others' backgrounds, insights, and opinions and felt more knowledgeable of different viewpoints and certain issues in society, an experience that they described as interesting, thought-provoking, enjoyable, and powerful.

Almost 75% percent of participants stated that this experience led them to be more informed of current events, political issues, and social concerns. A handful of participants signaled their lack of awareness of political and social issues prior to engaging with the account, stating that they did not watch the news or keep up with current events. Mackenzie wrote, “I’m a person who doesn’t really like talking about politics or hearing about them, so it’s easy for me to not know what’s going on.” Similarly, Savannah stated, “I don’t keep up with current news like I should and this Instagram account really makes me realize how much I am missing out on in the world.” These attitudes were similarly expressed by participants in Johnson & Ferguson’s (2018) study of recent college graduates’ civic identities in which participants described politics as “negative, divisive, nasty, offered little gratification, and ranged from a necessary evil to something that should be avoided altogether” (p. 518). In this sense, for some participants, this study required them to grapple with social and political issues that they typically avoided or distanced themselves from, forcing them to confront topics that they might have found unsettling.

However, through this assignment, participants indicated that they discovered “a whole other kind of Instagram accounts out there” that led them to develop a deeper and/or broader awareness of current societal issues. Mackenzie concluded, “this Instagram account was such a great way to be more informed.” Abigail wrote, “I gained a lot of valuable information because I do not watch the news, so it helped me feel connected to the world and what was going on.” It seemed that participants were unaware that Instagram could be used in this way, and they found that they benefited from

consuming news via social media, a practice and discussion of which has been steadily increasing (Boczkowski, Mitchelstein, & Matassi, 2018; Boulianne, 2016; Hermida, Fletcher, Korrell, & Logan, 2012; Pentina & Tarafdar, 2014).

Abigail also shared that engaging with this account “helped [her] question beliefs [she has] had in the past”, showing that this exposure to diverse perspectives enhanced her understanding of different topics and challenged her to reflect on her own viewpoints. It appears that her engagement with the account facilitated the interrogation of her own beliefs, values, and experiences, a process Bartolomé (2004) argues is necessary to arrive at political and ideological clarity. The appreciation for learning diverse perspectives and information about current issues afforded by @polibeats\_ was shared by more than half of the participants, and they benefited from this exposure in different ways.

### **Affirmed voice**

Six pre-service teachers felt that their voice and opinions were affirmed through the @polibeats\_ content. For them, this account formed an affinity space (boyd, 2014; Gee, 2005), and they enjoyed being a part of a like-minded community. Claire felt that the account was a “snapshot of her brain” and that she was amongst “kindred spirits... already thinking about most of what they posted/shared.” Mackenzie echoed this sentiment, stating, “it’s nice to know I’m not the only one who feels this way.” They felt that their perspectives were not only shared but endorsed by the @polibeats\_ account and its follower community.

Furthermore, four of these six participants who felt their voices were affirmed by @polibeats\_ were pre-service teachers of color, and of the pre-service teachers of color in this cohort, all but one made this comment in their post-questionnaire. Both Michelle, a Korean woman, and Zariah, a black queer woman, wrote “I loved this page.” They both stated that they found their posts to be educational, powerful, and funny and that they often shared the posts with their friends. Ariana, a biracial woman, wrote that it was “cool to see other like-minded people” on @polibeats\_, sharing that when looking through their content, she thought, “wow, this is exactly what I’m thinking.” Isabel also felt this way, describing that it was, “cool seeing what I had already been thinking but hadn’t verbally saying and seeing that people had posted and feeling validated that other people say the same thing.” Isabel went on to write that it demonstrated for her “the power of voice” and led her to consider “how [her] voice should not be belittled because it’s different.” These participants gained a sense of validation from the @polibeats\_ account and community, leading them to believe that their opinions and experiences were justified and valuable. Furthermore, Isabel found her engagement with this account to be empowering and inspired her to take up space with her opinions and her voice.

The experience that pre-service teachers had with the @polibeats\_ account was significant because many teacher candidates of color have described their teacher education programs as unwelcoming of their perspectives and lived experiences (Amos, 2010; Gomez et al. 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Sheets & Chew, 2002), greatly skewing the curriculum and lens of teacher education programs under the pervasive veil of whiteness

(K. Brown, 2014). For pre-service teachers of color to describe a course assignment as affirming demonstrates the potential of using an account like this in teacher education to not only expose some prospective teachers to new and diverse perspectives but also to incorporate those of others in authentic and holistic ways. This sense of validation and positive experience participating in a like-minded community was powerful for these pre-service teachers, particularly those of color.

### **Affordances of social media**

In some instances, participants' comments regarding what they learned through this assignment spoke to some of the affordances and uses of this social media platform. One big theme was teacher candidates' preferences for social media news consumption. Only one participant, Laila, shared that she struggled with the idea of social media as a news source in general due to the limited nature of the information shared in posts and mentioned that for this reason would no longer follow @polibeats\_ in the future. However, a handful of other participants stated that they preferred social media as an alternative source for news.

Marley described that consuming information about current events on @polibeats\_ "was easier than watching the news" because it was "too big of a flood of information." Christina shared that her father had mentioned to her previously that he had read that many young people were now getting their political information from social media referring to the increased consumption of online news which has been documented and explored in recent years (Boczkowski, et al., 2018; Boulianne, 2016; Hermida, et al.,

2012; Pentina & Tarafdar, 2014). In fact, a recent survey of news consumption by the Pew Research Center indicated that 62% of U.S. adults access news on social media (Gottfried and Shearer, 2016). While her father was shocked by these practices, what he perceived as a generational shift, Christina described that she enjoyed the multimodal nature of the posts and found it to be “more relevant and interesting than watching the news.”

Marley also shared that she would come across posts or topics that she was unfamiliar with and was then prompted to go research and find more information about them. She said the ease with which she was able to research issues was facilitated by her social media news consumption, as she would simply switch to another app or platform to begin searching for more information. Christina also mentioned using other social media sites such as Reddit to understand information from the posts. These practices demonstrate the ways that participants engaged other digital literacies in connection to their use of Instagram in this assignment.

In addition to discussions of relevance, interest, and ease, a possible factor that might have affected their preference for social media news consumption but was unnamed by participants relates to notions of time, schedule, and typical media consumption. As more and more young people are abandoning live TV in exchange for streaming services (Lee, Nagpal, Ruane, & Lim, 2018), access to live news media is likely decreasing amongst this population. Additionally, it could be questioned whether participants’ time or schedule constraints permit them to sit down to “watch the news.”



However, intentional or incidental consumption (Bergström & Jervelycke Belfrage, 2018) of @polibeats\_ posts can take less than 10 seconds and can be accessed on a device that every participant has and uses daily. As described by Boczkowski, Michelstein, and Matassi (2018), “news comes across when... in a moment of leisure” (p. 3523), as one is scrolling their feed, modeling the context collapse that boyd (2002) referenced. The affordances of social media in terms of time, access, relevance, and interest for these participants might have attracted participants to the idea of social media as an alternative to “watching the news.”

Another affordance of social media which was named by a few participants accounted for the ability of this account to feature diverse and often marginalized perspectives. Sofia wrote, “this account provides an opinion that doesn't always appear in the media and it was really interesting to see the different perspectives.” Zariah echoed this argument, writing, “it not only covers the news but social issues that we won't see on the news.” In both cases, the participants, both women of color, were noticing the ways that social media affords a space for diverse opinions that might not always be included in mainstream media, which was a central element in this study's design and purpose. The engagement with @polibeats\_ intended to expose pre-service teachers to perspectives that have long been marginalized by traditional media sources and dominant society but that might represent some of the experiences or issues of their students and communities.

Laila shared that she was able to learn “more about the opinions of others”, following by saying, “in my sphere, political talk is usually censored.” This comment demonstrates an affordance of social media to share political perspectives in ways that were not accessible to her in her everyday life. For example, she was able to learn from the perspectives posted by @polibeats\_ without having to interrogate the individual thoughts of people in her life and disrupt the norms of their relationships. This comment implies that the @polibeats\_ account facilitated Laila’s digital participation in social and political conversations that would not have been afforded to her in her non-digital life.

Another aspect of this assignment that prospective teachers enjoyed related to the Instagram cultural phenomenon of memes. Memes are understood as a humorous combination of text, image, and/or video that are shared repeatedly within the Instagram community. As described by DeCook (2018) and as used by the @polibeats\_ account, memes can be “bite-sized nuggets of political ideology” (p. 485) and “powerful in the construction of collective identity and for expressing and reinforcing political views, including resistance” (p. 488). The @polibeats\_ account uses memes frequently as a way to express views, draw attention to contradictions, call people out, and provide critiques in relation to current social and political issues.

This tactic was picked up by participants, and many participants selected posts containing memes that they found humorous. Comments such as “this is so funny!!!!!!”, “oh man, this got me laughing”, and “oh, how I just love the internet” were common in their reflections, followed by comments of how they saw truth in the post’s joke. The

following post (Figure 33) highlighted contradictions in arguments composing anti-immigrant rhetoric.



Figure 33: @polibeats\_ example #30, (Polibeats, n.d.)

Marley described this post as “really funny and accurate” and said that she loved how it was “calling people out.” This post not only drew on the cultural form of a humorous meme to make its point but also was possibly emboldened to make this observation by the affordances of social media. Social networking sites have been critiqued for creating a method for people to say things they might not always say in face-to-face context because they can “hide behind the keyboard”, which might be the case in many of the @polibeats\_ posts. However, in light of the increase of hate crimes in this political era (Giroux, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.b), this “keyboard courage” could also be thought of as a way for a marginalized and threatened community to provide important and necessary commentary from a protected space.

Autumn stated that there were a few humorous posts that she shared with others, saying about one post, “I think I have sent it to like 10 people because it is just too funny” while Michelle described “rewatching [a] clip over and over” because “it gave [her] a good laugh.” These elements of humor presented opportunities for the participants to engage with the post and its message, sometimes repeatedly, and even prompted them to share it with others. The rewatching of humorous posts and then sharing them with others refers to certain digital cultural practices of memes on Instagram, where users are able to revisit a post multiple times and then send it to others to share the laugh. This demonstrates the role of memes in the development of a collective identity, the creation of an ideological community, and the production of larger social movements (DeCook, 2018). Furthermore, memes, as well as humor in general, have been characterized as

spaces of agency and resistance (i.e. Lenhardt, 2016; Pavlovic, 2016) and therefore serve important purposes in the @polibeats\_ account and in the development of pre-service teachers' political and ideological clarity.

In these pieces of data, participants appreciated certain practices or affordances of Instagram that they experienced in this study such as the exposure to diverse opinions, the sense of an affinity group and how it affirmed their voice, and the use of memes. However, it is important to also discuss the ways that these same affordances are used by other ideological communities to advance their causes and grow their community. DeCook (2018) observed the digital practices of a young men's group called the "Proud Boys", which has been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an extremist hate group that propagates white nationalist and misogynistic rhetoric. DeCook's findings suggest that alt-right groups such as the Proud Boys also benefit from the digital practices, norms, and affordances of social media platforms such as Instagram and use them to spread their message. Therefore, these affordances are not unique to @polibeats\_ or to this study and do not challenge the reality that opposing ideologies and their communities as well as systems of oppression exist in the digital world just as they do in real life.

### **POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

Over half of the participants shared that they enjoyed the assignment or found it to be interesting and thought-provoking. They described the experience as informative, engaging, and even fun. One participant, Chloe, stated it "had a significant impact on me

as a person and as an educator”, following with a “thank you! 😊.” Over half (55%) indicated that they will continue following the account, and five (23%) shared that they might continue following the account.

A few participants shared that they were unaware that Instagram accounts of this sort even existed. These comments make sense considering pre-service teachers’ indications on their pre-questionnaire that they mostly followed accounts of friends, family, celebrities, and interests. These prospective teachers were appreciative that this assignment led them to be exposed to a different world of social media. Autumn wrote, “it made me want to look into following more accounts like this.” Katherine shared that,

Polibeats posts made me step back and actually think about the content I was taking in. Most of the people I follow post pictures that don't really require much thinking about. I think "oh that's so cool" or "oh they look so great". Polibeats made me ask myself "do I agree" "why or why not".

The @polibeats\_ posts pushed participants to use Instagram to explore their thinking about different issues rather than simply consuming the pictures posted by their friends and family. These examples demonstrate how the assignment asked participants to engage with social media in a way that they typically had not previously used.

Some participants acknowledged the wide range of content and perspectives on the internet and on social media and how the biases of both the accounts and the consumers are intertwined in the meaning that is constructed from each post. A few participants expressed aversion to the biases exemplified by @polibeats\_. Three indicated that they found it to be very “one-sided”. Jenna suggested that “it would have been cool

to have followed an account with a mix of liberal and conservative posts/viewpoints and be able to see the differences and pick from those.” She implied that differences in political affiliations created barriers in her enjoyment of engaging with the account and was advocating for a diverse range of political beliefs to be represented in the assignment.

One participant, Melissa, outwardly expressed extreme disdain in her engagement with the @polibeats\_ account. She noted that “not many” of the posts were relevant to her work as a teacher and with her students. She also shared that the account “lost credibility early on because some of the posts were offensive to her” in her Christian identity. She felt that the account portrayed Christians as “close-minded” which was hurtful to her and was “putting one story on a group of people”, inaccurately representing Christians in a generalized way. She felt that their posts about Christianity were not well-informed or researched, leading her to not trust the other things that they posted about. She found the account to be extremely biased and one-sided, describing it as an “opinionated account – not a news source.” While other participants might have shared similar concerns, Melissa was the only one who explicitly described her disapproving perception of the account and both acknowledged and enacted her inability to connect to other content in the account due to this disconnect she experienced with their posts about Christians.

Jessie, Jenna, and Melissa, three participants who expressed critiques of the biases and perspectives represented by @polibeats\_, were among the 5 participants who indicated that they would not continue following the account in the future. This decision

was likely related to their disagreement with the perspectives represented in their posts and offense that they took related to their own beliefs and perspectives.

Claire referenced that all different accounts and beliefs can be represented on social media and that most posts are interpreted through the consumer's bias and lens.

Jessie also made this observation, writing,

I learned that there is a lot of content on the internet and all different perspectives.

You can basically find anything that fits your perspectives, causing you to think you are right because somewhere, someone else is saying the same thing.

Both she and Claire were noticing the ability of a social media community to affirm and amplify perspectives of all different types, which can be seen by the ways that both @polibeats and the Proud Boys use Instagram (DeCook, 2018). Rather than affording the opportunity to expand cross-group understandings, Jessie expressed concerns about social media often leading to further confidence in one's opinion and further division between communities across society. She was speaking about the concerns for ideological polarization on social media which Spohr (2017) describes as "the assumption that algorithmic curation and personalization systems place users in a filter bubble of content that decreases their likelihood of encountering ideologically cross-cutting news content" (p. 150). In this sense, the technological mechanisms of social media platforms can cultivate a tailored affinity space for a user based on the content that they and their community engages with. Flaxman, Goel, and Rao (2016) found online and social media news consumption to simultaneously lead to ideological segregation through filter bubbles as well as to greater exposure to opposing perspectives; however, they argued



that these observations were modest and not extremely different than offline news consumption. Through this literature, Jessie and Claire's concerns are warranted but also do not present a challenge that is uniquely presented by the means of social media.

Claire, a second-career teacher candidate in her 40's and a mother of two, also warned against the perceived dangers of social media; however, she was the only participant who expressed these concerns. She noted how the limitations in length and level of expression dictated by Instagram captions and Twitter character limits shape one's message, stating, "while you don't intend to exclude people, you can't share the full depth of all that you're thinking and inevitably end up offending someone." These comments were exemplifying the transactional process (Rosenblatt, 1978) of a social media text, where both the author and the audience use their own experiences and perspectives to make meaning of a post. In particular, she was drawing attention to how the brevity of social media texts (see Barnard, 2016) implies a larger narrative which can be open for interpretation by the reader. Claire also pointed out that anything you put on social media "exists forever", at times leading to unintended consequences, expressing a concern that might impede some pre-service teachers' interest and willingness to use social media as an element of teacher education.

Of the other two participants who indicated that they would not continue following @polibeats, both had issues with the medium of social media. One, Savannah, was not an active user of Instagram. In her pre-questionnaire, she shared that she used to have Instagram but "it took too much of my time when I had it." She continued saying, "I also felt as though I was constantly comparing myself to others." Many users of social

media do indicate spending large amounts of time on their phones; Alhabash & Ma's (2017) participants averaged around 100 minutes a day on Instagram. Additionally, the notion of comparison on social media and its relation to women's perceptions of self-esteem and self-worth is a common topic of concern amongst social media users, leading many to abandon their accounts or use of these apps (see Lup, Trub, & Rosenthal, 2015). While Savannah shared that this was a "fun/interesting/thought provoking assignment", her disengagement with the medium itself, Instagram, led her to discontinue her interaction with @polibeats\_.

I find it important to share my own Instagram practices at the time of this study to acknowledge how my own lens created a bias on my interpretation of the possible use of social media in social justice-oriented teacher education. I, like most of the participants, have an Instagram account that I use multiple times a day, and I tend to be more of a consumer rather than a producer of content. As opposed to the participant in this study, Claire, who expressed concerns about the limitations of the medium itself, I engage with Instagram without worry or concern for issues of safety, privacy, or permanence. I use Instagram for communication, entertainment, inspiration, and information, following accounts of my family and friends, celebrities, memes, fashion and home bloggers, local organizations, and critically oriented accounts such as @polibeats\_.

I began following accounts like @undocumedia and @polibeats\_ a few years ago and have appreciated the spontaneous and incidental nature of information that I gain about current issues which allows me to be more informed. Furthermore, I have deeply valued the variety of voices, experiences, and perspectives that I am exposed to by

accounts like @polibeats\_, viewpoints that prompt my own self-interrogation, political and ideological clarity, and critical consciousness. Instagram does affect my emotional state because I too sometimes struggle with social comparison on Instagram, and like the participants experienced, sometimes certain posts on accounts like @polibeats\_ are jarring, challenging or disturbing to me. I on occasion have taken a few months' hiatus from the app or thinned down my "Following" list in response. I share these perspectives to demonstrate that my Instagram practices highly resemble those of the participants both before and during their participation in the study. While I see this lens as a strength in understanding their perspectives of Instagram and this account, I also acknowledge that my own practices led to assumptions and biases in the emerging results featured in this chapter.

Ultimately, prospective teachers engaged with the @polibeats\_ account, social media, and this assignment in different ways based on their perspectives of different political and social issues and their practices as users of social media. These examples and this analysis provided important insights for the consideration of social justice-oriented social media use in teacher education, which will be further examined in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine pre-service teachers' experiences with social justice-oriented social media as a possible element of their preparation as teachers. More specifically, this research study explored the ways in which participants interpreted and engaged with the content on the @polibeats\_ Instagram account with particular consideration of their sociocultural backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, this study aimed to better understand the possibilities and challenges of using social media in social justice-oriented teacher education.

This qualitative case study used a theoretical framework informed by themes of teacher identity and humanizing pedagogy. Data analysis was conducted in consideration of the following three understandings: 1) the teacher's biography (Britzman, 1986), including their personal background and past experiences, constitutes an important aspect of pre-service teachers' perspectives of teaching, schooling, and society, 2) the use of social media in this study was a part of the teacher education program that aimed to model a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) and push students into a state of crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) as part of their training as critically conscious educators, and 3) the goals of this type of social media use was to gauge and engage prospective teachers' political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) as a central aspect of their future work as social justice-oriented educators.

Given the data presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, the findings address the following research questions: 1) How do pre-service teachers interpret and engage with

issues of social justice through interactive social media? 2) How do the pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds inform how they understand issues of social justice through interactive social media? 3) What possibilities and challenges exist in the use of social media for preparing social justice-oriented educators? Themes were presented in each chapter to display how I understood and analyzed the results of the data in this study in light of the research questions.

Chapter Four addressed Research Question #1, describing the ways in which participants interpreted the social justice-oriented content on the @polibeats\_ Instagram account. The teacher candidates in this study engaged with a variety of social justice issues and shared robust understandings and analyses of the @polibeats\_ posts in their written reflections. The themes in this chapter noted the approaches that the pre-service teachers used to understand and speak to the issues on the account. They often displayed emotional reactions to the posts and drew on a variety of connections to other sources to analyze @polibeats\_'s arguments. In their written reflections, they wrote extensively about their students and their roles as teachers, approaching many issues of social justice through this lens. Some participants also sometimes rejected or challenged the @polibeats\_ arguments and provided counterarguments of their own. Through these different strategies, participants in this study engaged with notions of social justice displayed on the account.

Chapter Five responded to Research Question #2 by analyzing how participants' sociocultural backgrounds informed their understandings of the social justice issues on @polibeats\_. This chapter showed that prospective teachers' gender, race, and religion

played active roles in their interpretation of the account's content. The data in this chapter demonstrated how participants from different backgrounds engaged with the social justice issues on the account differently, arguing that pre-service teachers' engagement with the account was heavily rooted in their sociocultural backgrounds.

Chapter Six shared themes related to Research Question #3, exploring the ways that social media, in this case an Instagram account, worked within prospective teachers' preparation as social justice-oriented educators. The use of Instagram in this study and course appealed to participants as an engaging endeavor that asked them to use the medium in a new way than they were accustomed to. It led some participants to an increased awareness of diverse perspectives that were afforded by the democratic and social nature of a medium like Instagram. This medium and account also provided for some a sense of an affirmed voice and participation in a like-minded community. However, this chapter also discussed some of the challenges of using social media as a pedagogical tool and space, considering the risks in both participants' personal relationships with and uses of Instagram and the affordances of the medium in larger power structures.

The themes in these three chapters described the ways that pre-service teachers interpreted social justice issues prompted by social media considering their interpretative approaches, sociocultural backgrounds, and the role of the medium itself. The previous three chapters collectively inform the three findings from this study, which are detailed in this chapter. Finding one argues that the pre-service teachers in this study were in fact entering into crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) and were on a trajectory to political and

ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004). Finding two emphasizes the role of pre-service teachers' sociocultural backgrounds as well as both their past and present experiences in their development as critically conscious teachers. The final finding suggests that social media could be used as an engaging pedagogical tool in social justice-oriented teacher education. In the following sections, I will address each of these three findings with their associated implications and recommendations for teacher education. Then I will acknowledge limitations and share directions for future research. Lastly, I will close this manuscript with concluding thoughts on this study.

#### **FINDING 1: PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ARE ENTERING INTO CRISIS**

Currently, in teacher education literature, concerns abound for the linguistic and cultural mismatch between the backgrounds of teachers and their students (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2006; Gay & Howard, 2005; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012) due to the fact that today's teaching corps is predominantly white, middle-class, and female while the K-12 student population grows increasingly diverse (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some teacher education programs have begun to center theories and practices that attend to multicultural and multilingual learners and the social justice-oriented capacities of pre-service teachers in their coursework (Agarwal, et al., 2010; Conklin, 2008; Gorski, 2009; Kapustka, et al., 2009; Lucas, et al., 2008; McDonald & Zeichner, 2009; Seidl & Conley, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Whipp, 2013).

Education scholars oriented toward social justice argue that this type of learning on behalf of prospective teachers is important, especially in order to work as an educator

committed to humanization of and for all. Kumashiro (2000a) argues that entering into “crisis”, a space of learning and unlearning about the world, while uncomfortable, is necessary to become, and remain, anti-oppressive educators. Bartolomé (2004) also argues that teachers’ interrogation of their own beliefs is needed to be adequate and humanistic teachers of marginalized student populations and that their development of ideological and political clarity is imperative. However, many pre-service teachers, particularly those who are white, have been characterized as being uninformed and resistant to learning about issues of equity, diversity, and social justice in their teacher education programs, particularly with respect to the topic of race (Fasching-Varner, 2012; Marx, 2004; 2006; Matias, 2016a; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Matias, et al., 2014; Matias, et al., 2017; Picower, 2009).

The data in this study, however, showed otherwise. In this study, pre-service teachers were, in fact, entering into “crisis” in their written reflections responding to social justice-oriented posts on the @polibeats\_ Instagram account. They engaged in discussions of race, gender, language, class, religion, and politics and commented on the ways that these power structures were manifesting through the issues of, for example, police brutality, gun violence, rape culture, and anti-immigrant sentiment in current events that were shared by @polibeats\_. They generally demonstrated eagerness and comfort agreeing, and at times disagreeing, with the arguments made by the content on the account, and each participant supported at least one post that argued against injustice.

Of the 22 participants, each wrote at least one reflection on the topic of race and generally demonstrated a robust understanding of institutionalized racism and the effects



of white privilege. For the most part, they did not engage in demonstrations of denial, resistance, shame, or guilt as found by Matias & Zembylas (2014), Matias, et al. (2014), Matias (2016a), and Picower (2009). More so, they demonstrated acceptance and awareness of the reality of race and its implications. At times, they, primarily white women, named tensions that they felt, but these comments could often be interpreted as evidence of their “crisis” (Kumashiro, 2000a) and possible engagement in the “third space” of a white identity, which Leonardo (2009) describes as a place of constant struggle.

The teacher candidates in this study were considering social justice issues of all types on both micro and macro levels and were delving into the implications for their students and in their teaching careers. This data shows participants’ location on a trajectory towards political and ideological clarity, which Bartolomé (2004) defines as the development of teachers’ understandings of the sociopolitical realities of schools and their students’ lives while also challenging their own perspectives and experiences within a hegemonic society. In facilitating teachers’ development of political and ideological clarity, she argues,

the idea is simply to open up students to a wide range of experiences so that they can expand, hold up to a critical light, and adjust their own ideological lens in ways that make the classroom more inclusive, exploratory, and transformative. (p. 117)

The data in this study portrayed pre-service teachers' willing participation in this process and their commitment to self-interrogation, potentially leading to a more humanizing learning experience for their students.

The question remains of what factors led these participants to a space of such open engagement with discussions of social justice and the ability to be vulnerable in their own process of self-interrogation and awareness. While the data in this study did not intend to answer this question, in their written reflections, many participants did recognize their teacher education coursework as one experience in their biography (Britzman, 1986) that facilitated their understanding of some of the social issues featured in @polibeats\_ posts. It could be suggested that this teacher education program as a whole prepared the prospective teachers ideologically to be able to engage with this Instagram account in this way; however, investigation of this is beyond the realms of this study. Regardless, pre-service teachers in this study challenged characterizations of being resistant to discussions of social justice issues but rather demonstrated a generally accepting, earnest, and vulnerable attitude towards these topics, possibly as a demonstration of their emerging critical consciousness.

### **Implications and recommendations**

As teacher educators strive to prepare the next generation of critical, social justice-oriented teachers, they have been exploring different approaches that facilitate the development of multicultural awareness and critical consciousness amongst their students. The first finding from this study provides insights into how teacher educators

could broach discussions of social justice with pre-service teachers by building on the practices that they were using to engage with social and political issues on @polibeats\_.

*Anticipating, embracing, and using emotions to develop critical consciousness*

One of the primary ways that pre-service teachers interpreted the issues of social justice on @polibeats\_ was through their emotions, often having sentimental reactions to the posts. While the presence of emotions in prospective teachers' engagement with issues of social justice is not new (Matias, 2016a; Matias et al., 2017; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Picower, 2009), I propose that we begin to approach pre-service teachers' emotions in more constructive ways in recognition of their entry into crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) and their status along a trajectory to political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) and employ them in our quest for social justice-oriented teacher education.

In this study, the participants shared expressions of pride and hope and found inspiration from different stories of compassion, activism, and kindness on @polibeats\_. They also expressed sadness and anger, typically motivated by an act of injustice featured in one of the posts. The teacher candidates in this study generally did not display typified emotional reactions such as denial, shame, or guilt about injustices as found by other teacher education scholars; however, there were a few instances in which this occurred.

Zembylas (2007a) defines emotional knowledge as “a teacher’s knowledge about/from his or her emotional experiences with respect to one’s self, others, and the wider social and political context in which teaching and learning takes place” (p. 356)

and argues that it should be a topic of importance in teaching and teacher education. As pre-service teachers' learning about issues related to social justice has been described many times as an emotional process (see Matias, 2016a), teacher educators should therefore anticipate that their students will respond emotionally to social justice-related material and concepts throughout their coursework. However, essentializing or deficit approaches to teacher candidates' emotions should be avoided. For example, the concept of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) is often signaled in white people's emotional reactions to discussions of race and functions to deny or obscure the existence of racism and "reinstates white racial equilibrium" (p. 54). However, this study suggests that white fragility should be understood as emotions that impede, limit, or stop one's learning and not equated to the same sense of tension, struggle, or discomfort that pre-service teachers might feel while in a state of crisis. Knowing and embracing that critical emotions and emotional knowledge are a central part of the pre-service teachers' discomfiting "crisis" (Kumashiro, 2000a), as they learn and unlearn about power and oppression in the world, better prepares both the teacher educators and the prospective teachers themselves to grapple with these emotions in a productive way rather than pushing them to the side. Teacher educators should anticipate and build upon these displays of emotion to open up deeper discussion about the power structures of the world and thus, of schools.

In this study, one particularly salient emotion in pre-service teachers' reflections was that of anger, which Zembylas (2007b) describes as a potentially productive emotion that can be mobilized for the purposes of social justice. He explains that although notions of anger are often condemned in educational spaces, a politicized moral anger (Boler,

1999) is likely inevitable and also could be useful and therefore, desired. Boler (1999) defines moral anger as a response to a perceived injustice. Zembylas (2007b) further explains,

an important aspect that distinguishes moral anger from other kinds of anger is the notion of someone becoming angry as a witness of gross violations of justice, humanity and dignity; in other words, moral anger is what motivates someone to oppose injustice (p. 16)

In this sense, anger was an appropriate and constructive emotion for pre-service teachers to have in reaction to instances of injustice and dehumanization highlighted by @polibeats\_, and expressing and exploring this as part of their teacher education coursework could lead to action and change.

However, defensive anger (Boler, 1999) can and also did emerge amongst prospective teachers in this study, defensive anger being an angry response to an instance in which one perceives to be threatened themselves. Zembylas (2007b) explains, “defensive anger can be described as a protection of one’s beliefs, values and sense of identity; thus fear of losing those is a fundamental feature of defensive anger” (p. 18). This type of defensive anger manifests as an act of self-protection and can “be interpreted not so much as a righteous objection of one’s honor, but more as a defense of one’s investments in the value of the dominant culture” (Boler, 1999, p. 191). This type of defensive anger was likely demonstrated in some of the previous teacher education literature (Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Picower, 2009) and was indeed demonstrated by some participants in this study when @polibeats\_ posts offended or threatened their

backgrounds and beliefs. In these instances, Zembylas' (2012) recommendation of the pedagogy of strategic empathy (Lindquist, 2004) might be useful to explore and deconstruct the roots of their defensive anger. He argues,

teacher educators have to be willing to use empathy strategically to engage in in-depth critical inquiry of their students' troubled knowledge (Jansen, 2009), that is, an emotional willingness to engage in the difficult work of empathizing with views that one may find unacceptable or offensive. (p 333)

In this statement, he is advising that teacher educators embrace and engage with pre-service teachers' defensive anger and "troubled knowledge" in order to disrupt some of the beliefs or investments that they might have that are damaging to the project of anti-oppressive education and the teaching of culturally diverse students.

As a critical white teacher educator who also grew up in racial isolation similar to many white pre-service teachers, I argue that white pre-service teachers and members of other dominant groups can also be considered victims of the hierarchical social structures such as racism in which they exist that implicitly and explicitly propagate troubled knowledge (Lindquist, 2004) through false notions of superiority/inferiority, miseducation about others and themselves (Woodson, 1933), and enactment of the dehumanization of all, including themselves (Freire, 1970). Engaging in strategic empathy with prospective teachers could offer an opportunity for them to develop a critical consciousness as they understand deeper the role of power and oppression in society and acknowledge the ways that their worldview might have been shaped by their position, benefits, or privilege within larger social structures.

While strategic empathy and exploration of troubled knowledge might be an approach that seems useful and constructive to me as a white teacher educator, it is important to acknowledge the ways that pre-service teachers' troubled knowledge can be deeply offensive, microaggressive, and sometimes professionally damaging to minoritized teacher educators (i.e. Evans-Winters & Twyman-Hoff, 2011; Williams & Evans-Winters, 2005) in which a pedagogy of strategic empathy might not be a viable option. It is the responsibility of teacher educators in positions of power, for example white or male teacher educators, to share the burden of oppressive power structures such as racism, sexism, or heteronormativity and commit to social justice-oriented work across the teacher education curriculum to release the weight of it from minoritized teacher educators. Furthermore, all of us are dehumanized as we engage in the process and systems of dehumanization; therefore, working towards humanization should be a quest that will ultimately benefit us all.

As suggested by this study, teacher educators should not only anticipate but also work with teacher candidates' emotions as a gateway and component of developing a critical consciousness and political and ideological clarity. While the masculine context of schools and society often leads to an underengagement with emotions in educational settings (Matias, 2016a), examining and harnessing pre-service teachers' emotions can better prepare them for informed and prolonged commitment to teaching for social justice. Additionally, tying teacher candidates' emotions to both an awareness of the larger sociopolitical context in which they occur as well as of the steps towards justice that they mobilize and necessitate engages both the reflection and action needed in

Freire's (1970) model of a critical consciousness that captures a sense of critical hope, love, and humanization for all.

*Draw on diverse bodies of knowledge to co-construct meaning of social justice issues*

Another strategy that pre-service teachers used in this study in the development of their political and ideological clarity was “text to” connections in which they connected a @polibeats\_ post to personal experiences, teacher education coursework, their students and teaching, or to larger social discourses. These practices demonstrated that prospective teachers are drawing on many sources of knowledge to make meaning of discussions of social justice issues and develop their critical consciousness, and it could benefit teacher education programs to incorporate these perspectives into the teacher education coursework.

Building upon pre-service teachers' text-to-self connections engages their “cumulative social experience” as part of the context of teacher education (Britzman, 1986). Incorporating their personal connections resituates their lived experiences as valid knowledge and points of entry to discussions of social justice and creates a problem-posing education based on tangible evidence that they have in their personal lives. Particularly for pre-service teachers of marginalized groups, use of their text-to-self connections in teacher education can help them feel legitimized, builds on their strengths, and also provides them with language and analytic tools to critically make sense of their own experiences in the world. Additionally, sharing of teacher candidates' text-to-self



connections can create opportunities of cross-group contact (Allport, 1954; Hewstone & Swart, 2011) through which all in the classroom can learn.

By building upon or even requiring that pre-service teachers make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections when discussing issues of social justice, it forces them to explore the emergence and application of these discussions in their lives and in the greater world around them. It legitimizes the realities and concerns of the call to social justice and expands their understanding of it not as simply the fulfillment of another university assignment but rather as a quintessential element of their existence in the world. Asking teacher education students to draw on sources outside of the academic institution also shifts the onus of learning to the pre-service teachers' themselves, asking them, for example, to engage with larger social discourses, defend their stance with evidence, examine different arguments and counterarguments, and hopefully equips them with critical thinking skills that can enable them to pursue a continued state of crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) or continued search for political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004) long after they leave the teacher education classroom.

Another prominent connection made by participants in this study was from @polibeats\_ posts to their students or their teaching. The connection of teacher education coursework with teacher candidates' students, teaching, and field placement forms an integral part of many teacher preparation programs including the one featured in this study. In each semester, pre-service teachers were taking courses while also completing internships and student teaching in local elementary classrooms, and many of their courses' assignments involved practical application to their students and their field

placement. As prospective teachers demonstrated in this study that they often thought of social justice issues with their students in mind, making connections to students and to their field placements can be an effective approach to developing pre-service teachers' critical consciousness. Drawing on the relationships, care, and compassion that they have for the students in their field placement, who are likely culturally and linguistically diverse, can create an opportunity of direct contact (Allport, 1954) through which prospective teachers can extend empathy and understanding of certain issues of injustice. Pre-service teachers should be encouraged to share and discuss these examples in the course.

Additionally, pre-service teachers could be paired with social justice-oriented cooperating teachers who demonstrate political and ideological clarity and are engaging in humanizing pedagogical practices. In these types of field placements, teacher candidates could observe how one actually implements anti-oppressive practices in the field and could be encouraged to try out different lessons and practices of their own. These experiences can then be incorporated in the teacher education course as practical examples for critical examination, creating a learning experience for all.

Through this study, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers engage their emotions and draw on larger bodies of knowledge to make meaning of issues of social justice. As teacher educators exploring ways to support the development of teacher candidates' critical consciousness, crisis, and political and ideological clarity, preparing for and building from the ways that they are already understanding issues of social justice could result in improved pedagogical approaches. Incorporating rather than shying away

from pre-service teachers' emotions and larger bodies of knowledge could produce deeper understanding of issues of social justice in education and help identify ideologies and actions that could better espouse critical consciousness in their roles as future educators.

#### **FINDING 2: PAST AND PRESENT BACKGROUNDS ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT**

Britzman (1986) argues that “critical consideration must be given to what happens when the student teacher’s biography, or cumulative social experience, becomes part of the implicit context of teacher education” (p. 443). This study employed pre-service teachers’ linguistic histories as a representation of their biographies, and this course assignment provided insight into how prospective teachers interpreted social and political issues in light of their own cumulative social experience. The linguistic history assignment requiring pre-service teachers to tell their own story can be an important instructional model for them as students and also for them to contemplate using in their future classroom as teachers. Most importantly, the linguistic history assignment values each teacher candidate’s biography and positions their lived experiences as not only an integral context of their development as a teacher but also as valid knowledge itself. Particularly for pre-service teachers of color or other minoritized groups whose perspectives and experiences are not always represented in teacher education programs dominated and manipulated by whiteness (see K. Brown, 2014), this activity can re-center their experiences in the course curriculum. Furthermore, it gives prospective teachers an opportunity to tell their own narrative about who they are and to resist the

temptation to make assumptions about others. Additionally, the linguistic history assignment provokes pre-service teachers' self-reflection and interrogation of their own experiences and beliefs particularly of language, a process Bartolomé (2004) argues is necessary for teachers of a linguistically and culturally diverse population.

From pairing teacher candidates' biographies with their written reflections, this study concluded that their sociocultural backgrounds greatly informed the interpretations that they made of social and political issues. Particularly, participants' race, gender, and religion played a strong role in their engagement with certain issues presented in @polibeats\_ posts as evidenced in Chapter 5.

One insight from the participants' written reflections and linguistic histories illuminated the fact that not only pre-service teachers' past sociocultural experiences but also those of their present were impactful in their understanding of issues of social justice. For example, some participants described that their understanding of posts about race were enlightened by their friends of color from the university, insights that were developed by their current, not past, relationships. Also, a few of the participants who strongly identified as Christian described that they became Christians in college, implying that that aspect of their identity and perspective was not created with their family or in the home but rather at the university. In this sense, investigation into the biographies of teacher candidates should also explore and incorporate their current practices and experiences in college as important terrain for their ideological development regarding issues of social justice.

Furthermore, considerations of prospective teachers' biography as proposed by Britzman (1986) should not be perceived as a neutral endeavor. Rather, exploring the context of teachers' cumulative social experience should occur through an understanding of the ways that their both self-named and society-dictated backgrounds, experiences, and group memberships shape both their biographies and identities as teachers. Many scholars have contemplated the role of social markers such as race, class, language, and sexual orientation on pre-service teachers' emergence as teachers (i.e. Philip, 2014; Seidl & Hancock, 2011; Urrieta, 2007; Vavrus, 2009) as well as have called for intersectional perspectives on teacher identity work (see Pugach, Gomez-Najarro, & Matewos, 2018). This literature supports this study's finding that these markers are ever-present in prospective teachers' preparation as social justice-oriented educators, calling for critical analysis of their biographies as part of the terrain of teacher education.

### **Implications and recommendations**

#### ***White pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers of color relate to race differently***

Consideration on the part of the teacher educator must be paid to how different aspects of pre-service teachers' backgrounds might be at work in social justice-oriented programs. The themes in Chapter Five showed that pre-service teachers of color and white pre-service teachers reacted to and interpreted differently the topic of race as it was represented by @polibeats\_.

Teacher candidates of color related to many of the posts through personal perspectives and connections, ranging from appreciation for the increase of culturally

relevant literature to concerns for the safety of their communities in this political era. Much of the existing literature argues that pre-service teachers of color often feel their lived experiences and their racial and cultural knowledge are not well-integrated into teacher education programs (Amos, 2010; Gomez et al. 2008; Nguyen, 2008; Sheets & Chew, 2002). However, the pre-service teachers of color in this study, and in this course assignment, found many @polibeats\_ posts and discussions to be relatable to them and their own perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, teacher candidates of color were able to engage with social justice issues through an authentic concern for the humanization of they themselves, their loved ones, and their communities, illustrating Quioco and Rios (2000) claim that “many minority group teachers, in comparison with their European-American counterparts, are more likely to bring a critical, social justice orientation and consciousness that stems from their real, lived experiences with inequality” (p. 522). By positioning their lived experiences as not only gateways to discussing social justice issues on the @polibeats\_ account but also as valid and legitimate knowledge itself, insights from this course assignment and this study could demonstrate ways to better integrate the strengths that pre-service teachers of color bring to teacher education programs.

White prospective teachers, on the other hand, related to discussions of race in different ways. Through an exhibition of white racial consciousness, many of the participants in this study recognized incidents of race, racism, and white privilege in the @polibeats\_ account. Some of them described the racism that they saw in their family and friends, and others acknowledged the ways that they had benefited from white

privilege. Additionally, they understood @polibeats\_ posts about race from the lived experiences of people of color with whom they had direct contact and through frameworks of race that they had gained in their teacher education program. While white pre-service teachers demonstrated ideological awareness about structural racism, further exploration of how this reflection can translate to tangible action could benefit them, as well as their counterparts of color, in the furthered development of their critical consciousness.

Participants in this study placed critical emphasis on notions of race in relation to diverse student populations and social justice education; however, other notions of gender, class, ability, religion, and sexual orientation did not always appear to be as equally incorporated in their reflections. While prospective teachers, both white and of color, were able to deeply engage with posts about race and racism in this study, albeit in different ways, the participants' ability to interpret social issues concerning other aspects of diversity were not always as robust.

***Further incorporation of gender into teacher education could be beneficial***

While data showed that pre-service teachers referred to and often picked up ideas about injustices from their teacher education coursework, this rarely related to gender. Participants often related to posts about gender through their own experiences as women, rather than through a framework they had gained in their teacher education program. Additionally, there were times in their reflections that they lacked a gendered lens that could have aided them in better understanding and developing a social justice concept.

The pre-service teachers in this study all identified as women, aligning with national statistics in which 85% of the teaching corps are women (U.S Department of Education, 2016); however, their awareness of larger discourses, frameworks of women's issues, and intersectional and gendered analyses were, at times, underdeveloped and not connected to their teacher education coursework in their reflections. As all pre-service teachers in this cohort and most pre-service teachers entering the profession are women, a deeper discussion of gender and particularly of their roles and experiences as members of a subordinated group could possibly benefit them in their development of a critical consciousness. As teaching is a feminized profession that has been disrespected, underpaid, and deprofessionalized over time, an understanding of concepts, histories, and issues pertaining to women's rights might not only engage prospective teachers' identities and activism as women but also as teachers. Furthermore, as feminist theories in education have been critiqued for their tendencies towards the perspectives and interests of white women (Henry, 2011), consideration of intersectional feminism (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1989) could strengthen pre-service teachers' and teacher education's commitments towards women of color, their arguments, and the integration of their knowledge into their work with students. Lastly, as being a woman is a subordinated identity that is shared by most teacher candidates, understanding the injustices facing women from all different angles – macro-level and micro-level, historical and contemporary, personal and professional – could possibly serve as a gateway to understanding injustices facing subordinated communities to which they do not belong.



*Engaging religion in teacher education is imperative*

Some participants' perspectives as Christians seemed to be the most influential aspect of their sociocultural background that provided the primary lens through which they read the world and the word; however, religion and religious identity are rarely integrated in discussions of diversity at public institutions (White, 2009). In her post-questionnaire, one participant wrote that she read the @polibeats\_ posts first through the lens of a follower of Jesus. Another participant was completely turned off from the @polibeats\_ account due to a post that she found offensive that took aim at Christians. If these participants approached this assignment in this way, what makes teacher educators think that they do not approach each assignment or topic in teacher education from the same perspective?

Pre-service teachers' religion and religious identity should be addressed with awareness of how it can simultaneously limit and facilitate their understanding of issues of social justice and dedication to diverse student populations. In some ways, prospective teachers' Christian beliefs encouraged their extension of love, compassion, and humanity to all of their students and their communities, as portrayed in their written reflections. They also led them to criticize those who they felt did not act loving and portray God's love and to call out and stand against injustices. As Christianity has a long legacy of and commitment to social justice (Edwards, 2012), how could teacher educators tap into pre-service teachers' Christianity or other religious backgrounds to advance missions of educational equity and social justice? How can teacher candidates' religious beliefs and

spiritual selves further develop their ability to offer authentic care to their students and communities?

However, in other ways, participants' commitment to their Christian identity and beliefs might have limited their ability to comprehend other issues of social justice. As shared in Chapter 5, Melissa was uninclined to engage further with the @polibeats\_ account because of a post that she found to be offensive to Christians, demonstrating the way that this aspect of her identity closed her off from potential further learning. This comment and action also showed her inability to look critically at or reject any ideas from her religion which could potentially affect her perceptions of and interactions with curriculum, students, and the broader intentions of a social justice agenda. For example, if Melissa believes the Bible to be 100% true, then what will she think of a student who has two lesbian moms? What will she think of her students who are Muslim or transgender? How will she teach biology? These questions were prompted by Melissa's honesty in her participation in the study, but important questions remain considering what was not in the data. For example, what hesitations or rejections of different social justice-oriented arguments did Christian participants experience that they did not name in their reflections? What perspectives were hidden by those, if any, who did not identify as Christian? What factors led to Melissa's honesty and others' silence?

While some of these questions cannot be answered in the parameters of this study, it is important to recognize that pre-service teachers' religious identities are active in the ways that they make meaning of the content of teacher education programs and in their decisions as a teacher. Furthermore, religion, particularly the United States' relationship

with Christianity, indubitably plays a role in the pedagogy and curriculum of PK-12 institutions, and religion and religious identity also likely play a role in the lives of their students and their communities. As argued by White (2009), “the silence around teachers and religion assumes that teachers are neutral agents” in the choices and actions they make as educators (p. 859). The results of this study demonstrate the lack of neutrality in this regard and argue that the lack of incorporation of religion and spirituality as both an identity and a heuristic tool harms teacher education programs’ ability and commitment to preparing social justice-oriented prospective teachers and calls for further research in this direction.

Exploration of pre-service teachers’ sociocultural backgrounds in this study illuminated their interpretations and understandings of social justice issues in their engagement with the @polibeats\_ account. While teacher candidates, both white and of color, seemed prepared to discuss topics of race, the ways that they struggled with other aspects of diversity such as gender and religion pointed towards enhanced areas for consideration in this teacher education program as well as in the field of K-12 and teacher education.

### **FINDING 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ENGAGING TOOL**

Efforts to facilitate the development of critically conscious, social justice-oriented educators are constantly evolving, and based on the data presented in this study, the authentic and critical incorporation of social media in teacher education should be considered among these pedagogical approaches. In this study, participants described

Instagram as a medium for learning that was fun, relevant, and thought-provoking, and many indicated that they enjoyed this assignment. However, this type of characterization of the course assignment should not be perceived as simply a “fun” instructional activity but rather as also intentionally intertwined with the development of participants’ critical consciousness and tied to theoretical foundations of digital literacies, popular culture, and political and ideological clarity. The data in this study demonstrated that the use of Instagram in this teacher education course was engaging and powerful to pre-service teachers in terms of their interests and practices as young people but also as a method that was thoughtfully committed to humanizing pedagogy for both them as students and for their future students.

### **Building on participants’ digital literacy practices**

Most participants described the integration of Instagram into their teacher education coursework as relevant and enlightening. The cultural world of multimodal posts, likes, hashtags, and memes was familiar to them, as this digital space constituted a parallel, overlapping, and simultaneously intertwined universe in relation to and within their daily lives. This study incorporated the prospective teachers’ existing digital literacy practices with notions of teaching, social justice, and teacher education coursework, an approach that was well-received by many. What was powerful about this use of participants’ digital literacy practices was the hope that they not only applied and extended their practices in this study but that they might continue to do so in their consumption of critical social media content even after the course and study were

complete. As many participants indicated that they would continue to follow @polibeats\_ upon completion of the study, they were then tasked with a reversal of the assignment; instead of bringing social media into their social justice-oriented coursework, they then had to bring social justice-oriented content into their social media lives, a process which likely looked different for each participant based on their own digital literacy practices. However, the authentic use of participants' existing digital literacy practices in the consumption of social justice-oriented content in this study along with the idea that learning can be ubiquitous on social media, something that can occur anywhere and everywhere (Cope & Kalantzis, 2010), creates promising circumstances for continued learning and possibly continued crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) for these pre-service teachers.

### **Social media as popular culture**

This study built upon a staple cultural concept in participants' personal lives and asked them to use it in a new way while still attending to the content of the course, depicting what could be perceived as a funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) approach to teacher education. While the inclusion of teacher candidates' wealth of social media-related resources, skills, and interests in the classroom was engaging and validating as funds of knowledge approaches should be, this study conceptualizes social media as not just a hobby or an area of expertise but as a "socio-politically charged space" (Duncan-Andrade, 2010, p. 56) that has strong implications in the ideologies and worldviews held by pre-service teachers. In this sense, the appeal of Instagram as an engaging medium in this study should not only be thought of in terms of interest and buy-in but also in

connection to theories of pop culture and its pedagogies. Maudlin & Sandlin (2015) argue,

Popular culture itself has material consequences, as it helps constitute society and social life; through our engagements with popular culture, we learn what the world is, how to see the world, and how to experience and act within the world.

(p. 368)

Therefore, pop culture worlds and texts such as those that exist on Instagram shape society, people's understandings of the world, and their practices within it, presenting an important ideological space and tool that informs pre-service teachers' reflection and action. In working towards the development of critical consciousness amongst prospective teachers, the field of teacher education benefits from considering the realms of social media not only as a way to engage their interests and cultural knowledges but also to equip them to interrogate their own ideologies that are shaped by social media and to critically consume and analyze the dynamics of power and oppression on Instagram and beyond.

### **Social media in achieving political and ideological clarity**

The endeavor of this study aligns with Bartolome's (2004) call for teacher education programs to integrate experiences that "formally and explicitly examine ideology" (p. 116) as a means to achieving political and ideological clarity. She states, the teacher education curriculum... [must] be deliberately designed and carried out to expose prospective teachers to a variety of ideological postures so that they

can begin to perceive their own ideologies in relation to others' and critically examine the damaging biases they may personally hold, and the inequalities and injustices present in schools and in the society as a whole. (p. 116)

This study and course assignment intended to do just that, by employing a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) using content from social media that resituated and centered the perspectives of marginalized communities as texts that prompted pre-service teachers' considerations of their own worldviews and perceptions of injustice.

The @polibeats\_ account presented texts that required participants to read both the word and the world and problematize their own ideologies, experiences, and/or the unjust realities of the society in which they live and will teach. These social media texts that ignited participants' reflection and discussion were stimulating for teacher candidates' individual and collective development of critical consciousness and might have manifested in different discursive ways in participants' reflections. For some participants, the social media texts were thought-provoking or perceived as discussion starters that triggered self-reflection. Some participants used the posts as a shield, behind which they could hide to covertly express their own opinions on the topic but could be protected by the post's ownership of the argument. For others, the posts served as a springboard, which gave them license to then discuss other opinions they had of injustices. The social media content in this study became texts that prompted but also facilitated pre-service teachers' discussion of issues of social justice in their written reflections, and if integrated in a teacher education classroom, these texts could provide the basis for important conversations about topics of social justice in ways that might

enable prospective teachers' participation in the discussion. In each of these cases, the use of critically oriented social media content in this study stimulated pre-service teachers' ideological reflection as a component of the necessary process of developing political and ideological clarity.

### **Implications and recommendations**

The use of social media in teacher education is a burgeoning field (i.e. Benko, et al., 2016; Carpenter, et al., 2016; Krutka, et al., 2017); however, the use of social media for the purposes of cross-cultural engagement and social justice is limited. This study intended to explore the possibilities and the challenges involved in integrating social media into social justice-oriented teacher education. Based on the responses from the pre-service teachers, a few considerations could be made for teacher educators considering the integration of social media, particularly with a social justice orientation, in their courses.

As this study was a preliminary exploration of teacher candidates' interpretations and uses of social justice-oriented social media, it did not require that teacher educators necessarily integrate the social media content or pre-service teachers' written reflections into the course's class meetings. However, some participants indicated they would be curious to hear others in the cohort's perspectives. From the generally positive feedback that participants gave for participating in this study, it could be implied that teacher educators' incorporation of the @polibeats\_ posts and pre-service teachers' written



reflections into the course in a collaborative way could be necessary and pedagogically powerful.

Additionally, an awareness of how and why certain teacher candidates might not fully engage with a given social media app, in this case: Instagram, is necessary for teacher educators to adequately gauge and integrate its use. In this study, most participants (86%) were already active users of Instagram when they began the study; however, attention should be paid to those who were not. While no participants indicated difficulty using Instagram, one participant, a pre-service teacher in her 40's, did express concerns about the limitations of short captions and character limits as well as the permanence of the content put on social media. Other participants did not share these concerns; however, awareness of the existing concerns held by their students about social media and its use should be explored by teacher educators before integrating it into their course.

Concerns for Instagram users', particularly young women's, tendencies towards social comparison and depression symptoms associated with their audience and feed on social media (Lup, Trub, & Rosenthal, 2015) should be considered when asking them to participate in a social media integrated assignment. One participant in this study indicated that she no longer had a personal Instagram account because of the negative emotions associated with social comparison that it caused, and many others also shared that this was a reality for them on Instagram. Awareness of the affective effects of social media on its users provides an interesting insight to this study and the use of social justice-oriented social media in teacher education. Knowing that Instagram can cause heightened

emotional reactions as evidenced by Lup, Trub, & Rosenthal (2015) as well as knowing that learning about social justice is often an emotional process for pre-service teachers (see Matias, 2016a) suggests that engaging with social justice-oriented content on social media might be overly or negatively emotional in ways that might impede or deter prospective teachers' willingness to engage with the issues being presented. Asking pre-service teachers to use an app that might already be emotionally charged and collapsing the context (boyd, 2002) between their personal and now academic uses of the app could only heighten their emotional reactions to issues of social justice. For example, if when a teacher candidate is scrolling her personal Instagram feed and is being plagued by feelings of social comparison prompted by some of the people she follows and then is presented a post about racism from @polibeats\_, she might turn to unproductive emotions such as resistance or denial (Picower, 2009) which lead her away from growing her critical consciousness. While some participants might enjoy the incidental nature of their exposure to social and political issues on Instagram through this type of study or course assignment, others' personal relationships with Instagram might induce a different reaction. It is important to not only be aware of but also mediate the different perceptions and practices that pre-service teachers have of a given social media app before and while integrating it into teacher education coursework.

Nonetheless, data from this study indicated that pre-service teachers found social media to be an engaging tool, that was “fun”, interesting, and relevant. In many instances, prospective teachers described social media to be more “fun” than “watching the news” and viewed it as an alternative to traditional news media. However, the use of social

media in this study and in this course did not intend to ask pre-service teachers to engage with @polibeats in lieu of “watching the news” but rather as important texts that reflect topics of learning in relation to the teacher education program’s social justice orientation. In light of this observation, the teacher educator would need to make concerted efforts to explain that the social media’s posts constituted parts of the syllabus and should be considered therein.

Furthermore, the data presented in Chapter Six indicated that pre-service teachers felt that the @polibeats\_ account exposed them to diverse perspectives on political and social issues. Some felt extremely affirmed as they found their opinions to be represented by @polibeats\_ whereas a few participants expressed disdain for the biases of the @polibeats\_ account. In light of participants’ perspectives, some different options exist for the teacher educator. One approach entails that teacher educators are explicit with the students in their course about the type of content and social media that they choose to incorporate. This study intended to expose prospective teachers to non-dominant perspectives and lived experiences of marginalized groups that have not always been represented in traditional media; for this reason, the @polibeats\_ account was intentionally chosen for this study and course assignment, and this could have been made more clear to participants. Alternatively, teacher educators could use the approach of employing social media accounts containing a variety of sociopolitical perspectives and encourage teacher candidates to engage in analysis and reflection of these different viewpoints through a critically conscious lens.

As such, an important discussion could ensue about power relations in the digital world. While this study functioned under the argument that social media outlets provide platforms for the expression of marginalized perspectives and solidarity within and across a marginalized community, other opposing communities also benefit from these affordances while advancing messages and agendas that are not social justice-oriented. As described by DeCook (2018), extremist hate groups like the “Proud Boys” (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.a) also use Instagram to inform their followers and grow their collective identity. Additionally, questions of safety, accuracy of information, and the role of capitalistic algorithms all are factors in the complex and complicated terrain of social media as a space of ideological exploration and growth. Recognizing that neither social media nor social media accounts are neutral spaces and that the digital world is a social microcosm where systems of power and oppression also exist would be a necessary exercise and discussion for both pre-service teachers and teacher educators using social media in their coursework.

This study explored the possibilities and challenges of integrating social media into social justice oriented-teacher education. With consideration of the powers of social media to disrupt traditional notions of authority and participation in the construction of knowledge, this study contended that the @polibeats\_ account and other Instagram accounts like it presented marginalized perspectives and narratives that could be formative in the development of prospective teachers’ critical consciousness and political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 2004). While pre-service teachers generally responded positively to the integration of social media in this study and course

assignment, insights from this study were shared to show how social justice-oriented social media could be better integrated pedagogically to support teacher candidates' learning.

### **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The findings of this study provide important insights for teacher educators considering the preparation of critically conscious, politically and ideologically clear pre-service teachers. According to the results of this study, prospective teachers were entering into crisis (Kumashiro, 2000a) and were not shying away from difficult discussions about injustices in schools and society. In order to better support these discussions, teacher educators should draw from the existing practices and bodies of knowledge that pre-service teachers are using to understand notions of social justice. Teacher educators should also continue to consider the ways that teacher candidates' sociocultural backgrounds, both past and present, shape their understandings of social justice issues and extend this consideration to social markers beyond race but also, in this case, to notions of intersectionality, gender, and religion. Lastly, the careful and authentic use of social media in social justice-oriented teacher education can be an engaging approach to build upon pre-service teachers' existing digital literacies and participation in popular culture as part of the process of developing political and ideological clarity. While this study was able to offer these findings, it still had its limitations which call for further research which I will now detail.

First and foremost, this study focused on one cohort of 22 prospective teachers in an elementary ESL-generalist teacher preparation program. As case studies do not intend to produce generalizable results (Thomas, 2016), the results of this study cannot be interpreted as representative of prospective teachers beyond those participants included here; however, further studies with diverse groups of teacher candidates in varying teacher preparation programs would be valuable.

Secondly, this study was exploratory by nature; it aimed to explore the pre-service teachers' interpretations and understandings of social justice issues as prompted by content on social media. While the primary data sources for this study were assignments from the ESL Methods course, namely the written reflections and the linguistic histories, further incorporation of the content of the Instagram and the prospective teachers' thoughts therein into the course was minimal. Bartolomé (2004) warns against leaving pre-service teachers to their own devices when processing cross-cultural learning experiences intending to develop political and ideological clarity. She argues that, "the unanticipated end result ... is that the majority of students emerge evermore bound to their unquestioned ethnocentric ideologies precisely because they go into these learning situations without explicitly identifying and questioning the ideological lenses that filter their perceptions" (p. 117). The lack of pedagogical guidance in this study might have been discomfiting to participants and possibly harmful in the quest for critical consciousness raising through this experience. While participants' consumption of the content of the @polibeats\_ account was considered in this study to be a problem-posing education (Freire, 1970), bringing the content into the course to engage in dialogue with

pre-service teachers and the instructor would be important. This limitation asks that teacher educators and scholars investigate ways to incorporate social justice-oriented social media into teacher education coursework as part of the dialogic nature of a problem-posing education while providing adequate and appropriate guidance for prospective teachers.

Lastly, this study only asked participants to consume social media content; they were never asked to interact with the account, produce their own media, or take action outside of the course assignment, each of which could be adaptations in future studies. Furthermore, as critical consciousness requires reflection and action, pre-service teachers should be pushed to consider how to take action against the injustices that they were exposed to on the @polibeats\_ account.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to explore pre-service teachers' experiences with critical consciousness raising in the context of social media. Due to the potentially democratic space of social media, many perspectives can be expressed, shifting the sources of knowledge that members of society can consume. I contend that in preparation as social justice-oriented teachers of a diverse student population, it is imperative that teacher candidates and their teaching are informed by the histories, narratives, values, and issues that are shared by diverse communities, and when conducted with intentionality, the world of social media can present an opportunity for access and exposure to these perspectives.

This project deepens our understanding of how to support the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and the political and ideological clarity of pre-service teachers specifically through the use of social media in teacher justice-oriented teacher education. This study was motivated by concerns for the cultural mismatch of today's teaching corps and student population (U.S. Department of Education, 2016) particularly in this political era of dehumanization, bringing into question prospective teachers' abilities to humanistically teach a culturally and linguistically diverse student population with awareness of the social and political issues facing their communities and the historical and consistent marginalization of their experiences. In this study, I have provided a detailed account of how one cohort of 22 pre-service teachers interpreted different issues related to social justice that were represented on the @polibeats\_ Instagram account with particular consideration of their sociocultural backgrounds and future roles as teachers.

In this study, the efforts of social justice-oriented teacher education were successful in pushing participants into a state of "crisis" (Kumashiro, 2000a). Pre-service teachers were generally able to engage with topics of social justice and the discomfiting emotions around them demonstrating their entry into the space of tension and struggle that is necessary for them to be anti-oppressive educators. As more than half of the participants indicated that they will continue following @polibeats\_ even after the conclusion of this study and course, the possibility for them maintaining this space of crisis via social media is viable.



Fortunately, however, this study concluded that discussions of social justice can and are happening both in the lives of teacher candidates and on a larger scale. Pre-service teachers' abilities to relate their personal experiences, larger social discourses, and content from their teacher education coursework to the @polibeats\_ posts demonstrated the ways that they were actively making meaning of discussions of social justice by tapping into a number of sources from both inside and outside the academic institution. Teacher educators should draw on these bodies of knowledge to better support their work of educating for social justice in the classroom by leveraging prospective teachers' lived experiences and existing knowledge to further examine and deconstruct new issues of equity, diversity, and justice and better equip them with the language, theory, and critical thinking skills to continue questioning their experiences and the world around them.

This study's use of social media to instigate a problem-posing education not only promoted cross-cultural understanding by accessing diverse perspectives found on @polibeats\_ but also engaged the popular culture and practices of social media, a context that was very prevalent in the lives of pre-service teachers. As Duncan-Andrade (2010) argues, youth culture is "a sociopolitically charged space...[with] increasing influence on the cultural sensibilities of this country's next generation" (p. 56), suggesting the potential, and possibly need, for ideological struggle within the digital space of Instagram. Therefore, the integration of teacher candidates' cultural world of likes, tags, and memes was used as a gateway to discussions of social justice issues but also

hopefully supported their critical consumption of social media as part of a larger sociopolitical context.

Ultimately, this study aimed to be humanizing for both the pre-service teachers and their future students, taking in their needs, aspirations, backgrounds, experiences, and dispositions as part of the context in which we all work to comprehend what it means to educate for the liberation of all. As “the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting both the oppressors and whom they oppress” (Freire, 1970, p. 47), we are all functioning as not fully human, and only critical love can challenge our current condition. The critical love that I felt for all involved in this study, the teacher candidates, their future students, the curators, authors, and audience of the @polibeats\_ account, was central to this project and its aims towards the humanization of all. I conclude with words from Paulo Freire, whose ideas and visions for a better world inspired and shaped this study from its conception to its end.

*What keeps a person, a teacher able as a liberatory educator is the political clarity to understand the ideological manipulations that disconfirm human beings as such, the political clarity that would tell us that it is ethically wrong to allow human beings to be dehumanized... One has to believe that if men and women created the ugly world that we are denouncing, then men and women can create a world that is less discriminating and more humane... (Freire, 1997, p. 315).*

## **Appendices**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### Course Assignment description: Written Reflections

**Reflection:** In preparation for each class, you will choose one post from @polibeats\_ Instagram account and write a short response. Your response should be interactive, and it might ask questions, pose critiques, celebrate, connect or disagree with the post. You should include a screenshot of the post you have chosen at the top of your reflection form. Reflections will be submitted each day before class on Canvas.

## APPENDIX B

### Course Assignment description: Linguistic History

(from the syllabus)

**Linguistic History:** On the first day of class, you will sign up for a date to orally present your linguistic history in class. This assignment gives you a chance to reflect on and share the ways that your linguistic history has developed over time and consider how this impacts your teaching. You can share this life story in any way you wish. Completion of this assignment will receive full credit; there is no rubric.

(Prompts and descriptions from the class's PowerPoints)



### Linguistic Histories

- **Purpose:** to reflect on the role that language has played in our lives, based on the premises that
  - Language is socially constructed
  - Every person has a unique linguistic history and repertoire



### Your Linguistic History

- What are the roots of your linguistic repertoire and language use?
- What has shaped and informed your language?
- How is your language tied to place, culture, people, gender, race, identity?

## APPENDIX C

Pre-Questionnaire form

Do you use Instagram?

Yes  No

For Instagram non-users:

In your own words, what are your reasons, if any, for not using Instagram?

For Instagram users:

How often do you use Instagram?

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- Occasionally (a few times a week)
- Rarely (a few times a month)
- Never

How often do you scroll on the Instagram feed?

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- Occasionally (a few times a week)
- Rarely (a few times a month)
- Never

How often do you watch Instagram stories?

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- Occasionally (a few times a week)
- Rarely (a few times a month)
- Never

How often do you post Instagram stories?

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- Occasionally (a few times a week)
- Rarely (a few times a month)
- Never

How often do you post on your Instagram feed?

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day

- Occasionally (a few times a week)
- Rarely (a few times a month)
- Never

In your own words, what do you use Instagram for?

What types of accounts do you follow?

What are some of your favorite accounts?

---

## APPENDIX D

### Post-questionnaire form

How did you interact with @undocumedia?

Their posts appeared in my timeline

I visited their profile

Both

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Will you continue following @undocumedia?

Yes  No  Maybe

How often did you interact with @undocumedia?

Multiple times a day

Once a day

Occasionally (a few times a week)

Rarely (a few times a month)

Never

What, if anything, did you learn through this experience?

What connections did you make to your work as a teacher?

## APPENDIX E

### Sample Syllabus

#### Course Description

This course will prepare pre-service teachers to make connections between theory and methodology for the teaching of English as a Second Language in public school classrooms. The course will emphasize the needs of English language learners (ELLs) in academic instruction, with a focus on language and literacy integration throughout the curriculum, content ESL, and reading and writing strategies for English language learners. The course will provide interactive exploration of research-based ESL classroom practices. Several assignments require independent research and will satisfy the Independent Inquiry flag required by the university.

#### Objectives

Pre-service teachers will gain an understanding of the theoretical framework and best practices for English as a Second Language instruction by:

- Making first and second language acquisition connections
- Exploring a number of classroom practices for English language learner (ELL) instruction
- Examining oral language development and literacy development in ELLs
- Exploring how to infuse culturally responsive instruction across the curriculum
- Planning content reading and writing strategies for ELLs
- Planning for on-going authentic assessment
- Becoming familiar with SBEC standards for ESL
- Becoming familiar with the national, state, and local ESL standards

#### Course Requirements

In order for the pre-service teacher to explore how theoretical frameworks for the instruction of English language learners shape their practice as well as research-based methodology, several assignments focus on exploring strategies used in ESL contexts for the instruction of ELLs. The required documents the participant will prepare should demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and reflection upon class topics. Course requirements are as follow:

##### I. Class Participation

The highly interactive nature of the in-class activities will require your active participation on a daily basis. You must be in attendance and you must have read the assigned readings to contribute effectively in class. **Please refer to the classroom participation rubric attached. (100 pts.)**



## **Class Participation**

**Attendance (25 pts.):** Daily attendance and punctuality will be expected and recorded on class sign-in sheets. Two absences will automatically drop your grade one letter. It is your responsibility to review the material from the missed class and find out from your peers or blackboard about announcements or changes to the syllabus. The instructor will not be able to catch you up with missed work. If you need to miss a class in which you were scheduled to present or work with, you must make the necessary arrangements.

**Linguistic History (25 pts.):** On the first day of class, you will sign up for a date to present your linguistic history. This assignment gives you a chance to reflect on and share the ways that your linguistic history has developed over time and consider how this impacts your teaching. You can share this life story in any way that you wish. Completion of this assignment will receive full credit; there is no rubric.

**Double Reflection (25 pts.):** In preparation for each class, you will complete the assigned readings and write a short response on the Entering Thoughts portion of the Double Reflection sheet. In your response, you can summarize key points of the readings, share connections or questions you have, describe the implications in your field placement, etc. You will complete the Departing Thoughts portion at the end of class and submit before leaving.

**Participation (25 pts.):** Your participation grade will be evaluated at the end of the course and will be based on the quality of your contributions in whole class discussions and group activities. Given the subjectivity of this requirement, make your contributions memorable, relevant, well informed, and thoughtful.

## **II. Lesson Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation**

***DUE: 1/26 & 2/16***

You will develop, implement, and evaluate two lessons (integrating at least one content areas: math, science, social studies, and language arts and ESL) in which you demonstrate integration of content and language development. You can use any lesson plan format as long as you include the basic elements of a lesson (please refer to rubric below). Lesson Plan 1 will consist of reworking a previous lesson to consider the needs of English Language Learners and the Evaluation/Analysis of Lesson will reflect on the changes made to the lesson plan. Lesson Plan 2 will be written and then taught in the field placement, and the Evaluation/Analysis of Lesson will reflect on the writing and teaching of the lesson plan. **(25 points each)**

## **III. Mini-Lesson**

***DUE: 2/9***

You will form small groups and choose **one** of the books listed below to read and discuss with your group members simulating a literature circle.

Choi, S. N. (1993). *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* (Reprint edition). New York, N.Y.: Yearling.

Cisneros, S. (1991). *The House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage.

Hesse, K. (2009). *Letters from Rifka* (1 Reissue edition). New York: Square Fish.

Mohr, N. (1999). *Felita* (Reissue ed. edition). New York: Puffin Books.

Whelan, G. (1993). *Goodbye, Vietnam* (Bullseye Books ed edition). New York: Yearling.

On the day of the mini-lesson, you will discuss briefly in class the book you chose by summarizing, evaluating and suggesting possible activities/relevance in a content area. The objective is to present the book in a manner that engages your peers in a thought provoking discussion about how to integrate language and content in the context of the particular reading.

\*You will plan a **10-15 minute** mini lesson to teach to the members of your group. (**50 points**). You should integrate the following in your lesson:

- a) Incorporate key points, ideas, and/or vocabulary from the reading for your mini lesson.
- b) Be sure to have a content (TEKS) and language objective (ELPS) explicitly stated and displayed.
- c) Be creative and incorporate text, images, and/or any other media as well as an **interactive strategy** that you would use in your classroom for emergent bilinguals (strategies should be from the Herrell & Jordan book and cleared with course instructor to avoid repetition).
- d) Be explicit about what the name of the strategy is, what the skill it supports is, and how it is implemented.

#### **IV. Ethnographic Study and Presentation**

You will complete an ethnographic study, which will include an exploration of the community in which one of your students' lives. You will also complete an in-depth investigation into the life of one of your students using the parent permission form in your student teaching handbook. You will present both components of the project (i.e., what you learned about the community and student) in a gallery walk format on the last day of class. Presentation can be electronic or a tri-fold poster (or both), but must incorporate both components of the project.

##### **A. Photo essay**

***DUE: 2/2***

Using your smart phone, digital camera, iPad, etc. you will develop a photo essay based on your school's neighborhood. You should have at least 15 pictures and offer a

reflection/comments while you present your essay (**100 points**). The idea is for you to go on a neighborhood walk or neighborhood plunge and capture in photos the places, objects, and/or people that in your opinion depict an aspect of the community that relates to the funds of knowledge of your students (i.e., gardens could reflect deep knowledge of medicinal herbs and horticulture that is a part of a student's daily life. This can be integrated in the classroom through science or Language Arts).

### **B. Mini-case Study**

*DUE: 2/23*

The Pre-service teacher will conduct a mini-case study in order to find out about a student's funds of knowledge. The Pre-service teacher will select a student in their Student Teaching classroom as the subject (participant) of the mini-case study. The Pre-service teacher is encouraged to seek to learn about the student's funds of knowledge by participating in some of the community events that are a part of the student's life. The mini-case study can be written as a traditional paper (minimum of 5 pages) OR as presented in an alternative creative form (scrap book, video, children's book, short story, etc.). In either case, the following are required components of the mini ethnography narrative:

- Parent permission using the form in the field placement handbook
- Home visitation/Parent interview
- Connections between theory and considerations for instruction in the classroom.
- Description of the student as a child and as a learner (i.e., likes/dislikes, hobbies, academic strengths, linguistic challenges, etc.).

### **V. Language Development Plan**

*DUE: 3/2*

You will develop an English Language Development Plan for your classroom. The plan must make reference to specific relevant factors and the particular program design when planning for the instruction of English Language Learners. Please use these guidelines in thinking about your placement classroom.

#### **Language Development Plan - Guidelines**

- What type of bilingual education program design does your campus/district ascribe to? How does it determine/shape what you do in the classroom?
- How will you plan for a positive language learning environment?
  - Think of strategies, materials and activities.
  - Consider the routines and procedures in your classroom.
  - Consider the physical organization of your classroom.
- How will you handle errors?
  - Will you have a classroom routine/procedure/policy to address errors?
- How will you integrate culture in your classroom?
  - Think of strategies, activities, materials
- How will you become a cultural mediator?
  - How will you connect to the homes/families of your students?
  - How can your campus support the education of ELLs?

- How can the community support the education of ELLs?
- How will you plan for classroom management that builds community?
  - Social integration
  - Grouping
  - Match Learning Styles
- What are your “teacher tools” to promote oral language development in your classroom? How will you use these tools to scaffold your ELL students?
- How will you assess oral language to determine the oral language development stages of your ELLs and plan instruction accordingly for the demands of the content areas?
- How will you use reading and writing to develop literacy?
  - What approaches will you use?
  - What strategies will you use (consider the language and literacy stages of your ELLs)?
  - Think about your centers, word walls and other physical space.
- How will you use what you know about your ELLs in planning, reading and writing activities?
- How will you assess the progress of your ELLs?
  - What classroom performance-based tools will you use?
  - How often will you assess and what?
  - How will you use assessments to inform your planning?

**Please refer to the rubric below: (100 pts.)**

The Language Development Plan should be presented as a paper with 6 sections titled for the topic. You will work in class and at home on every section during the duration of this course.

#### **CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics/Readings/Due Dates</b>
1/16	<b>Welcome/Course Overview</b>
1/17	<b>Who are English Language Learners?</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 1
1/18	<b>Second Language Acquisition in the Classroom</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 2 Chamot: Chapter 1
1/19	<b>Funds of Knowledge - Home and Community Culture</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 3
1/22	<b>Oral Language Development</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapters 5 & 6
1/23	<b>Content-Language Integrated Lessons</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 10 ELPS
1/24	<b>Vocabulary Development &amp; Academic Language</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 7 Chamot: Chapter 3

1/25	<b>Literacy Development and ELLs - Reading/Writing</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapters 8 & 9 Chamot: Chapter 8
1/26	<b>Content Area Instruction - Math, Science and Social Studies</b> Chamot: Chapters 9, 10 & 11
1/26	<b>Neighborhood Walk</b>  <b>DUE: 1<sup>st</sup> Lesson</b>
2/2	<b>Classroom Management</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 4  <b>DUE: Photo Essay Presentations</b>
2/9	<b>Assessment in the ESL Integrated Classroom/Thematic Instruction</b> Levine & McCloskey: Chapter 11 & 12 Chamot: Chapter 6  <b>DUE: Mini-Lesson Presentations</b>
2/16	<b>Workshop: ESL Certification Practice Test/Language Development Plan</b>  <b>DUE: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson</b>
2/23	<b>DUE: Mini-case Study</b>
3/2	<b>DUE: Language Development Plan</b>

## References

- Abdullah, S.A., Llanes, J.R., & Henry, D. (2015). White disadvantage: The effects of racial isolation on white pre-service teachers. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 3(2), 542-554.
- Achinstein, B., & Ogawa, R. T. (2011). *Change (d) agents: New teachers of color in urban schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R.T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for ‘hard-to-staff’ schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(1), 71-107.
- Adair, J. (2008). White pre-service teachers and “de-privileged spaces.” *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(4), 189–206.
- Agarwal, R., Epstein, S., Oppenheim, R., Oyler, C., & Sonu, D. (2010). From ideal to practice and back again: Beginning teachers teaching for social justice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(3), 237-247.
- Agee, J. (2004). Negotiating a teacher identity: An African American teacher’s struggle to teach in test-driven contexts. *Teachers College Record*, 106(4), 747-774.
- Alhabash, S., & Ma, M. (2017). A tale of four platforms: motivations and uses of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat among college students?. *Social Media + Society*, 3(1), 1-13.
- Alim, H. S. (2016). Introducing Raciolinguistics. In Alim, H.S., Rickford, J.R., & Ball, A.F. (Eds.) *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race*, 1-30.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge/Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Amos, Y.T. (2010). “They don’t want to get it!” Interaction between minority and white pre-service teachers in a multicultural education class. *Multicultural Education*, 17(4), 31-37.
- Anderson, E. (2012). The iconic ghetto. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 642(1), 8-24.
- Anderson, E. J., Daugherty, M. A., Pickering, L. K., Orenstein, W. A., & Yogev, R. (2018). Protecting the community through child vaccination. *Clinical Infectious Diseases : An Official Publication of the Infectious Diseases Society of America*, 67(3), 464-471.
- Anderson, J.L. & Justice, J.E. (2015). Disruptive design in pre-service teacher education: Uptake, participation, and resistance. *Teaching Education*, 26(4), 400–421.
- Andersson, A., Hatakka, M., Grönlund, Å., & Wiklund, M. (2014). Reclaiming the students – Coping with social media in 1:1 schools. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 39(1), 37–52.
- Andrews, D. J. C., Richmond, G., & Stroupe, D. (2017). Teacher education and teaching in the present political landscape: promoting educational equity through critical inquiry and research. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68 (2), 121-124.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera*. San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Press.

- Apple, M. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum* (3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Au, W. (2017). When multicultural education is not enough. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 19(3), 147-150.
- Au, K.H. & Blake, K.M. (2003). Cultural identity and learning to teach in a diverse community: Findings from a collective case study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(3), 192-205.
- Ball, A. F., & Tyson, C. A. (Eds.). (2011). *Studying diversity in teacher education*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Banks, J. (2004a). Multicultural education: characteristics and goals. In J. Banks, & C. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 3–30). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Banks, J. (2004b). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. In J. Banks, & C. Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 242–264). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Banks, J., Cochran-Smith, M., Moll, L., Richert, A., Zeichner, K., LePage, P., . . . McDonald, M. (2005). Teaching diverse learners. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 232-274). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Barnard, J. (2016). Tweets as microfiction: On Twitter’s live nature and 140-character limit as tools for developing storytelling skills. *New writing*, 13(1), 3-16.
- Barrett, L. F., & Bliss-Moreau, E. (2009). She's emotional. he's having a bad day: Attributional explanations for emotion stereotypes. *Emotion*, 9(5), 649-658.
- Bartolomé, L. (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64, 173–194.
- Bartolomé, L. I. (2004). Critical pedagogy and teacher education: Radicalizing prospective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 31, 97–122.
- Bartolomé, L. I. (2008). Authentic cariño and respect in minority education: The political and ideological dimensions of love. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2005). Womanist lessons for reinventing teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(5), 436-445.
- Beckman, L. J. (2017). Abortion in the United States: The continuing controversy. *Feminism & Psychology*, 27(1), 101–113.
- Bell Jr, D. A. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 518-533.
- Benko, S.L., Guise, M., Earl, C., & Gill, W. (2016). More than social media: Using Twitter with preservice teachers as a means of reflection and engagement in communities of practice. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 16(1), 1-21.
- Bergström, A., & Jervelycke Belfrage, M. (2018). News in social media: incidental consumption and the role of opinion leaders. *Digital Journalism*, 6(5), 583-598.

- Bersh, L. C. (2009). Deconstructing Whiteness: Uncovering Prospective Teachers' Understandings of Their Culture-A Latina Professor's Perspective. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 11(2), 107–112.
- Bigelow, B. (2015). Unsung heroes: Encouraging students to appreciate those who fought for social justice. Retrieved from <https://zin nedproject.org/materials/teaching-about-unsung-heroes/>
- Blanco Ramírez, G. (2016). Case studies. In Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (Eds.) *Designing qualitative research*. (19-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bloom, D. S., Peters, T., Margolin, M., & Fragnoli, K. (2015). Are My Students Like Me? The Path to Color-Blindness and White Racial Identity Development. *Education and Urban Society*, 47(5), 555–575.
- Boczkowski, P. J., Mitchelstein, E., & Matassi, M. (2018). “News comes across when I’m in a moment of leisure”: Understanding the practices of incidental news consumption on social media. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3523-3539.
- Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Boser, U. (2014). Teacher Diversity Revisited: A New State-by-State Analysis. *Center for American Progress*.
- Boulianne, S. (2016). Online news, civic awareness, and engagement in civic and political life. *New media & society*, 18(9), 1840-1856.
- boyd, d. (2002) *Faceted id/entity: managing representation in a digital world*. Master’s Thesis, Program in Media Arts and Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA.
- boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Britzman, D.P. (1986). Cultural myths in the making of a teacher: Biography and social structure in teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 442-456.
- Brown, A. L., & Au, W. (2014). Race, memory, and master narratives: A critical essay on US curriculum history. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 44(3), 358-389.
- Brown, A. L., & Brown, K. D. (2010). "A spectacular secret:" understanding the cultural memory of racial violence in K-12 official school textbooks in the era of obama. *Race, Gender & Class*, 17(3/4), 111-125.
- Brown, K. D. (2013). Trouble on my mind: Toward a framework of humanizing critical sociocultural knowledge for teaching and teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 16(3), 316-338.
- Brown, K. D. (2014). Teaching in color: a critical race theory in education analysis of the literature on preservice teachers of color and teacher education in the U.S. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17(3), 326-345.
- Bunch, G.C. (2013). Pedagogical language knowledge: Preparing mainstream teachers for English learners in the new standards era. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 298-341.
- Callahan, R. M., & Gándara, P. C. (Eds.). (2014). *The bilingual advantage: Language, literacy and the US labor market*. London, UK: Multilingual Matters.



- Carano, K.T. (2009). Becoming globally literate: Teaching cross-cultural awareness through the use of social networking sites. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 2(2), 59-66.
- Carpenter, J.P. (2015). Preservice teachers' microblogging: professional development via Twitter. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 15(2), 209-234.
- Carpenter, J.P., & Krutka, D.G. (2014). How and why educators use Twitter: A survey of the field. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 46(4), 414-434.
- Carpenter, J.P. & Krutka, D.G. (2015). Social media in teacher education. In Niess, M.L., & Gillow-Wiles, H. (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education in the Digital Age* (28-54). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Carpenter, J.P., Tur, G., & Marín, V.I.. (2016). What do U.S. and Spanish pre-service teachers think about educational and professional use of Twitter? A comparative study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 60: 131-43.
- Center for Homeland Defense and Security. (2018). K-12 School Shooting Database. Retrieved April 13, 2019 from <https://www.chds.us/ssdb/>
- Cheruvu, R., Souto-Manning, M., Lenc, T., & Chin-Calubaquib, M. (2015). Race, isolation, and exclusion: What early childhood teacher educators need to know about the experiences of pre-service teachers of color. *The Urban Review*, 47(2), 237-265.
- Christian, B. M., & Zippay, C. (2012). Breaking the Yoke of Racism & Cultural Biases. *Multicultural Education*, 19(4), 33-40.
- Clayton, C., & Brisk, M. E. (2011). It's my responsibility! Teacher of bilingual learners in an English-immersion context. In Bustos Flores, B., Sheets, R.H., & Clark, E.R. (Eds.) *Teacher preparation for bilingual student populations: Educar para transformar*. New York, NY: Routledge, a Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (1991). Learning to teach against the grain. *Harvard educational review*, 61(3), 279-311.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. Teachers College Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2010). Toward a theory of teacher education for social justice. In *Second international handbook of educational change* (pp. 445-467). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Villegas, A. M., Abrams, L., Chavez-Moreno, L., Mills, T., & Stern, R. (2014). Critiquing teacher preparation research: An overview of the field, Part II. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66, 109-121.
- Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Conklin, H. G. (2008). Modeling compassion in critical, justice-oriented teacher education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(4), 652-674.
- Conklin, H. G., & Hughes, H. E. (2016). Practices of compassionate, critical, justice-oriented teacher education. *Journal of teacher education*, 67(1), 47-60.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4, 164-195.

- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Ubiquitous learning*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Corrington, A., & Hebl, M. (2018). America clearly is not ready for a female president: Why? *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 37(1), 31-43.
- Cox, D.H., & Nickson, L.M. (2014). A peek behind the page: How preservice teachers use social media to build understanding and community. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 27(4), 591-604.
- Crawford, J. (2004). *Educating English learners: Language diversity in the classroom*. Los Angeles, CA: Bilingual Educational Services, Inc.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139- 167.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cushner, K.H., McClelland, A. & Safford, P. (2006). *Human diversity in education: An integrative approach (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Darder, A. (2015). *Culture and power in the classroom: Educational foundations for the schooling of bicultural students*. Routledge.
- Davis, J. L., & Jurgenson, N. (2014). Context collapse: Theorizing context collusions and collisions. *Information, communication & society*, 17(4), 476-485.
- de Jong, E.J. & Harper, C.A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(2), 101-124.
- De Lissovoy, N. (2012). Education and violation: Conceptualizing power, domination, and agency in the hidden curriculum. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15(4), 463-484.
- DeCook, J. R. (2018). Memes and symbolic violence: #proudboys and the use of memes for propaganda and the construction of collective identity. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 43(4), 485-504.
- Dede, C. (2016). Social media and challenges to traditional models of education. In Greenhow, C., Sonnevend, J., & Agur, C. (Eds.) *Education and social media* (95-112). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3), 54–70.
- Donald J. Trump [@RealDonaldTrump]. (n.d.) Tweets [Twitter profile]. Retrieved April 13, 2019 from <https://www.twitter.com/RealDonaldTrump/>

- Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R. (2010). Chapter Four: Your best friend or your worst enemy: The significance of youth popular culture in education. *Counterpoints*, 293, 55-74.
- Duplass, J.A. (2007). Elementary social studies: Trite, disjointed, and in need of reform? *The Social Studies*, 98 (4), 137-44.
- Duxbury, S. W., Frizzell, L. C., & Lindsay, S. L. (2018). Mental illness, the media, and the moral politics of mass violence: The role of race in mass shootings coverage. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 55(6), 766-797.
- Dyches, J., & Boyd, A. (2017). Foregrounding equity in teacher education: Toward a model of social justice pedagogical and content knowledge. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(5), 476-490.
- Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Edwards, C. N. (2012). Christian social justice advocate: Contradiction or legacy? *Counseling and Values*, 57(1), 10-17.
- Egalite, A. J., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. A. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 45, 44-52.
- Ellingson, L.L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2014). “The truth must dazzle gradually”: Enriching relationship research using a crystallization framework. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31(4), 442-450.
- Erlanson, D. A., Harris, E. L., Skipper, B. L., & Allen, S. D. (1993). *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods*. Sage.
- Esa, N. (2010). Environmental knowledge, attitude and practices of student teachers. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 19(1), 39-50.
- Evans-Winters, V. E., & Twyman Hoff, P. (2011). The aesthetics of white racism in pre-service teacher education: a critical race theory perspective. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(4), 461-479.
- Fairclough, A. (2004). The costs of *Brown*: Black teachers and school integration. *The Journal of American History*, 91(1), 43-55.
- Fasching-Varner, K. (2012). *Working through Whiteness: Examining White racial identity and profession with pre-service teachers*. United Kingdom: Lexington.
- Fasheh, M. (1990). Community education: To reclaim and transform what has been made invisible. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(1), 19-36.
- Featherstone, M. (2010). Body, image and affect in consumer culture. *Body & Society*, 16(1), 193-221.
- Flaxman, S., Goel, S., & Rao, J. M. (2016). Filter bubbles, echo chambers, and online news consumption. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 80(S1), 298-320.
- Flint, A. S., Holbrook, T., May, L., Albers, P., & Dooley, C. M. (2013). Reading the world to read the word. *Language Arts*, 90(6), 399.

- Flores, N. & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 85 (2), 7-29.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2010). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Frank, A.M. (2003). If they come, we should listen: African American education majors' perceptions of a predominantly White university experience. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(7), 697-717.
- Fránquiz, M., & de la Luz Reyes, M. (1998). Creating inclusive learning communities through English language arts: From chancclas to canicas. *Language Arts*, 75, 211–220.
- Fraser, J. W. (2006). *Preparing America's Teachers: A History*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (2003). Literacy as engaging with new forms of life: The “four roles” model. In G. Bull & M. Anstey (Eds.), *The literacy lexicon* (2nd ed., pp. 51–66). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education.
- Freeman, D.E. & Freeman, Y.S. (2014). *Essential linguistics: What teachers need to know to teach ESL, reading, spelling, and grammar* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Freire, P. (1985). Reading the world and reading the word. *Language Arts*, 62(1), 15.
- Freire, P. (1997). *Mentoring the mentor: A critical dialogue with Paulo Freire*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Garcia, O. (2008). Multilingual language awareness and teacher education. In *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 2130-2145). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Garcia-Navarro, L. (2017). Vatican addresses Trump Catholic supporters. National Public Radio. Retrieved April 13, 2019 from <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/06/541877769/vatican-addresses-catholic-trump-supporters>
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G., & Howard, T. C. (2000). Multicultural teacher education for the 21st century. *The Teacher Educator*, 36(1), 1-16.
- Gay, G., & Kirkland, K. (2003). Developing cultural critical consciousness and self-reflection in preservice teacher education. *Theory into practice*, 42(3), 181-187.
- Gee, J. P. (2005). Semiotic social spaces and affinity spaces: From the age of mythology to today's schools. In Barton, D. & Tusting, K. (Eds.) *Beyond communities of practice: Language power and social context*, 214-232.
- Genor, M., & Goodwin, A.L. (2005). Confronting ourselves: Using autobiographical analysis in teacher education. *The New Educator*, 1(4), 311-331.

- Giroux, H.A. (2017). White nationalism, armed culture and state violence in the age of Donald Trump. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 43(9), 887–910.
- Gist, A. N. (2017). “I knew america was not ready for a woman to be president”:  
Commentary on the dominant structural intersections organized around the  
presidency and voting rights. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 40(2), 150-  
154.
- Gist, C. D. (2017). Voices of aspiring teachers of color: Unraveling the double bind in  
teacher education. *Urban Education*, 52(8), 927-956.
- Glaser, B.G. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis.  
*Social Problems*, 12(4), 436-445.
- Gomez, M., & Journell, W. (2017). Professionalism, preservice teachers, and Twitter.  
*Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 25(4), 377-412.
- Gomez, M.L, Rodriguez, T.L, & Agosto, V. (2008). Who are Latino prospective teachers  
and what do they bring to U.S. schools? *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 11(3),  
267-283.
- Goodwin, A.L. (2017). Who is in the classroom now? Teacher preparation and the  
education of immigrant children. *Educational Studies*, 53 (5), 433-449.
- Gordon, L. (2007). *The moral property of women: A history of birth control politics in  
America*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Gorski, P. C. (2009). What we're teaching teachers: An analysis of multicultural teacher  
education coursework syllabi. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(2), 309-318.
- Gottfried, J., & Shearer, E. (2016). *News Use Across Social Medial Platforms 2016*. Pew  
Research Center.
- Greenhalgh, S.P., Rosenberg, J.M., & Wolf, L.G. (2016). For all intents and purposes:  
Twitter as a foundational technology for teachers. *E-Learning and Digital Media*,  
13 (1-2), 81–98.
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In  
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (105-  
117). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage.
- Guest, P. D. (2001). Battling for the bible: Academy, church and the gay agenda.  
*Theology and Sexuality*, 2001(15), 66-93.
- Gundaker, G. (2007). Hidden education among African Americans during slavery. *The  
Teachers College Record*, 109(7), 1591-1612.
- Guyton, E., Saxton, R., & Wesche, M. (1996). Experiences of diverse students in teacher  
education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 12(6), 643-652.
- Haddix, M. M. (2012). Talkin’ in the company of my sistas: The counterlanguages and  
deliberate silences of Black female students in teacher education. *Linguistics and  
Education*, 23(2), 169-181.
- Haddix, M. M. (2017). Diversifying teaching and teacher education: Beyond rhetoric and  
toward real change. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 49(1), 141-149.
- Hall, P. D. (2016). White fragility and affirmative action. *The Journal of Race & Policy*,  
12(2), 7-21.

- Hallstein, D. L. O. (2008). Silences and choice: The legacies of white second wave feminism in the new professoriate. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 31(2), 143-150.
- Hamann, E.T. & Harklau, L. (2010). Education in the New Latino Diaspora. *Handbook of Latinos and education: Theory, research, and practice*, 157-169.
- Hampton, B., Peng, L., & Ann, J. (2008). Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Urban Schools. *The Urban Review*, 40(3), 268–295.
- Harris, C.I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, 106(8), 1707-1791.
- Helms, J.E. (1984). Toward a theoretical explanation of the effects of race on counseling: A black and white model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 12, 153-165.
- Helms, J.E. (1995). An update of Helms's white and people of color racial identity models. In J.G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L.A. Suzuki, & C.M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 181-191). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hemmings, C. (2012). Affective solidarity: Feminist reflexivity and political transformation. *Feminist Theory*, 13(2), 147-161.
- Henry, A. M. (2011). Feminist theories in education. In S. Tozer, BP Gallegos, A. Henry, M. B. Greiner & PG Price (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in the Social Foundations of Education*, (p. 261-282). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hentges, S. (2016). Toward #SocialJustice: Creating social media community in live and online classrooms." *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, 26(2), 230–38.
- Hermida, A., Fletcher, F., Korell, D., & Logan, D. (2012) Share, like, recommend. *Journalism Studies*, 13:5-6, 815-824.
- Herrell, A., & Jordan, M. (2015). *Fifty strategies for teaching English language learners* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Hewstone, M., & Swart, H. (2011). Fifty-odd years of inter-group contact: From hypothesis to integrated theory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(3), 374-386.
- Hill-Jackson, V. (2007). PART III: CREATING MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS: Wrestling Whiteness: Three Stages of Shifting Multicultural Perspectives among White Pre-service Teachers. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 9(2), 29–35.
- hook, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress*. New York: Routledge.
- Howard, T. C. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms* (Vol. 39). Teachers College Press.
- Howard, T.C. & Aleman, G.R. (2008). Teacher capacity for diverse learners: What do teachers need to know? In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D.J. McIntyre (Eds.). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (157-174). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group/Association of Teacher Educators.
- Huang, S. (2017). Reading practices of pre-service teachers in the United States. *Reading Psychology*, 38(6), 580–603.

- Hughes, J.E., Ko, Y., Lim, M., & Liu, S. (2015). Preservice teachers' social networking use, concerns, and educational possibilities: Trends from 2008 to 2012. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 23(2), 185-212.
- Irizarry, J.G. & Raible, J. (2011). Beginning with *el barrio*: Learning from exemplary teachers of Latino students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 10(3), 186-203.
- Jackson, T. O. (2015). Perspectives and insights from preservice teachers of color on developing culturally responsive pedagogy at predominantly white institutions. *Action in Teacher Education*, 37(3), 223-237.
- Jansen, J. (2009). *Knowledge in the blood: Confronting race and the apartheid past*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Jenlink, P.M. (2014). Editorial: Preparing teachers for the 'Neomillennial' generation—Rethinking the role of social media. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 27(4), 504-513.
- Jensen, A. (2012). Digital culture, and the viewing/participating pre-service teacher: (Re)envisioning theatre teacher training for a social media culture. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 17(4), 553-68.
- Johnson, M. R., & Ferguson, M. (2018). The role of political engagement in college students' civic identity: Longitudinal findings from recent graduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(5), 511-527.
- Juárez, B. G., & Hayes, C. (2015). On Being Named a Black Supremacist and a Race Traitor: The Problem of White Racial Domination and Domestic Terrorism in U.S. Teacher Education. *The Urban Review*, 47(2), 317-340.
- Kapustka, K. M., Howell, P., Clayton, C. D., & Thomas, S. (2009). Social justice in teacher education: A qualitative content analysis of NCATE conceptual frameworks. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(4), 489-505.
- Keene, E.K., & Zimmerman, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reading workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kimmel, M. (2013). *Angry white men: American masculinity at the end of an era*. New York, NY: Nation Books.
- King, J. (2004). Culture-centered knowledge: Black studies, curriculum transformation and social action. In J. Banks & C. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*. (2nd edition). (pp. 349-378). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- King, S.H. (1993). The limited presence of African-American teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 63(2), 115-149.
- Krutka, D.G. (2015). Platforms, purpose, and pedagogy: Reclaiming context and resisting technopoly with participatory media. *Journal of Thought* 49 (3-4), 35-49.
- Krutka, D.G., & Carpenter, J.P. (2016). Why social media must have a place in schools. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 52 (1), 6-10.
- Krutka, D.G., & Carpenter, J.P. (2017). Mediating democracy: Social media as curriculum. In Wright-Maley, C. & Davis, T. (Eds.) *Teaching for democracy in an age of economic disparity* (227-246). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Krutka, D.G., Nowell, S., & Whitlock, A.M. (2017). Towards a social media pedagogy: Successes and shortcomings in educative uses of Twitter with teacher candidates. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 25(2), 215-240.
- Krutka, D.G., Bergman, D.J., Flores, R., Mason, K., & Jack, A.R. (2014). Microblogging about teaching: Nurturing participatory cultures through collaborative online reflection with pre-service teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 40 (May), 83–93.
- Kumashiro, K.K. (2000a). Teaching and learning through desire, crisis, and difference: Perverted reflections on anti-oppressive education. *The Radical Teacher*, (58), 6-11.
- Kumashiro, K.K. (2000b). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2001). “Posts” perspectives on anti-oppressive education in social studies, English, mathematics, and science classrooms. *Educational Researcher*, 30(3), 3-12.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American educational research journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3-12.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: aka the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84.
- Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W.F. IV. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.
- Lamarre, C. (2018 May 5). Cardi B sounds off on haters calling her 'ghetto': 'Leave me alone' Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/hip-hop/8455619/cardi-b-response-ghetto-hate-tweet>
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2011). *New literacies*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Laughter, J. C. (2011). Rethinking assumptions of demographic privilege: Diversity among White preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 43–50.
- Lee, E., Lee, J. A., Moon, J. H., & Sung, Y. (2015). Pictures speak louder than words: Motivations for using Instagram. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 18(9), 552-556.
- Lee, C. C., Nagpal, P., Ruane, S. G., & Lim, H. S. (2018). Factors affecting online streaming subscriptions. *Communications of the IIMA*, 16(1), 1-24.
- Lemon, N. (2014). Twitter and teacher education: Exploring teacher, social, and cognitive presence in professional use of social media. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 27(4), 532-560.
- Lenhardt, C. (2016). “Free Peltier Now!” The Use of Internet Memes in American Indian Activism. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 40(3), 67-84.
- Lenski, S.D. (1998). Intertextual intentions: Making connections across texts. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas*, 72(2), 74-80.



- Leonardo, Z. (2009). *Race, whiteness, and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Leonardo, Z., & Broderick, A. (2011). Smartness as property: A critical exploration of intersections between whiteness and disability studies. *Teachers College Record, 113*(10), 2206-2232.
- Levine, M. & Levine, A. (2012). Education deformed: No Child Left Behind and the Race to the Top. ‘This almost reads like our business plans’. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 82*(1), 104-113.
- Lindquist, J. (2004). Class affects, classroom affectations: Working through the paradoxes of strategic empathy. *College English, 67*(2), 187-209.
- Loewen, J.W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Lomawaima, K. T., & McCarty, T. L. (2006). *"To Remain an Indian": Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lucas, T. & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, J. McIntyre, & K. Demers (Eds.). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). (606-636). New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Lucas, T., Villegas, A.M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education: Preparing classroom teachers to teach English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(4), 361-373.
- Lup, K., Trub, L., & Rosenthal, L. (2015). Instagram# instasad?: exploring associations among instagram use, depressive symptoms, negative social comparison, and strangers followed. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 18*(5), 247-252.
- Maas, M. K., McCauley, H. L., Bonomi, A. E., & Leija, S. G. (2018). “I was grabbed by my pussy and its# NotOkay”: A Twitter backlash against Donald Trump’s degrading commentary. *Violence against women, 24*(14), 1739-1750.
- Macedo, D., Dendrinos, B., & Gounari, P. (2003). *The hegemony of English*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Mantei, J., & Fahy, M. (2018). Examining what it means to make 'text-to' connections with year 5 and 6 students. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years, 26*(2), 41-49.
- Marino, M.P. (2011). High school world history textbooks: An analysis of content focus and chronological approaches. *The History Teacher, 44*(3), 421-446.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2016.) *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Martin-Jones, M. (2000). Bilingual classroom interaction: A review of recent research. *Language Teaching, 33*(1), 1–9.
- Marx, S. (2004). Regarding Whiteness: Exploring and Intervening in the Effects of White Racism in Teacher Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 37*(1), 31–43.

- Marx, S. (2006). *Revealing the invisible: Confronting passive racism in teacher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Matias, C.E. (2016a). *Feeling white: Whiteness, emotionality, and education*. Boston, MA: Sens Publishers.
- Matias, C. E. (2016b). “Why do you make me hate myself?”: Re-teaching Whiteness, abuse, and love in urban teacher education. *Teaching Education*, 27(2), 194–211.
- Matias, C. E., Henry, A., & Darland, C. (2017). The twin tales of whiteness: Exploring the emotional roller coaster of teaching and learning about whiteness. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 16(1), 7-29
- Matias, C. E., & Grosland, T. J. (2016). Digital Storytelling as Racial Justice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 67(2), 152–164.
- Matias, C. E., & Mackey, J. (2016). Breakin’ Down Whiteness in Antiracist Teaching: Introducing Critical Whiteness Pedagogy. *The Urban Review*, 48(1), 32–50.
- Matias, C. E., Viesca, K. M., Garrison-Wade, D. F., Tandon, M., & Galindo, R. (2014). “What is Critical Whiteness Doing in OUR Nice Field like Critical Race Theory?” Applying CRT and CWS to Understand the White Imaginations of White Teacher Candidates. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 47(3), 289–304.
- Matias, C. E., & Zembylas, M. (2014). “When saying you care is not really caring”: Emotions of disgust, whiteness ideology, and teacher education. *Critical Studies in Education*, 55(3), 319–337.
- Maudlin, J. G., & Sandlin, J. A. (2015). Pop culture pedagogies: Process and praxis. *Educational Studies*, 51(5), 368-384.
- Maxwell, L. (2014). U.S. school enrollment hits majority-minority milestone. Education Week. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/20/01demographics.h34.html>
- McCarty, T. (2005). *Language, literacy, and power in schooling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McDevitt, S.E. & Kurihara, M. (2017). Bridging funds of knowledge in learning to teach: The story of a Japanese pre-service teacher’s authentic teaching practicum experience. *Journal of Thought*, 51(3-4), 38-51.
- McDonald, M. & Zeichner, K. (2009). Social justice teacher education. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 595-610). New York, NY: Routledge.
- McGuinn, P. (2012). Stimulating reform: Race to the Top, competitive grants and the Obama education agenda. *Educational Policy*, 26(1), 136-159.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack working paper 189. "White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies."
- McLaren, P. (2016). *The fist called my heart: The Peter McLaren Reader*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Meacham, S.J. (2000). Black self-love, language, and the teacher education dilemma: The cultural denial and cultural limbo of African American preservice teachers. *Urban Education*, 34(5), 571-596.

- Menchaca, M. (2011). *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants: A Texas Story*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam S. B. & Tisdell E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miedzian, M. (2002). *Boys will be boys: Breaking the link between masculinity and violence*. New York, NY: Lantern Books.
- Milner, H.R. & Howard, T.C. (2004). Black teachers, Black students, Black communities, and Brown: Perspectives and insights from experts. *Journal of Negro Education*, 73(3), 285-297.
- Milner IV, H. R., & Howard, T. C. (2013). Counter-narrative as method: Race, policy and research for teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16(4), 536-561.
- Mobley, K., & Fisher, S. (2018). Political Scientists in Polite Company: Talking Politics with Family Members. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 1-7.
- Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D. & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.
- Morris, M. (2016). *Pushout: The criminalization of Black girls in schools*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Mueller, J., & O'Connor, C. (2007). Telling and retelling about self and “others”: How pre-service teachers (re) interpret privilege and disadvantage in one college classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(6), 840-856.
- Murnen, S. K., Wright, C., & Kaluzny, G. (2002). If "boys will be boys," then girls will be victims? A meta-analytic review of the research that relates masculine ideology to sexual aggression. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 46(11/12), 359-375.
- Nagle, J. (2018). Twitter, cyber-violence, and the need for a critical social media literacy in teacher education: A review of the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 76, 86-94.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2016*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016007.pdf>
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- New York Times. (2016, October 8). Transcript: Donald Trump’s taped comments about women. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/donald-trump-tape-transcript.html>
- Nguyen, H.T. (2008). Conceptions of teaching by five Vietnamese American preservice teachers. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 7(2), 113-136.

- Noble, S.U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Nurka, C. (2014). Public bodies. *Feminist Media Studies*, 14(3), 485-499.
- Oakes, J., Lipton, M., Anderson, L., & Stillman, J. (2013). *Teaching to change the world* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). (29-59). Boulder CO: Paradigm.
- Orfield, G., Ee, J., Frankenberg, E., & Siegel-Hawley, G. (2016). "Brown" at 62: School Segregation by Race, Poverty and State. *Civil Rights Project-Proyecto Derechos Civiles*.
- Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical studies in media communication*, 34(1), 59-68.
- Palmer, D.K. & Martinez, R.A. (2013). Teacher agency in bilingual spaces: A fresh look at preparing teachers to educate Latina/o bilingual children. *Review of Research in Education*, 37, 269-297.
- Palmer, D.K. & Martinez, R.A. (2016). Developing biliteracy: What do teachers really need to know about language? *Language Arts*, 93(5), 379-385.
- Palmer, D. K., & Menard-Warwick, J. (2012). Short-term study abroad for texas preservice teachers: On the road from empathy to critical awareness. *Multicultural Education*, 19(3), 17-26.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.
- Paris, D. & Alim, H.S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85-100.
- Pavlović, L. M. (2016). Internet memes as a field of discursive construction of identity and space of resistance. *AM: Art + Media*, (10), 97-106.
- Pentina, I., & Tarafdar, M. (2014). From "information" to "knowing": Exploring the role of social media in contemporary news consumption. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 35, 211-223.
- Pew Research Center. (2015, September 28). *Modern immigration wave brings 59 million to U.S. driving population growth and change through 2065: Views of immigration's impact on U.S. society mixed*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Pew Research Center. (2018, December 18). *A record number of women will be serving in the new Congress*. Washington, DC: Drew Desilver.
- Pew Research Center. (2019, February 8). For the fifth time in a row, the new Congress is the most racially and ethnically diverse ever. Washington, DC: Kristen Bialik.
- Philip, T. M. (2014) Asian American as a political-racial identity: Implications for teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17(2), 219-241.
- Philip, T. M., & Benin, S. Y. (2014). Programs of teacher education as mediators of White teacher identity. *Teaching Education*, 25(1), 1-23.
- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined Whiteness of teaching: how White teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(2), 197-215.

- Pierik, R. (2018). Mandatory vaccination: An unqualified defence. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 35(2), 381-398.
- Pierson, P.D., and Tierney, R.J. (1984). On becoming a thoughtful reader: Learning to read like a writer. In *Becoming readers in a complex society*, edited by Purves, A.C., & Niles, O.S. 144-173. Chicago, Illinois: National Society for the Study of Education.
- Polibeats [@polibeats\_]. (n.d.) Posts [Instagram profile]. Retrieved April 13, 2019 from <https://www.instagram.com/polibeats/>
- Pugach, M. C., Gomez-Najarro, J., & Matewos, A. M. (2018). A Review of Identity in Research on Social Justice in Teacher Education: What Role for Intersectionality? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 00(0), 1-13.
- Quiocho, A. & Rios, F. (2000). The power of their presence: Minority group teachers and schooling. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(4), 485-528.
- Reeve, J. (2017). 13 books to teach children about protesting and activism. Retrieved from <https://geekdad.com/2017/01/13-books-children-activism/>
- Richards, D. (2018, November 19). What to do about your racist AF uncle at Thanksgiving. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-thanksgiving-racist-uncle\\_n\\_5bef01e3e4b0b052597a5e34](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-thanksgiving-racist-uncle_n_5bef01e3e4b0b052597a5e34)
- Richardson, S., & Donley, A. (2018). "That's so ghetto!" A study of the racial and socioeconomic implications of the adjective ghetto. *Theory in Action*, 11(4), 22-43.
- Rosen, J. (2012). The people formerly known as the audience. In Mandiberg, M. (Ed.). *The social media reader* (13-17). New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Rosenblatt, L.M. (1978), *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL.
- Rumbaut, R.G. (2009). A language graveyard? The evolution of language competencies, preferences, and use among young adult children of immigrants. In *The education of language minority immigrants in the United States* – Wiley, T.G., Lee, J.S., Rumerger, R.W. (Eds). (pp. 35-71). London UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Ryan, C. (2013). *Language use in the United States: American community survey reports (Vol. ACS-22)*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Salazar, M. C. (2013). A humanizing pedagogy: Reinventing the principles and practice of education as a journey toward liberation. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 121-148.
- Salinas, C. & Castro, A.J. (2011). Disrupting the official curriculum: Cultural biography and the curriculum decision making of Latino preservice teachers. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 38(3), 428-463.
- Schwager, S. (1987). Educating Women in America. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 12, 333-372.
- Seidl, B. L., & Conley, M. D. (2009). Writing new possibilities for teaching lives: Prospective teachers and multicultural apprenticeships. *Language Arts*, 117-126.

- Seidel, B. & Hancock, S. (2011). Acquiring double images: Preservice teachers locating themselves in a raced world. *Harvard Education Review*, 81(4), 687-709.
- Shannon, S. (1995). The hegemony of English: A case study of one bilingual classroom as a site of resistance. *Linguistics and Education*, 7(3), 175-200.
- Sheets, R.H. & Chew, L. (2002). Absent from the research, present in our classrooms: Preparing culturally responsive Chinese American teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 127-141.
- Siddle-Walker, V. (2000). Valued segregated schools for African-American children in the South, 1935-1969: A review of common themes and characteristics. *Review of Educational Research*, 70:3, 253-285.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: The overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94-106.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2008). Preparing White teachers for diverse students. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, & J. McIntyre (Eds.), *Handbook of research in teacher education: Enduring issues in changing contexts* (3rd ed., pp. 559-582). New York: Routledge.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2017). Critical race theory and the whiteness of teacher education. *Urban Education*, 52(2), 155-169.
- Sleeter, C.E. & Milner, IV, H.R. (2011). Researching successful efforts in teacher education to diversify teachers. In A.F. Ball & C.A. Tyson (Eds.). *Studying diversity in teacher education*. (81-103). American Educational Research Association.
- Sleeter, C. E., La Vonne, I. N., & Kumashiro, K. K. (Eds.). (2014). *Diversifying the teacher workforce: Preparing and retaining highly effective teachers*. Routledge.
- Smith, E. B. (2009). Approaches to Multicultural Education in Preservice Teacher Education: Philosophical Frameworks and Models for Teaching. *Multicultural Education*, 16(3), 45-50.
- Smith, J. (2018). The revolutionary power of Black Panther. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved April 13, 2019 from <http://time.com/black-panther/>
- Snyder-Hall, R. C. (2010). Third-wave feminism and the defense of “Choice”. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(1), 255-261.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban education*, 36(3), 308-342.
- Sostaita, B. (2016). Dear white people, please don't complain about going home for Thanksgiving. Retrieved (April 13 2019) from <http://feministing.com/2016/11/23/dear-white-people-please-dont-complain-about-going-home-for-thanksgiving/>
- Spivey, N.N. (1997). *The constructivist metaphor*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Spohr, D. (2017). Fake news and ideological polarization: Filter bubbles and selective exposure on social media. *Business Information Review*, 34(3), 150-160.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Stake, R.E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stewart, K. & Gachago, D. (2016). Being human today: A digital storytelling pedagogy for transcontinental border crossing. *British Journal of Educational Technology: Journal of the Council for Educational Technology*, 47 (3), 528–42.
- Stuart, A. (2006). Equal treatment as exclusion: language, race, and U.S. education policy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10(2-3), 235-250.
- Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.a). Proud Boys. Accessed 23 March 2019. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>
- Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.b). Rage against change. Accessed 23 March 2019. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/issues/rage-against-change>
- Taylor, L.K. (2007). Reading desire: From empathy to estrangement, from enlightenment to implication. *Intercultural Education*, 18(4), 297-316.
- Téllez, K. (1999). Mexican-American preservice teachers and the intransigency of the elementary school curriculum. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, (15), 555-570.
- Tettegah, S. (1996). The Racial Consciousness Attitudes of White Prospective Teachers and Their Perceptions of the Teachability of Students from Different Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds: Findings from a California Study. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 65(2), 151–163.
- Thomas, G. (2016). *How to do your case study* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tompkins, J. (2018). Woke hollywood, all hype the black panther. *Film Criticism*, 42(4), 1-5.
- Tuck, E. (2011). Rematriating curriculum studies. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 8(1), 34-37.
- Tur, G., & Marín, V.I. (2015). Enhancing learning with the social media: Student teachers' perceptions on Twitter in a debate activity. *New Approaches in Educational Research*, 4(1), 46-53.
- U.S. Department of Education (2016). The state of racial diversity in the educator workforce. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf>.
- Urrieta, L. (2004). Dis-connections in “American” citizenship and the post/neo-colonial: People of Mexican descent and Whitemain Pedagogy and curriculum. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 32(4), 433-458.
- Urrieta, L. (2007). Identity production in figured worlds: How some Mexican American become Chicana/o activist educators. *The Urban Review*, 39(2), 117-144.
- Urrieta, L. (2010). Whitemain: Why some Latinos fear bilingual education. In L.D. Soto & H. Kharem (Eds.). *Teaching bilingual/bicultural children: Teachers talk about language and learning* (Vol. 371, 47-56). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Vaidhyanathan, S. (2018). *Anti-social media: how Facebook disconnects us and undermines democracy*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Valdés, G., Bunch, G., Snow, C., Lee, C., & Matos, L. (2005). Enhancing the development of students' language(s). In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford

- (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 126–168). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Valencia, Richard R. (2012). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Vavrus, M. (2009). Sexuality, schooling, and teacher identity formation: A critical pedagogy for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(3), 383-390.
- Villegas, A. M., Ciotoli, F., & Lucas, T. (2017). A Framework for Preparing Teachers for Classrooms That Are Inclusive of All Students. In *Teacher Education for the Changing Demographics of Schooling* (pp. 133-148). New York, NY: Springer.
- Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teaching force: An examination of major arguments. *The Urban Review, 42*(3), 175-192.
- Villegas, A.M. & Lucas, T. (2002). Educating culturally responsible teachers: A coherent approach. *SUNY series in teacher preparation and development*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Villegas, A.M., Strom, K. & Lucas, T. (2012). Closing the racial/ethnic gap between students of color and their teachers: An elusive goal. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(2), 283-301.
- Vlieghe, J., Vandermeersche, G., & Soetaert, R. (2016). Social media in literacy education: Exploring social reading with pre-service teachers. *New Media & Society, 18*(5), 800-816.
- Volden, C., Wiseman, A. E., & Wittmer, D. E. (2018). Women’s issues and their fates in the US congress. *Political Science Research and Methods, 6*(4), 679-696.
- Wang, K. T., Castro, A. J., & Cunningham, Y. L. (2014). Are perfectionism, individualism, and racial color-blindness associated with less cultural sensitivity? Exploring diversity awareness in White prospective teachers. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 7*(3), 211–225.
- Wang, Y., Davidson, M. M., Yakushko, O. F., Savoy, H. B., Tan, J. A., & Bleier, J. K. (2003). The scale of ethnocultural empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 50*(2), 221-234.
- Washington, K. R. (1977). An analysis of the attitudes of white prospective teachers toward the inner-city schools. *The Journal of Negro Education, 46*(1), 31–38.
- Weidhase, N. (2015). ‘Beyoncé feminism’ and the contestation of the black feminist body. *Celebrity Studies, 6*(1), 128-131.
- Whipp, J. L. (2013). Developing socially just teachers: The interaction of experiences before, during, and after teacher preparation in beginning urban teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 64*(5), 454-467.
- White, K. R. (2009). Connecting religion and teacher identity: The unexplored relationship between teachers and religion in public schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(6), 857-866.
- Whitehead, A. L., Perry, S. L., & Baker, J. O. (2018). Make america christian again: Christian nationalism and voting for donald trump in the 2016 presidential election. *Sociology of Religion, 79*(2), 147-171.



- Wickramanayake, L., & Jika, S.M. (2018). Social media use by undergraduate students of education in Nigeria: A survey. *The Electronic Library*, 36 (1), 21–37.
- Wiggins, R. A., Follo, E. J., & Eberly, M. B. (2007). The impact of a field immersion program on pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(5), 653–663.
- Williams, D. G., & Evans-Winters, V. (2005). The burden of teaching teachers: Memoirs of race discourse in teacher education. *The Urban Review*, 37(3), 201-219.
- Winslow, B. (2013). Clio in the curriculum: The state of women and women's history in the middle and high school curriculum . and perhaps a way forward. *Journal of Women's History*, 25(4), 319-332.
- Wong Fillmore, L., & Snow, C. E. (2000). What teachers need to know about language. Washington, DC: US Department of Education Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The Mis-education of the Negro*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World P.
- Wright, N. (2010). Twittering in teacher education: Reflecting on practicum experiences. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 25(3), 259-265.
- Yosso, T. J. (2002). Toward a critical race curriculum. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2), 93-107.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), 69-91.
- Zeichner, K. M. (2009). *Teacher education and the struggle for social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Zembylas, M. (2007a). Emotional ecology: The intersection of emotional knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(4), 355-367.
- Zembylas, M. (2007b) Mobilizing Anger for Social Justice: The politicization of the emotions in education, *Teaching Education*, 18:1, 15-28.
- Zembylas, M. (2012). Pedagogies of strategic empathy: Navigating through the emotional complexities of anti-racism in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17(2), 113-125.