

---

# A CASE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION: THE CRITICAL SPACE BETWEEN SOCIAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED TEACHING AND LEARNING

---

JACOB HACKETT  
*University of Washington*

TONY COPPAGE  
*Tony Coppage Educational Consultants, Atlanta*

AYINDE SUMMERS  
*Tony Coppage Educational Consultants, Atlanta*

MECCA HANDY  
*Atlanta Public Schools*

## Abstract

*A case-study analysis is used to examine the relationship between community partners and in-service public high school teachers who co-constructed a culturally responsive informal learning experience. An analysis of a summer literacy and character development camp for adolescent males of color provides a supportive argument for developing the Community-Based Teacher (Murrell, 2001). Culturally responsive informal learning experiences of public school students are the centerpiece of this case study as well as the shared experiential education instruction provided by community partners. Implications for teacher education programs, both traditional and Alternative Routes to Certification (ARCs) that purport mission statements integrating social justice are discussed. Community partners are integral practice of community-based teachers and the case study is used to reinforce this idea as well as claim the importance of community partners in the development of a pre-service community-based teacher.*

## Introduction

Current discourse surrounding methods, practice, and theory of teacher education is contentious as the popularity of alternative teacher certification programs rise and rival traditional teacher colleges (Grossman & Loeb, 2008). Partly in response to the growth of alternative teacher certification programs, some of which include as little as four-weeks of practice prior to becoming a teacher of record, and partly out of a need to evolve traditional teacher preparation colleges, national attention has been cast on the reinvention of teacher preparation in the United States (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin & Heilig, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Alternative certification agencies and many urban-situated traditional teacher colleges have explicitly stated their intention to prepare socially just and culturally responsive teachers; however, there is tremendous variability among these institutions and agencies over their operationalization of these concepts (Zeichner, 2009; *see* TFA, 2013). One very promising teacher education framework to develop culturally responsive pre-service teachers is focused on fostering what Peter Murrell (2001) has termed, *Community Teacher*.

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

Aside from a strong disposition to culturally relevant teaching, a Community Teacher is one who can also navigate local communities to identify and partner with community leaders outside of schools to further their community understanding and community-based practice. In this framework, pre-service—and eventual in-service—teachers are considered responsible to value and engage with these community partners or *players* (Murrell, 2001). Teachers' epistemological ability to identify, value and partner with players takes space and time throughout a pre-service teacher education program to instill. This time and space is unfortunately not provided often enough in traditional teacher education programs and is incompatible, due to logistical constraints, with alternative teacher certification routes (ARC) even though oftentimes social justice is a mission and impoverished schools are intentional targets of ARCs (*see* TFA, 2013, for example).

This paper intends to synthesize literature around Teacher Education and Social Justice (Kumashiro, 2000; North, 2008; Zeichner, 2009), Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Banks, 2001; Howard, 2003), and the involvement of Murrell's (2001) critical community-based "players," in the education of pre-service teachers. Next, a case is presented in which community players were vital to both student success as well as the development of a more culturally responsive teacher. The case involves a summer camp focused on literacy and character development at Henry W. Grady High School located in Atlanta, Georgia. The community players were trained in the outdoor experiential education discipline and avid environmental educators and teachers were trained in traditional teacher education. Through program co-development and facilitation of cultural relevancy and critical analysis, teachers and players bridged a large institutional void between learning in formal classrooms and informal community settings.

A case such as the summer camp is used to expand the recognition and redistribution of teaching for social justice to a more knowledge and action theory that, as North (2008) writes, "contribute to both academic competencies and the democratization of social institutions and relations, within and beyond school walls" (p. 1194). A nontraditional and informally set learning experience was created when all members of the instructional team, situated in both the public school (teachers) and outside of the public school (players), worked beyond restrictive traditional bounds of the classroom to connect culturally relevant experiential learning.

The camp was also designed to specifically address and improve current data that show continual disproportionate numbers of students of color and poverty living in urban centers. Henry Grady High School is a school that serves an increasing number of students from poverty and it is necessary to provide national poverty figures to understand the national landscape and need to perhaps provide a radically different framework to teacher education such as the community teacher framework that foregrounds community players in development of culturally responsive teachers.

### **Poverty in the K-12 Education System**

Officially, the rate of poverty in 1990 was 13.5%, and in 2006, it was 12.3% for all persons living in the United States (Meyer & Wallace, 2009). This overall rate is actually lower than the rate for children specifically. The poverty rate for children under the age of 18 was 20.6% in 1990, and the rate was 17.4% in 2006 (Meyer & Wallace, 2009). In 2012, 21.8% of children under 18, or 16.1 million children, lived in poverty ([http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income\\_wealth/cb13-165.html](http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/income_wealth/cb13-165.html), retrieved 10/29/2013). Race is also a component of poverty demographics that reveals a more disproportionate representation of children of color. Recent figures show that close to 40% of Black children under the age of 18 are living in poverty; whereas, 13% of White children are living in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

The three years that capture childhood poverty rates described above (1990, 2006 and 2012) demonstrate an alarming trend, which is that children are disproportionately represented in

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

American poverty statistics, as compared to other age demographics. Poverty, therefore, has a significant influence on the United States education system, particularly when race is taken into account.

Children, on average, who are living in poverty, enter the kindergarten to twelfth grade system (K-12) significantly behind those peers who do not experience poverty in their lifetime (Farkas, 2008; Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2009). Moreover, according to Farkas (2008), “African American students begin school with lower basic skills and lower evaluations on attentiveness and effort. Their families have much lower SES, and they typically go to lower quality schools” (p. 118). The intersection between race and poverty has a very long history in the United States and is certainly still prominent in the public education arena. Poverty-affected and historically underfunded schools are the explicit targets of many alternative and traditional teacher certification programs with harsh criticism being leveled against many traditional teacher preparation institutes.

## *Current Rhetoric Criticizing Teacher Education at Institutes of Higher Education*

Within the past thirty years, Institutes of Higher Education and their Teacher Education schools have received spirited and vitriolic criticism from many prominent figures both representing alternative routes to teacher certification, as well as traditional routes (Grossman & Loeb, 2008; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2013a). As quoted in Zeichner and Hutchinson (2008), even the former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, lamented, “Mandated education courses, unpaid student teaching, and the hoops and hurdles of the state certification bureaucracy discourage many potential teachers from entering the pipeline. The tragedy is that none of these hurdles leads to improved quality” (p.23-24).

Current Secretary of Education in the Obama Administration, Arnie Duncan, has very similar sentiments of teacher colleges across the country as well. In his October 2009 address to Teachers College Columbia University, Secretary Duncan bemoaned that, “By almost any standard, many if not most of the nation's 1,450 schools, colleges, and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. America's university-based teacher preparation programs need revolutionary change—not evolutionary tinkering” (Duncan, 2009, para. 3).

Other groups, particularly the New Schools Venture Fund, a non-profit that has a direct and substantial interest in promoting alternative pathways for teacher certification to be expanded, have used even more vitriolic language to denounce the performance of teacher preparation at teachers colleges (Zeichner, 2013). The language used by such an organization may simply and innocently feed the fodder of public discourse; however, it is clear that the organization actually has direct contact with several members of congress who will be voting on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the near future. The criticism of teacher education is flawed in numerous ways because of the assumptions in their message, and also from an absence of including teacher performance abilities and dispositions that align with those of leading teacher education researchers.

## *Standardization Movements*

One country that is also being influenced by the standardization agenda is Australia, where a leading researcher of Critical Literacy instruction, Alan Luke, resides. Luke (2000) has quipped:

How a state educational system evaluates and gauges approaches that ask to be judged on their realization of social transformation and change is, obviously, way beyond available regimes of surveillance and evaluations. Whether anything can

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

be made to count that can't be counted in educational systems is the vexing question facing governments with declining resources for state education. I can just imagine someone trying to run quality assurance checks on the production of socially transformative citizens. (p. 458)

If the goal of education is to create socially “transformative citizens” as Luke (2000) implies, then the course that the standardization agenda is taking America and many countries is getting further from that possibility. A reduction in what can qualify as knowledge has enabled many policymakers and alternative teacher certification advocates to flourish in the broader political conversation that Roberts and Peters (2008) astutely identified when they wrote that, “in most policy documents ‘knowledge’ now appears to be barely distinguishable from skills and information and is understood and discussed principally in terms of its exchange value. Knowledge is, more than ever, for sale, and institutions have devoted considerable effort to its effective packaging and distribution” (p. 5). Unfortunately, within the standardization movement, one common method to address group inequality is to use a recognition/redistributive framework (North, 2008) to address social inequality and justice (Brown, 2005).

North (2008) also raised awareness of this the redistributive view of group equity when she stated that, “Too often, a seeking of sameness in the name of equality does not explicitly challenge group stereotypes, recognize the complexity and dynamism of individual identities, or acknowledge the ways in which various political, economic and social forces continue to subordinate some groups of people and not others” (p. 1188). A shift in teacher understanding of social inequality may need to occur so more meaningful socially just approaches can be undertaken. This undertaking by an instructor promotes the empowerment of marginalized people and perhaps cannot happen in the reduced space and time of alternative teacher certification pathways.

### ***Commodification of Teacher Education: Alternative Pathways to Teacher Certification***

Teacher education has, in many arenas, been reduced to a packaged commodity that lacks acknowledgment that teaching is both a highly localized practice, but also lies within and across different levels of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; see Murrell, 2001, for review of micro, meso, macro levels). When levels of influence (i.e. intra-, and inter-personal, classroom, school, community, state, and federal) are not acknowledged in teacher preparation, then the ability to utilize the community and its resources is obscured, and inquiry by teacher candidates narrowed. Roberts and Peters (2008) describe this phenomena by stating, “The traditional professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced with institutional stress on performativity, as evidenced by the emergence of an emphasis on measured outputs: on strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures, and academic audits” (p. 1). Here, the preparation of teachers is reduced to a logic model of preparation involving linear inputs and outputs.

Alternative pathways for teacher certification have grown by leaps and bounds over the past decade. Prominent routes (e.g. Teach for American) have garnered national attention, partnered with some of the most prominent philanthropic organizations (e.g. The Gates Foundation), and have even become the template for international alternative teaching certification programs (e.g. Teach First Uganda).

Although the national conversation surrounding these organizations is focused on immediately inserting content-knowledgeable young professionals in the neediest schools in the country and world, the collateral damage transpiring along the periphery is the advancement of a broader neoliberal agenda (Purcell, 2008; Roberts & Peters, 2008). The narrowing and operationalizing of the ‘achievement’ definition is an interesting maneuver particularly as the same individuals define the problem, measurement, and solution. What gets glaringly stripped



## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

from teacher preparation is the space where teachers prepared in colleges and schools of education discuss vital issues of critical analysis and social justice, which occupy the space between theory and practice. This is the space where a teacher for social justice becomes the transformative agent that scholars have discussed for decades (Zeichner, 2009).

A critical and transformative practitioner is one who first recognizes the meritocratic ideology that pervades the colonial American school system (Murrell, 2001). A system that privileges values of a dominant demographic, and transformative practitioners actively craft their classroom and personal relationships with all students to combat those very economic, social and educational policies (North, 2008). Transformative practitioners are reflective in their educational journey to label how practices either alter or re-inscribe the oppressive dominant views or privileged groups. Transformative teachers are aware of the tensions in the education system's goals and can use these goals as lessons in the class to analyze tensions with their students and subsequently build skills through nontraditional curricula and "de-centered" materials (Fishman & McCarthy, 2005).

For example, a teacher of any grade may use the content of the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project (<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/>) to facilitate many different types of lessons, from writing and literacy goals to geography and research goals. In this example, instructors are intentional in their use of often overlooked materials as ways to mediate foundational skills rather than materials that do not question the institutional marginalization of specific groups of people. The recognition of these materials to be used in thoughtful manners, though, needs space to be used in practice and reflected upon. The reflection could transpire in methods courses with more knowledgeable others, and often that space is absent, if a teacher follows an alternative certification pathway.

Alternatively certified teachers are those who have intentionally variable and sparse pre-service classroom practice prior to becoming teachers of record (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008). This extreme variability is seen in the practice requirements of seven prominent alternative pathway certification agencies:

- Milwaukee's Metropolitan Multicultural Teacher Education Program (MMTEP), which requires six weeks half-time during summer school;
- North Carolina's Teachers of Excellence for All Children (NC TEACH), which requires classroom observations only;
- New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program, which requires four weeks of coaching with a mentor;
- New York City Teaching Fellows Program (NYCTFP), which requires some opportunities during summer school;
- Teach For America (TFA), which requires four weeks during the summer;
- Teacher Education Institute (TEI) in Elk Grove, California, Unified School District, which requires one year;
- Texas Region XIII Education Service Center's Educator Certification Program, which requires two weeks during summer school. (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008)

Some candidates have previous teaching experience, but without strong and consistent support throughout the graduates' induction year of teaching as the teacher of record, it is presumptive that these programs offer the space in their pre-service practice to cultivate the transformative instructor that social justice education has sought (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2008).

In 2001, the *St. Petersburg Times* reported, as documented by Darling-Hammond (2010), "On the loss of nearly 100 area recruits in the first few months of the school year, most of them alternative certification candidates who had entered without training and were supposed to learn on the job" (p. 37). That is a catastrophic certification and preparation blunder and the children in

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

those abandoned classrooms directly absorbed the consequences. The moral imperative is heightened as the demographics of schools being serviced by alternatively certified teachers are examined. Schools being served by alternatively certified teachers predominately serve a majority minority student population that overwhelmingly experience poverty (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Alternative pathways to teacher certification have garnered bipartisan political support and flourished in the broader conversation of the standardization movement of public and education policy (Zeichner, 2013). Subtle, and increasingly overt, shifts to privative and semi-privatize states' educational functions by commissioning responsibilities and services such as teacher education can increase the autonomy of alternative pathway agencies, but it can also be a way to, as stated by Purcell (2008), "Undermine government requirements and protections" (p. 12). A move to undermine requirements can be seen clearly in the aforementioned reduced requirements to establish oneself as a teacher of record and the vocal support by these alternative pathway providers to further reduce requirements (Riley, 2011). The development of a potential culturally responsive teacher-student is now unpacked.

## *Culturally Responsive Teacher-Students*

Paulo Freire (1970) began his civil service as an instructor for many children and adult members of the working class in Brazil. During his time, he developed and wrote about critical pedagogy and the need to synthesize action and reflection to both liberate the student and teacher from a mindset and position of oppression (Freire, 1970). A complex place of "praxis" is where educators see their practice as being mutually constructed with students (Freire, 1970). It is in this space that the instruction's liberating or oppressive dimensions surface and the potential transformative nature of teaching developed. Freire's (1970) idea of the teacher conducting herself in a dialectical manner with the student— and thus permitting for education to be bidirectional in nature— promotes the role of a new professional, the teacher-student. It is in this similar vein that that very teacher-student may acquire, in a dialectical manner, cultural understanding from community players among, "Parent groups, community-based agencies, and/or neighborhood groups" (Murrell, 2001, p. 2). An understanding of the importance of these players may be epistemologically ingrained in prospective teacher candidates if their teacher college provides a space for identified players to interact with candidates in intentional ways.

Howard (2003) put forth a set of guiding questions that pierced the core of how teaching can unintentionally be destructive and marginalizing to students of color, or of a different cultural background than their instructor, because race alone is not a "unifying force" (Freire, 1970). Howard (2003) wrote questions that pertained to culturally relevant pedagogy and which allow a reflective teacher to:

- Acknowledge how deficit-based notions of diverse students continue to permeate traditional schools thinking, practices, and placement, and critique their own thoughts and practices to ensure they do not reinforce prejudice behavior.
- Recognize the explicit connection between culture and learning, and see students' cultural capital as an asset and not a detriment to their school success.
- Be mindful of how traditional teaching practices reflect middle-class, European-American cultural values and seek to incorporate a wider range of dynamic and fluid teaching practices. (p. 198)

Critical reflection is vital to the development of a teacher-student who is transparent, thoughtful, and engaged with culturally relevant pedagogy. A paradigm shift in the dispositions of students in historically under-resourced communities is necessary for meaningful development and at the heart of that paradigm shift is teacher preparation that values community players and space for pre-service teachers to critically reflect on their positions and value systems. Gallego (2001)

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

reinforces the need to develop the community teacher in that, “Without connections between the classroom, school, and local communities, classroom field experiences may work to strengthen pre-service teachers’ stereotypes of children, rather than stimulate their examination” (p. 314).

Once teacher-students fundamentally recognizes the power of their personal values and the image of students they possess, then they are able to change their worldview to be more socially just, equitable, and empowering. The need for a culturally responsive and reflective teacher is very high—and difficult—as Howard (2003) states, “In order to become a culturally relevant pedagogue, teachers must be prepared to engage in a rigorous and oftentimes painful reflection process about what it means to teach students who come from different racial and cultural backgrounds than their own” (p. 198).

### *Teacher-Students as Social Justice Change Agents*

Anti-oppressive education must be woven into the fabric of accredited teacher education colleges, which should be the only acceptable method to certify teachers. By either following Kumashiro’s (2000) four progressive frameworks of anti-oppressive education or explicitly being guided to construct lessons and practices along a “social justice education sphere” (e.g. Knowledge/Action, Macro/Micro, or Redistribution/Recognition; North, 2008), pre-service teachers must co-create their practice with mentors and community-affiliated players. The space that is being described here is not possible in an expedited alternative certification pathway that is devoid of a theoretically robust and holistic educational vision. Prospective teachers need a clear understanding of our country’s staunch individualistic ethos, and the repercussions of that mentality when people of color, or people from poverty, are disproportionately unsuccessful in navigating an educational system that privileges narrow views of success and traditionally dominant cultures (North, 2008).

Kumashiro (2000) writes that, “Educators should create safe spaces based on what they see is needed right now, but they should also constantly re-create the spaces by asking, whom does this space harm or exclude?...without constantly complicating the very terms of ‘the Other,’ an education ‘for the Other’ will not be able to address the ways it always and already misses some Others” (p. 31). This may be the very space of reflection that critical theorist Freire (1970) promoted, and without a clear understanding of one’s own identity and values, the reflective nature of this space may be lost without recognition of how instruction is missing Others. A chance to ask oneself the reflective questions posed by Howard (2003) in the context of teaching and learning is vital in the teacher preparation program to guide the creation and recreation of teaching by pre-service instructors.

Self-awareness is critical to understand anti-oppressive methods of teaching and this must also be demonstrated through a performance assessment of student learning (Cochran-Smith, Gleeson, & Mitchell, 2010). Teacher preparation is a time to undertake the responsibility to critically analyze instruction and student outcomes to identify the potential bridging or continued marginalization of student groups or individuals. Banks (1995) argues that, “Teaching students how knowledge is produced, particularly how various historical, political, social, and economic viewpoints of the knowers and the known can influence that production...enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from various perspectives to take action on important personal, civic, and social problems” (as cited in North, 2008, p. 1194). A case is now presented exemplifying a process of reflection and action by a teacher-student. The mediating experience is the co-facilitation of a culturally responsive camp targeting academic skills with historically marginalized students. The camp focused on exposure to, and action upon, politicized and racialized dilemmas.

### ***One Case: Learning Critical Literacy in Community-based Informal Settings and the Grady Camp Framework (Sapelo Island, Georgia)***

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

Teaching and learning opportunities lie well beyond classrooms and schools, and the informal spaces of community-based activities provide unique chances for developing distinct relationships (Gallego, 2001; Murrell, 2001; Tatum & Gue, 2012). A community-based setting and activity can be a space to aggressively analyze numerous oppressive societal intersections and challenge their ability to exist. This is a space that allows for the dialogical nature of teaching to blossom and be instilled. A space where the transformative agent can recognize that bonding with others is the essence of resistance and liberation (Johnstone & Terzakis, 2012). It is in this vein that the author reflects on one mission to take advantage of that space. Critical pedagogical styles were evolved to accomplish what Freire (1970) described: “Literacy education can generate tools and conditions for people to reposition themselves in relation to economies, cultures, and dominant ideologies” (as cited in Luke, 2000; p.48).

In order to actively combat the destructive nature of long summer recesses, a summer camp in community-based setting was created to assist students from an urban school who were struggling readers and be introduced to critical learning spaces that were different than the traditional classrooms they experienced all year. It is vital that students learn the rules of the culture of power and are supported in thoughtful ways to not only enter into that conversation of power dynamics, but also to affect changes to the status quo, which was the focus of the Henry W. Grady High School Summer Literacy & Character Development Camp (Grady Camp; see <http://vimeo.com/29605201>) (North, 2008).

Grady High School is member of the Atlanta Public Schools District and serves a disproportionately high number of students of color and who experience poverty. During the Grady Camp, students carefully created a learning community, based on group identified shared goals. Explicit activities and community meetings provided the space to negotiate and write these goals. These goals were revisited on a daily basis to ground and calibrate camp participation and purpose.

The camp expectations focused on member respect and participation in a service trip to the tight-knit community of Sapelo Island, Georgia. Sapelo is a coastal barrier island and is home to the last Geechee community on the Georgia coast. The island has had a long embattled history of controversial land rights among the families of slave descendants who live on the island and highly affluent mainland families who are primarily White.

The sociocultural benefits of the camp are aimed at improving academic literacy access skills as well as critical literacy skills, participating in an emotionally secure and supportive group, and increasing self-awareness and resiliency through service learning (Tatum & Gue, 2012). Community players were vital in creating and maintaining group reflections and goals in both Atlanta and Sapelo Island. Partnerships between the community players and Grady High School staff members were formed through an organic process that centered on talk and a shared vision for youth development. An organic process provides a space to co-construct visions, goals, and participants’ varied strengths (e.g. increased cultural understanding; instructional design; community networking; etc.). Banks (2001) terms this the insider-outsider dynamic of group membership, and this relationship was intentionally analyzed between the Grady staff and community partners. An insider-outsider dynamic was vital throughout the camp, but it was of particular importance during the cultural immersion and experiential education portion of the camp.

### ***Community Player Involvement: Action and Reflection***

Grady Camp was organically developed from the design and deep reflection of several key figures, both within and outside the school. Key figures included two community teachers who valued learning in informal settings and two key community players (Murrell, 2001). The camp was developed over a four-year iterative process through group reflection on the strong

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

racial injustices of the Atlanta community surrounding Grady High School and the power of identifying those inequities with the students to enact change. It was also established to allow for teacher-students and students to participate in a space to mutually learn from one another.

North (2008) stated that, “At the micro level of classroom social interactions, a view of power that recognizes students’ and teachers’ dynamic identities and their desires and fears challenges a view of empowerment based on an unproblematic, direct, reflexive, total exchange of knowledge” (p. 1193), and the self-reflective process of developing the camp was an attempt at just that. The initial iteration of the Grady Camp did not include learning in informal settings or community-based goals. It was not until key community players participated in the camp that the camp evolved to address the sociocultural benefits of community-based education and team building for character development.

An average of 18 students participated in the Grady Camp. Student and key player reflections occurred frequently because, as Murrell (2001) explained, “Human systems and institutions that do not systematically question their fundamental assumptions, values, and goals undoubtedly contribute to the perpetuation of structural inequity” (p. 50). Academic and experiential education empowerment lessons were designed with empowering texts to create a sociocultural identity both of our immediate group and the Sapelo Island community that welcomed the Grady Camp (Bailey & Bledsoe, 2000).

### *Academic Skills Developed Through Empowering Texts & Experiential Education*

The multifaceted goals of the Grady Camp were to both improve the fundamental text access skills of students who were reading significantly below grade level (i.e. fluency and text decoding skills; see appendix), and to work through a text, *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man: A saltwater Geechee talks about life on Sapelo Island* (Bailey & Bledsoe, 2000), that gives a historical perspective of an empowered African American. This perspective of the community contests many caricatured images of socially distraught communities of color, and introduces the author – Cornelia Bailey—who is a transformative agent for social change. Grady Camp participants then met Cornelia Bailey once they arrived at Sapelo, to make an even stronger connection between the text and reality.

Including the text as supplemental helped students to critically examine what they are taught. Delpit (2012) explains that, “When people of color are taught to accept uncritically texts and histories that reinforce their marginalized position in society, they easily learn never to question their position” (p. 128). Engaging and empowering texts were also utilized once the students had arrived via ferry to Sapelo Island. The critical community players helped to design an incredibly elaborate and highly emotional experiential educational lesson. The lesson involved several historical accounts of experiences slaves had while navigating the Underground Railroad. Campers then coupled these accounts with maps of Sapelo Island and, in the darkness, they silently navigated the marshland while roped together.

Emotions ran very high as campers worked together to collectively support their group resiliency and self-awareness to gain a much deeper knowledge of the critical texts and resources. Kumashiro (2000) wrote about the value of such experiences when he stated that “educators need to create a curriculum space for students to work through crisis...that teaching and learning really take place only through entering and working through crisis, since it is this process that *moves* a student to a different intellectual/emotional/political space” (p. 44, emphasis added).

Students were asked to utilize many different senses, strengths, and forms of communication during this and other experiential educational lessons. These experiences led directly to new representations of the self for the students and attempted to achieve what Kumashiro (2000) described when he wrote, “Rather than adding new information about Others to students’ understanding of self, teachers push students to go beyond the realm of cognitive ‘knowing’ to ‘perform new readings, new meanings, and associations with different emotions’,”

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

(as cited in North 2008, p.1196). All of the actors gave the crisis new meanings and new associations that empower and transform learners, both adolescent and adult, to be equipped with a critical outlook on what may be previously viewed as emotionless behavior. The goals of moving toward an anti-oppressive method of teaching were also targeted in the students' service projects.

### *Service Learning and Participation in Shared Community Norms*

Service project lessons facilitated by the team of highly reflective instructors provided meaningful and thoughtful lessons for campers, many of whom had been identified as having emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs) while attending school. Reflection between staff and community partners transpired daily at some points occurring directly following a lesson. The reflective sessions provided a space to ask tough questions about student assumptions as well as lesson shortcomings. The reflective sessions are at the core of the culturally responsive teacher that Howard (2003) has presented and is discussed later. Through reflection, it was clear that a service learning opportunity for the adults and students would enhance our community goals.

Service learning centered on the preservation of Behavior Cemetery (see Appendix C, Figure 1) and the distribution of food to elderly residents of the Hog Hammock community on Sapelo. Behavior Cemetery is a highly revered area on the island that was neglected for years while many White mainland residents became land-grabbers, and it is a special place the campers read about prior to arriving on Sapelo (Bailey & Bledsoe, 2000). Former slaves are buried throughout the cemetery and campers were in full reverence as they raked under the hot sun to beautify the grounds and pay homage. Service learning was also integral in the distribution of food and resources to the community, which is a shared cultural norm on the rural island.

Fishing on Sapelo has been conducted using the same techniques handed down generations from former slaves, stolen and shipped to the island, in the early to mid-nineteenth century from West Africa. Students were taught in the same traditional manners including both long and cast net methods to participate in a communal fish. Many of the students gained an even more dynamic sense of self by recognizing skills used to catch fish and then provide that sustenance to elder members of the community. A sense of duty to provide for the community is a deeply and collectively held belief in Hog Hammock, Sapelo Island. Campers were immersed in that community and were thoughtfully supported to contribute to that community (see Appendix D, Figure 2). An integral part of the cultural immersion was the introduction to Cornelia Bailey, a lifelong resident of Sapelo Island, historian, and author of the empowering text campers collectively read (Bailey & Bledsoe, 2000).

### *Student Partnerships with Community Players*

Cornelia Bailey is an iconic and proud Hog Hammock matriarch on Sapelo Island, Georgia. She is also an instrumental community player who is an accomplished author and storyteller. Camp participants, teacher-students, and Grady Camp players worked with Mrs. Bailey to gain a deeper understanding of the culture and history of Sapelo Island to become aware of the historical atrocities afflicting Sapelo and many other communities of color in Georgia. Through this elevated awareness, students were able to engage with the empowering texts, narratives, and sense of place that was not previously available through traditional classroom education. It was through the partnership with community players that other sources of expertise and funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) were honored. The Grady camp was organically and serendipitously created, and it underscores the need for pre-service teachers to be introduced to the potential of community partners. Pre-service teachers in traditional certification routes must not only be exposed to the benefit of pre-service teacher program, but also to best networking practices with community players. Alternative routes, due to logistical parameters and expedited

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

timelines, cannot provide the type of experience offered by Sapelo Island. Furthermore, with their hyper-focused attention on traditional classroom practice, informal learning environments are continuously neglected from the alternative teaching certification teacher preparation routes.

As demonstrated by the Grady camp, supportive partnering with various community players, storytellers, elders, fishermen, and sweet grass basket weavers became a medium that participants gained a holistic perspective of the community. In turn, the players thoughtfully guided critical reflection of adults to facilitate a deeper understanding of the purposes of education in formal settings and how culturally responsive ideas being revealed in Sapelo Island could inform our their education in the Atlanta community and beyond.

### ***Conclusion: Community Players' Active Roles in Teacher Preparation***

Grady Camp was presented to demonstrate community players' influence in the development of not only student learning in informal settings, but particularly the development of an in-service novice teacher-student. Community players are able to navigate insider-outsider (Banks, 2001) dynamics and help create the space necessary to become a more reflective and culturally responsive teacher. Goals and objectives of the Grady Camp were both technical (e.g. text access skills) and sociocultural (e.g. community building and self-resiliency) in nature. Various empowering texts were used during the camp to provide a shared collective space for students to explore ideas of cultural awareness. Experiential education lessons paralleled the texts in order to provide structured crises to move students and teacher-students to a new emotional and political space together.

Current literature abounds with declarations that teacher-students need to develop trust and relationships with students to move education in thoughtful directions (Delpit, 2012), and the Grady Camp is used here to spotlight a case of mutual relationship development among students, teacher-students, and community players. Results of the student learning included significant literacy access skill development (as measured by the GORT-IV; see Appendix A, table 1) and a decrease in the behavior referrals during the school years following students' participation in the Grady Camp (Appendix B). Campers were also held accountable to draw parallels to their community in Atlanta and how ideological norms at Sapelo, an African-American community that contradicts stereotypical or caricaturized Black communities throughout Atlanta, could be drawn upon to actively improve inequities in Atlanta. Just as Luke (2000) wrote of an inability to measure, with a snapshot, the performance of a transformative agent, participants in the Grady Camp and their transformative dispositions are still evolving and could never be captured by a standardized test.

Community players were absolutely integral to the iterative evolution of the Grady Camp through the years. The players and teacher-students shifted objectives to align with personal and communal goals to make instruction culturally relevant and empowering. An evolution of the camp was only possible through a deep commitment of the teacher-students and community players to hold each other accountable for their thoughts and actions, particularly as they may inadvertently marginalize students or other community members. Community player partnering is vital to a teacher preparation program and a firm norm of reflection must be instilled in prospective teachers. They should not have to wait until they are practicing teachers of record to gain this cultural competence.

Kumashiro (2000) writes that, "there is always a space between the teaching and learning, and rather than close that space, the teacher should work within that space, embrace that paradox, and explore the possibilities of disruptions and change that reside within the unknowable," (p. 46). A teacher education program can be the space where a prospective teacher, with the assistance of critical community players, informs their teaching and learning and value systems. Without the 'hope' that a serendipitous partnership evolves once a teacher is in-service—as was the case with the Grady Summer Camp—it is in a teacher's pre-service training

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

that valuing community players should foster. Highly intentional exposure from teacher education professors to community players, in community spaces, must encourage the epistemological knowledge of seeking community partnerships no matter what geographical area an novice teacher lands. Critical reflection may be guided by Howard's (2003) deeply deliberative questions for prospective teacher-students, but only if these candidates are thoughtfully held accountable by teacher educators who themselves are willing to be reflective of their own practices and willingness to invite community players to their teacher training courses.



## References

- Bailey, C., & Bledsoe, C. (2000). *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man: A saltwater Geechee talks about life on Sapelo Island*. New York: Doubleday.
- Banks, J. A. (2001). Cultural diversity and education. *Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching* (4th ed.). London: Allyn.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In *International Encyclopedia of Education*, (Vol. 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Elsevier. Reprinted in: Gauvain, M. & Cole, M. (Eds.), *Readings on the development of children*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (1993, pp. 37-43). NY: Freeman.
- Brown, E. L. (2005). Service-Learning in a One-Year Alternative Route to Teacher Certification: A Powerful Multicultural Teaching Tool. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 38(1), 61-74.
- Bullough Jr, R. V., Clark, D. C., & Patterson, R. S. (2003). Getting in step: Accountability, accreditation and the standardization of teacher education in the United States. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 29(1), 35-51.
- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2007). *How and why do teacher credentials matter for student achievement?* (NBER Working Paper 12828). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Gleeson, A. M., & Mitchell, K. (2010). Teacher education for social Justice: What's pupil learning got to do with it? *Berkeley Review of Education*, 1(1). Retrieved from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/35v7b2rv>
- Corrales, J. (1999). *The politics of education reform: Bolstering Supply and Demand; Overcoming Institutional Blocs*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Danziger, S., Cancian, M., & Project Muse. (2009). *Changing poverty, changing policies*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Teacher Education and the American Future. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61, 35-47.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Baratz-Snowden, J. C., & National Academy of Education. (2005). *A good teacher in every classroom: Preparing the highly qualified teachers our children deserve*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D.J., Gatlin, S.J., & Heilig, J.V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42).
- Delpit, L. D. (2012). *"Multiplication is for white people": Raising expectations for other people's children*. New York: New Press.
- Duncan, A. (2009). *Teacher preparation: Reforming the uncertain profession*. Speech on U.S. teacher education at Teachers College Columbia 10/22/09. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/teacher-preparation-reforming-uncertain-profession>
- Farkas, G. (2008). How educational inequality develops. In D.Harris & A.Lin (Eds.), *The colors of poverty: Why racial and ethnic disparities persist* (pp. 105-134). New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.
- Fishman, S. M., & McCarthy, L. (2005). Talk about race: When student stories and multicultural curricula are not enough. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(4), 347-364.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Fryer, Jr, R.G. (2011). Racial inequality in the 21st Century: The declining significance of discrimination. *Handbook of Labor Economics*, 4, 855-971.
- Gallego, M. (2001). Is experience the best teacher? The potential of coupling classroom and community-based experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(4), 312-325.
- Grossman, P. L., & Loeb, S. (Eds.). (2008). *Alternative routes to teaching: Mapping the new landscape of teacher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

## Community-Based Teacher Education

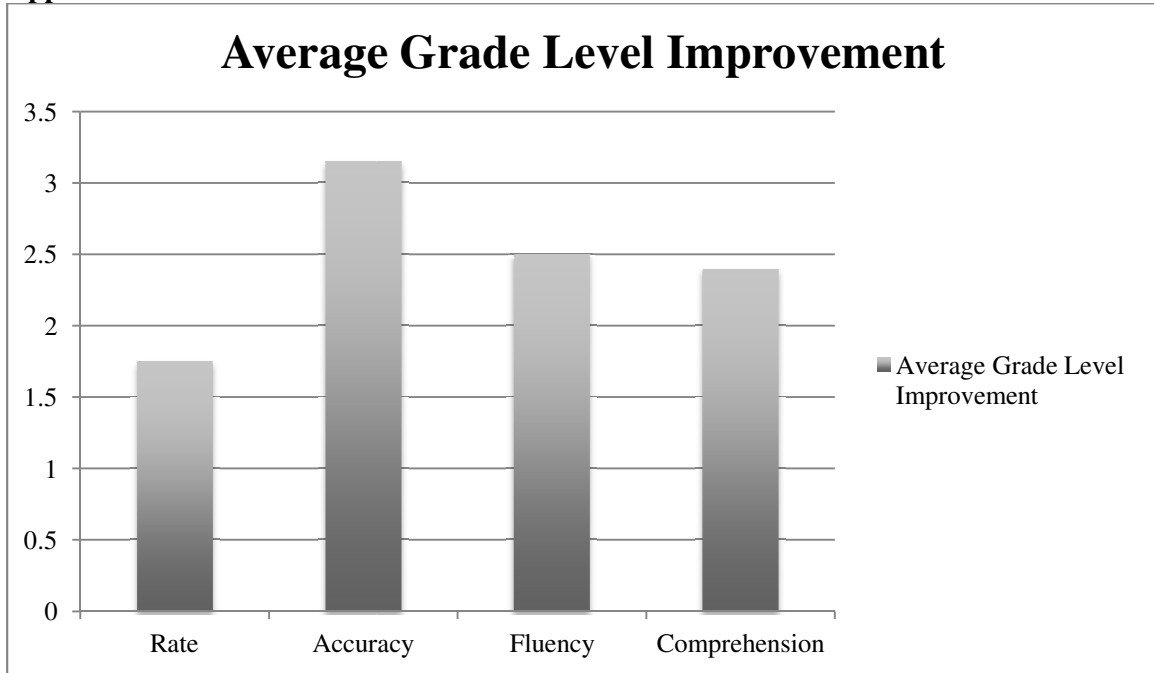
- Hackett, J., Coppage, T., & Handy, M. (2010, July). *Pairing Literacy and Sapelo Island*. Presentation delivered at High Schools that Work Conference, Louisville, KY.
- Hackett, J., Coppage, T., Handy, M & Summers, A. (2011, July). *Motivating African-American Males in the Classroom*. Presentation delivered at High Schools that Work conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Hackett, J., & Summers, A. (2010, March). *Mastery through fluency*. Presentation delivered at International Dyslexia Association conference, New York, NY.
- Hellig, J.V. & Jez, S.J. (2010, June). *Teach for America a review of the evidence*. Boulder, CO: Education and the Public Interest Research Center.
- Henke, R., Chen, X., & Geis, S. (2000). *Progress through the teacher pipeline: 1992-93 college graduates and elementary/secondary school teaching as of 1997*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice*, 42(3), 195-202.
- Humphrey, D., Wechsler, M., & Hough, H. (2008). Characteristics of effective alternative teacher certification programs. *The Teachers College Record*, 110(1), 1-63.
- Johnstone, A., & Terzakis, E. (2012). Pedagogy and revolution: Reading Freire in context. In Bale, J., & Knopp, S. (Eds.), *Education and capitalism: Struggles for learning and liberation* (pp. 187-210). Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25-53.
- Luke, A. (2000). Critical literacy in Australia: A matter of context and standpoint. *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy*, 43(5), 448-461.
- Magnuson, K., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2009). Enduring influences of childhood poverty. In M. Cancian & S. Danziger (Eds.), *Changing poverty, changing policies* (pp. 153-179). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Meyer, D. R., & Wallace, G. L. (2009). Poverty levels and trends in comparative perspective. *Focus*, 26(2), 7-13.
- Moll, L.C. (1992). Literacy research in community and classrooms: A sociocultural approach. In R. Beach, J.L. Green, M.L. Kamil, & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Multidisciplinary perspectives in literacy research* (pp. 211- 244). Urbana, IL: National Conference on Research in English and National Council of Teachers of English.
- Murrell, P. C. (2001). *The community teacher: A new framework for effective urban teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- National Council on Teacher Quality. (2013). *Standards*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.nctq.org/teacherPrep/ourApproach/standards/>
- North, C. (2008). What is all this talk about "social justice"? Mapping the terrain of education's latest catchphrase. *The Teachers College Record*, 110, (6), 1182-1206.
- Purcell, M. (2008). *Recapturing democracy: Neoliberalization and the struggle for alternative urban*
- Riley, B. (2011, June 22). Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Education: GREAT Act Q&A. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://www.newschools.org/blog/great-act-qa>
- Roberts, P., & Peters, M.A. (2008). *Neoliberalism: Higher Education and Research*. Educational Futures: Rethinking Theory and Practice, Vol. 26. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Tatum, A., & Gue, V. (2012). The Sociocultural Benefits of Writing for African American Adolescent Males. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 28 (2), 123-142.
- Teach For America (TFA). (2013). [Mission Statement]. Retrieved from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/our-mission/a-solvable-problem>
- United States., Bush, G. W., & United States. (2001). *No child left behind: Communication from the President of the United States transmitting a report for nationwide education reform*

## *Community-Based Teacher Education*

- entitled, No child left behind.* Washington, DC: G.P.O.
- United States Census Bureau. (2014, December 30). *American community survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.
- Zeichner, K., & Hutchinson, E. A. (2008). The development of alternative certification policies and programs in the United States. In P. Grossman & S. Loeb (Eds.), *Alternative routes to teaching: Mapping the new landscape of teacher education* (pp.15-29). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Zeichner, K. M. (2009). *Teacher education and the struggle for social justice*. New York: Routledge.
- Zeichner, K. M. (2013). Why the 'GREAT Teachers and Principals Act' is not great. *Answer Sheet: The Washington Post Education Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/10/10/why-the-great-teachers-and-principals-act-is-not-great/>.

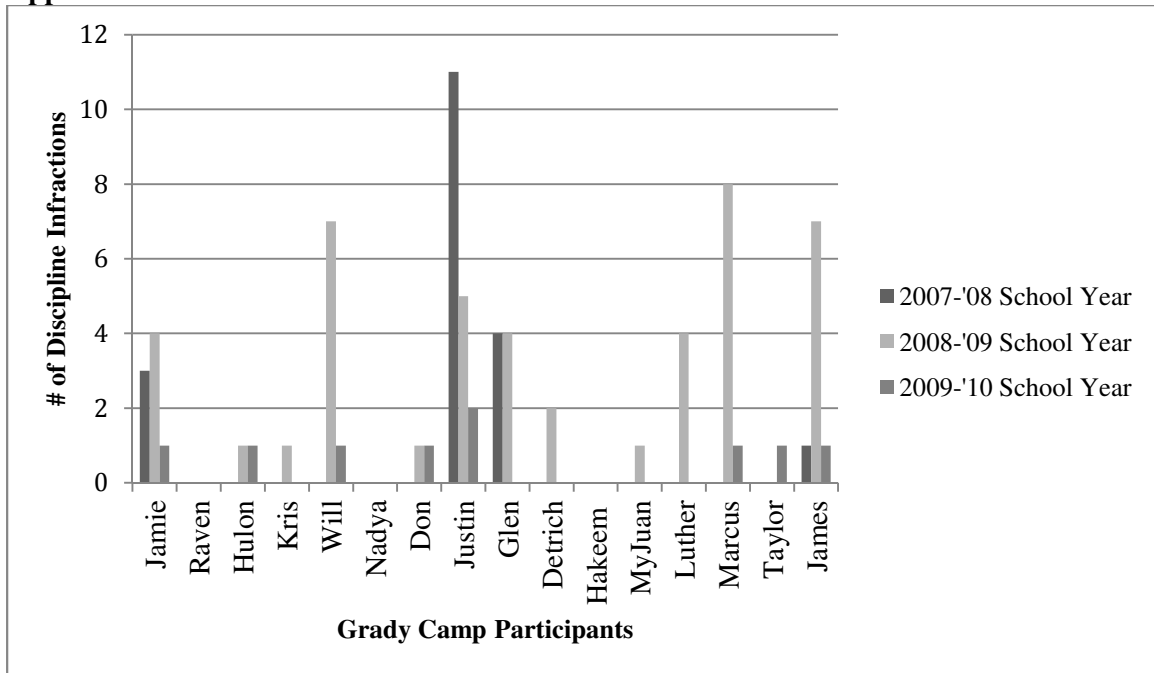
Appendices

Appendix A



**Table 1.** 2009 Average Grade Level Improvement by Reading Dimension as Measured by Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-IV).

Appendix B



**Appendix C**



**Figure 1.** Behavior Cemetery, Sapelo Island, Georgia

**Appendix D**



**Figure 2.** Various Grady Campers, Community Players, and Teacher-Student